

ECONOMICS AND INDUSTRY STANDING COMMITTEE

INQUIRY INTO MICROGRIDS AND ASSOCIATED TECHNOLOGY IN WA



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 4 APRIL 2018**

SESSION THREE

Members

**Ms J.J. Shaw (Chair)
Mr S.K. L'Estrange (Deputy Chairman)
Mr Y. Mubarakai
Mr S.J. Price
Mr D.T. Redman**

Hearing commenced at 4.24 pm**Mr LUKE VANDELEUR****Vice President, Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, examined:****Mr KRISTAN PINNER****Committee member, Carnarvon Chamber of Commerce and Industry, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you for agreeing to appear today for a hearing for the committee's inquiry into microgrids and associated technologies in Western Australia. My name is Jessica Shaw and I am Chair of the Economics and Industry Standing Committee. I would like to introduce the other members of the committee. To my right is Yaz Mubarakai, member for Jandakot; to my left, Sean L'Estrange, member for Churchlands and Deputy Chair; Stephen Price, member for Forrestfield; and Terry Redman, member for Warren-Blackwood, will join us in a moment. It is important you understand that any deliberate misleading of this committee may be regarded as a contempt of Parliament. Your evidence is protected by parliamentary privilege; however, this privilege does not apply to anything you might say outside of today's proceedings.

Before we begin with our questions, do you have any questions about your attendance here today?

The WITNESSES: No.

The CHAIR: Would either of you like to make a short opening statement?

The WITNESSES: No.

The CHAIR: All right; let us get to the point. We are here in Carnarvon to talk about two matters. Firstly, to discuss Horizon Power's trial and then to also ask for your impressions on the servicing of regional airline providers up here. Are you aware of the Horizon Power energy trials that they are running here in Carnarvon at the moment?

Mr VANDELEUR: Yes, we are. Horizon Power actually hosted a sundowner for us—it must have been close to six months ago, I think—and they spoke to us about the project they were undertaking up there. It was quite high level, but it gave us a bit of an understanding as to what was happening up on the site. As far as a little bit of background information goes, we do have that.

The CHAIR: How has it been received both within the local business community but also amongst the local residential community?

Mr VANDELEUR: I would say that it has not been spoken about; it has not had a lot of publicity really. Aside from that one event that we went to, I do not think I can recall one other instance where I have heard it referred to or read about it. But that is only speaking for myself, which is pretty small, anecdotal evidence. Can you think of anything?

Mr PINNER: I agree with Luke. Apart from that first information session, which was really informative and had some really some high-end people there speaking about the solar systems and how they worked, which was really interesting, there has been no other dialogue with Horizon Power at all, certainly with the chamber.

The CHAIR: Do you think there would be an appetite for a bit more engagement on it?

Mr PINNER: I would say yes.

The CHAIR: Is solar PV on rooftops something that a lot of businesses in Carnarvon seem pretty willing to trial?

Mr PINNER: Yes.

Mr VANDELEUR: I believe it would be, yes.

The CHAIR: And households as well? Do you guys have PV on your rooftops yourselves?

Mr PINNER: I run a construction company in Carnarvon. As I understand it, Horizon Power have reached their limit on offering what you would call power back into the grid from residential dwellings. Unfortunately, there was a big push on that quite some years ago and that seems to have ceased. But even some sort of lesser funding from the government would still get people to have that opportunity to put back into the grid, which would be great.

The CHAIR: Do you see any economic development opportunities associated with the renewable industry here in Carnarvon?

Mr PINNER: I think small suppliers, you know local electricians and whatnot, would be quite willing to take it on. I know a lot of electricians who are in town have done it themselves, so they are quite familiar with it. I guess the answer to that would be yes.

Mr VANDELEUR: There are instances of renewable energy being used commercially in Carnarvon at the moment with, I think it is called, Solex Ice, which is out on the eastern side of town. Without knowing exactly what the business model is, I understand that they have a range of solar panels there and use that to generate ice and then sell that locally around town.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: From a chamber of commerce perspective, are there any issues in and around energy prices in Carnarvon?

Mr VANDELEUR: When I was asked the question last week about whether I would come here, we had a bit of discussion of this at our last committee meeting. There really was not any negative feedback amongst the committee in relation to prices or reliability; everyone was more or less of the opinion that our power supply is reliable and acceptable, and everyone was stretched to come up with anything really to say to answer that question other than we are happy with the power supply that we have presently.

...

The CHAIR: Thank you. That is very consistent with a lot of the evidence that we received, so thank you.

I will proceed to close today's hearing. Thank you for your evidence before the committee today. A transcript of this hearing will be emailed to you for correction of minor errors. Any such corrections must be made and the transcript returned within seven days of the date of the letter attached to the transcript. If the transcript is not returned within this period, it will be deemed to be correct. New material cannot be added via these corrections and the sense of your evidence cannot be altered. Should you wish to provide additional information or elaborate on particular points, please include a supplementary submission for the committee's consideration when you return your corrected transcript of evidence.

Hearing concluded at 4.49 pm
