

ABENGOA SOLAR THERMAL POWER PLANT — PERENJORI

2368. Mr C.J. Tallentire to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to a proposal by the Spanish renewable energy firm Abengoa to build a 20MW solar thermal power plant with storage in Western Australia near Perenjori, and ask:

- (a) has the Minister for Energy or his representative met with Abengoa, and if so, could the Minister provide the minutes taken during that meeting and what, if any, support does the company require from the State Government to make the project come to fruition;
- (b) have representatives of Western Power or Horizon Power met with Abengoa, and if so, could minutes of that meeting be provided to the Assembly;
- (c) what assistance can the Minister provide to ensure the project has access to the SWIS;
- (d) can the Minister provide data on current and projected future power consumption in the Perenjori region taking into account the development of several new iron ore mines in the Wheatbelt;
- (e) can the Minister provide information on the projected future expenditure by Western Power/Horizon Power on grid reliability and service provision in the Perenjori region; and
- (f) what benefits would a 20MW power generation plant, with storage, bring to the Perenjori section of the SWIS and what grid infrastructure expenditure savings could such a project deliver?

**Dr M.D. Nahan replied:**

- (a) Representatives from the Department of Finance's Public Utilities Office have met with project partners for the Perenjori Dispatchable Solar Thermal Power Project, including an Abengoa representative, in November 2013 and May 2014.

The purpose of the informal meetings was for the project partners to provide an update on progress of the project. Given the nature of these meetings the discussions were not formally recorded.

In December 2013, the Public Utilities Office received a request from one of the project partners (West Gen Pty Ltd) for a letter of Liberal National Government support for inclusion in a project funding submission to the Commonwealth Government Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA).

On 10 January 2014, a letter was provided by the Deputy Director General of the Public Utilities Office indicating in-principle support by government for electricity industry participants exploring new technologies. In May 2014, ARENA announced \$450,000 funding for Abengoa to conduct a feasibility study into construction of a 20 megawatt solar thermal plant in Perenjori. (The media release on this matter is available on ARENA's website [www.arena.gov.au](http://www.arena.gov.au).)

- (b) Yes, representatives of Western Power met with Abengoa. No minutes of the meeting were kept.
- (c) Access to the SWIS is managed in accordance with Western Power's Applications and Queuing Policy (AQP) which is approved by an independent regulator. The AQP provides an equitable, transparent, efficient and non-discriminatory process to connect loads and generators to the network.
- (d) Western Power's latest local forecast indicates the Perenjori feeder will have adequate capacity to cater for natural load growth for more than 10 years. Mines are not considered natural load growth and are required to fund any necessary network reinforcement based on a user pays system.
- (e) Western Power's focus is to continue to invest in replacing or treating ageing network assets that pose a risk to public safety wherever they are located. The network will continue to need increasing levels of investment to improve safety and overcome decades of underinvestment.
- (f) At this time Western Power has not undertaken a detailed network assessment of Abengoa's proposed project. Western Power understands the Australian Renewable Energy Agency has funded a feasibility study into Abengoa's project. The feasibility study is expected to be complete by April 2015.