

WESTERN POWER — POWER POLE DEFECT NOTICES

793. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. Given the distressing program, can the minister advertise that to the people who have been directed to replace their poles so that families are not unnecessarily struggling with financial distress?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am very happy to tell Western Power to make sure that it engages again, but the notice includes all the contact arrangements that the pole owner should respond to. I am very happy to make sure that Western Power goes back and talks to people again, because this is an unfortunate situation that has arisen because of the Supreme Court decision. In my view, the court made the determination—it is its decision—but it did overturn the expectation, because, previously, the security of the pole had always been considered the resident's responsibility. The problem now is that Western Power, through its insurers, has been held liable for the damage caused to other properties by the failure of that consumer pole. It would potentially cost Western Power millions and millions and millions of dollars if it does not get these poles remediated.