

ELECTRICITY — OUTAGES — COMPENSATION

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

I have a supplementary question. Surely, the minister must recognise the disadvantage that many people suffer from the current scheme. Will the minister commit to a review of the compensation scheme to ensure that people get adequate compensation in a more timely manner?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

Like so many things that the shadow minister does not seem to understand, this is not a compensation scheme. It is a small payment for the disruption and inconvenience that people have if they have an extended outage. It is not designed to compensate anybody for their losses. If they believe they have a compensable loss, they have alternative avenues available to them. However, often there is not a compensable loss because it is not a matter within the control of Western Power. Therefore, it is made as a payment to people for the inconvenience of the outage.

As I just explained a moment ago, it is either equal to or exceeds the payments available in every other state in Australia. No state in Australia is more generous than the Western Australian government's requirements of Western Power.

As to the question of a review, the government conducted a review and that is why we doubled the outage payment from the level that was given when the member for Cottesloe's party was in government. If he is asking me why the former Liberal government was so derelict in its duties, that is a question for him.