



Hon Peter Collier MLC
Minister for Energy; Training and Workforce Development; Indigenous Affairs

Your ref: Petition No 129
Our ref: 34-14990

Hon Brian Ellis MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Ellis

PETITION NO 129: LACK OF RETICULATED ELECTRICITY TO REMOTE COMMUNITIES SUCH AS WINDY HARBOUR

Thank you for your letter dated 29 September 2011 regarding a petition tabled in the Legislative Council on 18 August 2011 concerning electricity supply to Windy Harbour. My comments in response to the matters raised in your letter are as follows.

This particular issue has a long history and has been the subject of much correspondence between the author of the petition, myself and the Premier. I sympathise with the desires of the people of Windy Harbour, however, in light of competing demands on the State Budget, the Government does not consider it a priority to fund the extension of power distribution networks to holiday home settlements at this point in time.

The *Electricity Industry (Obligation to Connect) Regulations 2005* impose an obligation on network operators to connect premises to the electricity network, but only where the distribution system would not need to be extended further than 100 meters. Beyond that, as elsewhere on the electricity grid, network operators require that the cost of extending the distribution network be met by the beneficiaries.

In this case, the petitioner's letter identifies that there are considerable costs associated with the proposed extension which would need to be shared among a relatively small number of residents. I understand from previous correspondence related to this matter that the residents have not agreed to fund this work.

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Unlike many other holiday communities, Windy Harbour is entirely situated within a reserve. A Management Order is currently in place giving the Shire of Manjimup management responsibility for the reserve and holiday cottage and professional fishermen's leases are available from the Shire for 20 year terms. Under the provisions of the *Land Administration Act 1997*, the land is reserved and may only be used for "Recreation, Camping, Caravan Park and Holiday Cottages" and not for permanent residences.

The Government's overarching future plans for the provision of power to remote and regional Western Australia are currently being considered as part of the Government's Strategic Energy Initiative: *Energy 2031*.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Collier', written in a cursive style.

Hon Peter Collier MLC
MINISTER FOR ENERGY

21 OCT 2011

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