

ENERGY — ESPERANCE POWER PROJECT

3299. Hon Diane Evers to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to a recent ABC news article entitled ‘Esperance power station approval calls WA Government process into question’, and I ask:

- (a) did the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation:
  - (i) speak directly to the Shire of Esperance when seeking comments on the proposed works approval;
  - (ii) receive any formal reply from the Shire regarding the proposed works approval:
    - (A) if yes to (ii), what was the reply; and
    - (B) if no to (ii), did the Department follow up;
  - (iii) take into account changes to working arrangements and operating hours due to Covid-19 when seeking a response in April 2020; and
  - (iv) conduct any forums consultation sessions directly with the community:
    - (A) if no to (iv), why not;
- (b) what ‘community feedback’ was received that was ‘considered’; and
- (c) why was a decision not deferred until Shire members had received adequate training given the Governments Development Assessment Panel’s (DAP) website states ‘Local representation is a vital component of the DAP’?

**Hon Stephen Dawson replied:**

- (a)–(b) I am advised that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) undertook consultation on the Esperance power station works approval application in accordance with requirements of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* (EP Act) and its guidance and procedures. This included a letter inviting comment from the Shire of Esperance dated 7 April 2020, the application being advertised on the DWER website for 21 days from 3 April 2020 and an advertisement in *The West Australian* inviting comment on 13 April 2020.  
  
The Department received no submissions or comments, including from the Shire of Esperance. Given that there were no comments received, a community forum was not considered necessary.
- (c) The Development Assessment Panel and training for Shire members are separate matters, not relevant to the decision-making processes under the EP Act. The works approval was granted in accordance with the EP Act and after the relevant planning approval was issued on 17 July 2020.