

UNDERGROUND POWER PROGRAM

315. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the Office of Energy's website, which states that the government of Western Australia has a long-term goal to have at least half the houses in Perth supplied by underground power by 2010, with a corresponding improvement in regional areas of the state. The minority Liberal government has yet to fund any new underground power projects.

- (1) How is the minister to achieve at least 50 per cent of Perth homes being serviced by underground power by 2010?
- (2) Will the minister commit to an immediate resumption of the underground power project in light of the government's action in raising electricity prices for consumers by 10 per cent today and a further 15 per cent on 1 July?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)-(2) Stage 4 of the underground power project is fully committed. There have been some issues with the funding of the project in some areas—for example at Withers in Bunbury. The funding commitment is 25 per cent local government, 25 per cent state government and 50 per cent consumer, but that project is fully funded. The future direction of the underground power project is a part of budget considerations, so I cannot make any comment until the budget is brought down.