

WESTERN POWER — NETWORK — GERALDTON

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

I refer to Western Power's current plans to reinforce the power network in the central Geraldton area.

- (1) What new substation and power connection infrastructure does the project require?
- (2) What is the estimated cost of the power network reinforcement project?
- (3) Does Western Power plan to use overhead poles, underground cables or a combination of both to link the existing Rangeway substation to a new Geraldton port substation, and what are the differences in costings for each of the three options?
- (4) What is the anticipated completion date for the project?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. It is a good question.

- (1) Western Power is currently assessing options to reinforce the Geraldton CBD and Geraldton port area. An option under consideration involves installing a new substation in the port area, along with a 132 000-volt—132-kilovolt—transmission line between the existing Rangeway substation and the potential new port substation. This option would also cater for reinforcement of the CBD network, allowing for improved power reliability and the future power requirements of the CBD area.
- (2) For the option of building a new port substation, the estimated cost of this power project is in the range of \$35 million to \$60 million depending on whether overhead, cable or a combination of both is used to connect the potential new substation.
- (3) The new transmission line could be built overhead, underground or a combination of the two between Rangeway and the potential new port substation. Western Power informs me that an underground cable connection would be approximately five to six times more expensive than an overhead line. As an indication, a double-circuit overhead line is estimated to cost approximately \$5 million, as opposed to \$25 million to \$30 million for double-circuit underground cables. However, maintenance costs for the coastal environment in Geraldton will be factored into the cost of overhead lines over the life of the asset. Western Power will continue to work with the community and other stakeholders, and will also consider all technical, environmental and social issues associated with overhead lines, including investments made by the City of Greater Geraldton, when selecting the preferred option.
- (4) This project is strongly driven by large port consumers and their required in-service date. At present, I understand the preferred solution will be identified by early 2013 with the earliest completion by 2015.