

KALBARRI, WESTERN POWER MAINTENANCE

Statement by Member for Greenough

MR J.P.D. EDWARDS (Greenough) [12.54 pm]: I use this opportunity to raise the grave concerns of the residents in the business community of Kalbarri. Due to the impending withdrawal of the last Western Power employee from the town, basic maintenance functions will now need to be performed by Western Power officers from Geraldton, the closest Western Power depot. That entails a four-hour round trip for two personnel who may be needed only to change a fuse on a power pole. That could take just 15 minutes. It is painfully obvious that this is an economically costly exercise for Western Power and leaves the township of Kalbarri in a position of uncertainty and anxiety. I raised this issue with the Minister for Energy through a grievance some six months ago. There must be a cheaper and simpler solution such as qualifying a local resident electrician in Kalbarri to manage basic maintenance problems on behalf of Western Power. On behalf of the Kalbarri community I call on the Minister for Energy to ensure that a qualified and accredited electrician with Western Power expertise be made available to the town for that purpose. It is not good enough for a township of 2 500 people with a growing tourism industry and a fishing industry relying on freezing and refrigeration to not have a reliable resident Western Power-accredited officer.