

STREETLIGHT POLE — ELECTRIC SHOCK — MANDURAH

157. Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN to the Minister for Energy:

Before I ask my question, on behalf of the member for Mirrabooka, I acknowledge the students from John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School who are in the public gallery today.

I refer to yesterday's terrible incident in Mandurah involving a 15-year-old boy who received a severe electric shock from a light pole that Western Power claimed had been deactivated and made safe.

- (1) How could this pole have been reactivated, and is Western Power responsible for the reactivation of the pole?
- (2) Given the blame game has started over who is responsible for this incident, will the Minister for Energy take responsibility for answering questions about why the pole was active when Western Power said that it had been made safe?
- (3) Who owns the pole and why did it lay bent over for five months and was not removed or repaired?

Dr M.D. NAHAN replied:

I would like to thank the member for the very valid question.

- (1)–(3) Two young children were injured, one seriously, when they touched a pole. It was actually a streetlight that had been hit by a car back in October last year and had fallen over. That is completely unacceptable. In this state, when something like that happens, EnergySafety makes an inquiry. That is underway. Western Power is also investigating, as is, I assume, the City of Mandurah. I will not make any conclusions until those studies are completed, as we need the facts. What the member mentioned is right—the pole was supposedly de-energised way back in October 2014. That is what I have been told. Clearly, something went wrong—electricity was in the pole and it impacted two young people yesterday. We have to get to the bottom of that, and that is what we will do. EnergySafety, as per its standard policy, will make a public statement about its findings. It is strange that it was supposedly de-energised all those months ago, but it was not. Let the experts get to it. The issue is who owns the pole. My understanding—EnergySafety will get to the bottom of that—is it was the City of Mandurah —

Mr D.A. Templeman: Are you not responsible for EnergySafety, though?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No, I am not.

Mr D.A. Templeman: Why do you not take responsibility?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: As far as I understand, the City of Mandurah owns the pole, though it relied on Western Power to de-energise it. The question is: why was the pole sitting on the ground for nearly five months? I do not know. We are not going to make a political issue of this. Kids' lives were at risk; they were injured. We are going through EnergySafety, which is the system we have here, to get to the bottom of it. When it does, we will report on it.