



Cr Charlie Zannino
Mayor, Swan Valley/Gidgegannup Ward Councillor
29 October 2009

PUBLIC



Hon Max Trenorden MLC
Chairman
Standing Committee on Public Administration
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr Trenorden

INQUIRY INTO WOODEN POWER POLES

Thank you for your letter dated 24 September 2009 requesting comment on issues being experienced with Western Power or Horizon Power in relation to wooden power poles.

I am advised by City staff that there appears to be a lack of Asset Management Procedures in relation to wooden poles and it is suggested they be replaced by undergrounding of power, where possible.

The West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bushfire Brigade has provided the following comments:

“Bushfire Risk

Wooden power poles in the Gidgegannup area pose a bushfire risk for the following reasons:

1. Pole top fires throw sparks onto nearby vegetation. Areas near the bases of power poles are rarely sufficiently cleared of flammable material.
2. Overhanging and nearby branches and trees impact the powerlines causing clashing, breakage and consequent sparking. While contractors have done much trimming, the risk remains significant.
3. Clashing of wires due to wind can also cause sparking and ignition.
4. Deterioration due to rot and termite activity can cause structural failure/collapse leading to clashing/sparking.

Factors 1 and 2 are common to any power poles, 3 is wooden pole specific.

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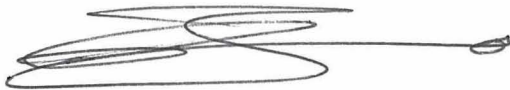
Bushfire Impact

Bushfires can impact directly on wooden power poles causing damage/collapse. The chief contributing factor would be proximity of flammable vegetation, in particular near the bases.

To minimise risk and impact of bushfires

1. Concrete or steel poles are preferred:
 - a. they are unlikely to be significantly impacted by nearby flames;
 - b. they will not deteriorate as wooden poles do.
2. Vegetation needs to be kept well clear of the pole bases so sparking from pole top fires is less likely to start bushfires and in the case of wooden poles for bushfires to impact upon them.
3. Nearby trees and branches need to be kept well trimmed back.”

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Zannino', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Cr Charlie Zannino
MAYOR