

Shire of Mundaring

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Office of the President
Our Ref: HD:ai 091009
ID: 58012

PUBLIC

16 October 2009



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 in relation to the above matter.

After consulting with The Shire's Health and Community Safety Officers, Bush Fire Control Officers and in turn with Bush Fire Brigades I have pleasure in providing the following comments with relevance to the terms of reference of the above inquiry:

- The equipment/fittings at the top of the pole is often a cause of fires, due to:
 - Fauna (Crows, Kookaburas, Possums) contacting high voltage conductors

Faulty insulators causing pole top fires

Faulty insulators or cross arms causing conductor failure or release

Pole top operations such as fuse rupture causing release of hot metal


- Vegetation contact is a significant problem (not specifically related to wooden poles). Vegetation clearance programs must be rigidly enforced.
- Conductors clashing in winds can cause fires. This is not due to the source material for the pole, rather it is a function of pole spacing and hardware.
- Wooden poles are very susceptible to fire damage and in the event of bush fire may disintegrate causing:
 - Electrical risks to firefighters
 - The effect of loss of power to the effected community who may rely heavily on power for pumps and lights, critical in a fire situation

- Substandard private power lines have caused fires
- Provide vegetation and litter removal around the base of fuse poles and switch poles so that pole top fuse and/or switch arcing does not ignite bush
- Provide a uniform means of access to the area around the base of power poles that are in locked areas such as compounds
- Require that all vegetation and litter be maintained clear of pole and pole base in locked areas
- Vegetation in easements under powerlines where they pass through bush reserves should be mechanically mulched to protect wooden poles from intense fires and increased flame heights. This would also enhance access to easements by firefighters.

I hope the above assists the Committee in its inquiry and thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.

Should you require any clarification of the above matters you may wish to contact the Shire's Manager Health and Community Safety Services, Mr Adrian Dyson by telephoning 9290 6666.

Yours sincerely



Cr Helen Dullard
SHIRE PRESIDENT