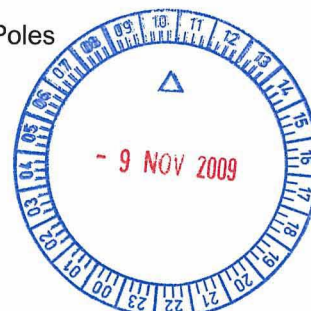


**PUBLIC**

**Stephenson, Cassandra**

**From:** alan.hill.wwes  
**Sent:** Friday, 6 November 2009 4:30 PM  
**To:** Stephenson, Cassandra  
**Subject:** Standing Committee on Public Administration Wood Power Poles

Helena River Catchment Group  
C/O Alan L Hill



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION: WOODEN POWER POLES

1. This submission is contributed on behalf of Helena River Catchment Group 2. We request an opportunity to speak to the Committee 3. We thank the Committee for the opportunity to comment 4. Current members of the Helena River Catchment Group committee contributed to a post graduate study in 1987 on landscaping and safety of wooden power poles and the manifold benefits and savings of life and money with underground power. The study report was entitled Putting Nature into the Nature Strip: Guidelines for the landscaping of roads. It was produced by Ms Patsy Sargent in 1987 for a Post Graduate Diploma in Planning at Curtin University. Its balanced approach and community benefit was recognised and it was distributed across Western Australia free of charge by Greening Western Australia. A hard copy of this report will be concurrently sent to the committee.
5. The funded systematic removal of trees and vegetation from Perth catchments over the past thirty years is now recognised by the Helena River Catchment Group as a continuing unnecessary environmental tragedy and a poor reflection of public administration in Western Australia.
6. The opportunity to have underground power, underground optic fibres and to continue to have undisturbed vegetation and retained verge and conservation reserve vegetation moderating climate was not recognised in the 1980's, and we submit should be required to occur now.
7. Identified Indigenous scarred wandoo heritage trees at the top of the catchment in Girrawheen Drive Gooseberry Hill are not being protected by Western Power as promised by Western Power several years ago by the promised installation of bundled cables. Although a few scarred trees have been protected, the 1km long scarred wandoo grove has instead been drastically cut annually by contractors and whole trees removed with the effect of a reduction in the extent of the area's aesthetics and heritage values.
8. Bundled cables have been placed in city centres in Kalamunda along roads where power should be underground.
9. Bundled cables have not been placed where low and high tension cross through vegetated Darling Range Regional Park reserves and wildlife corridors, and where they pose a fire risk. Instead natural vegetation canopy and understory has been removed causing weed grass and even higher fire risk.
10. Patsy Sargent's report showed cross subsidies encouraging unwisely power poles in preference to underground power. Her report showed that the health costs of accidents and pruning costs of trees were extreme.
11. Her report showed that a strategic approach to placing utility services underground was long overdue in 1987. It is even longer overdue now.
12. The Federal Government rollout of fibre optics should be used as a catalyst to further assist common trenching infrastructure and underground power establishment in Perth.
13. A number of recent fires in Gooseberry Hill were caused by overhead wires touching in strong winds. Spacers are now used where fires were started. The cables in these areas should be systematically placed in bundled cable and placed underground.
14. Energy conservation work in Davis California US in the 1970's showed that the presence of shady (un pruned!) street trees outside houses cut energy use for air conditioning by 50%. The removal of street tree canopy in Perth can be a likely significant cause of microclimate and heat sink changes for the worst and the need for greater airconditioner use. This is not consistent with the reductions in green house gas required currently.
15. Please propose a strategy for funding the common trenching of power in vegetated areas of Perth.
16. In the interim period please fund bundled cables to be placed where power crosses wildlife corridors and conservation reserves, and remove the need for complete clearing underneath overhead power switches with a comensurate decrease in conservation and heritage value and increase in fire risk from weed grass.

17. Thankyou again for the opportunity to comment on your investigation. We would welcome the opportunity to speak to the committee.

Alan L Hill

Helena River Catchment Group

Encl: Sargent P A (1987) Putting Nature into the Nature Strip: Guidelines for the Landscaping of Roads in Perth, Curtin University of Technology