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Underground Power Concerns Allayed

Dr Mike Nahan, the Member for Riverton appeals to the community of Parkwood West area to remain open minded about their suburb being converted to underground power.

"There is no doubt that there are many benefits to having underground power, especially when it comes to reliability and continuity of service," said Dr Nahan.

"And even those residents who already have underground power in their particular street would gain a benefit from the whole area being undergrounded because at the moment, their underground power connects to the overhead system at the end of their street, so they are still vulnerable to being affected by storm damage and blackouts."

Dr Nahan said he understood the community concerns regarding the cost of the underground power project.

"There is no doubt that in these tough economic times, the cost to individual ratepayers can be significant. The Office of Energy has recognised this affordability issue and is undertaking a public review of the program to address these problems," said Dr Nahan.

"They have also noted that this is the first time that the situation has arisen where some people in a proposed area already have underground power in their street."

"In November, if Parkwood West does get the final tick of approval for underground power, the Office of Energy's Steering Committee will look at the funding component in detail at that time."

"At the request of the Treasurer, the Economic Regulation Authority is also conducting an inquiry into the overall costs and benefits of the State Underground Power Program and what the appropriate share of funding should be between the State Government, individual households and Western Power."

Dr Nahan said some community concerns had also been raised about the independence of the underground power survey results.

"The Office of Energy and its Steering Committee have contracted the role to a professional survey company to ensure that the results are independent," said Dr Nahan.

Dr Nahan said other community concerns had been raised that the high voltage transmission lines in Vellgrove Avenue in Parkwood would not be included in the underground power project.

"It is standard operating procedure not to put these types of power lines underground because it costs around \$2 million per kilometer to do so and because these types of lines are more robust and are not usually damaged in storms," said Dr Nahan.

"There are many benefits to having access to full underground power and I encourage the community to consider all aspects of this important community project."

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