

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question on notice

20 SEP 2011

Tuesday, 16 August 2011

4506. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Energy.

With reference to regional power provider Horizon suspending the applications for connections to the grid for rooftop solar panels in Carnarvon after renewable energy threatened to overload the local electricity grid (Sunday Times, 13 May 2011), I ask

- (1) Why has Carnarvon's grid not been able to manage a mere 4.4 percent take up of renewable energy?
- (2) Why has Horizon suspended the connection of rooftop solar panels in Carnarvon?
- (3) Why has Horizon Power stated that people were still entitled to install and connect renewable energy systems up to 1.5KW in capacity?
- (4) Could further 1.5 KW systems, if installed, threaten to overload the grid?
- (5) What is the Minister doing to immediately rectify the situation to allow for people to take advantage of renewable power?

Answer

- (1) The non-dispatchable photovoltaic installations currently contribute approximately 17 per cent of daytime electricity generation to the Carnarvon community.
- (2) The safe, reliable supply of electricity to customers is the first priority of Horizon Power. Horizon Power has determined that additional connections of distributed renewable energy will increase the risk of not meeting these commitments. Horizon Power is currently analysing the relationship between distributed renewable energy and the system performance to understand how this risk can be better managed and depending on the results of this analysis, Horizon Power may be able to increase hosting capacity.
- (3) No applications for renewable energy systems are being approved unless they are feed in managed or dispatchable in nature.
- (4) Yes. The hosting capacity of the network to support renewables in Carnarvon has been exceeded.
- (5) Horizon Power is deploying a feed in management system to enable the installation of additional distributed renewable energy generation above hosting capacity. Horizon Power is currently negotiating a power purchase agreement for an additional 300 kW of

feed in managed photovoltaic generation in Carnarvon. In addition, Horizon Power is analysing the risk to safety, power quality and reliability from increasing hosting capacity of uncontrolled renewable energy and developing a number of other avenues to allow customers to connect renewable energy to Horizon Power's systems.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Callin'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial 'R'.

Minister for Energy