

14 July 2026

Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson BA MLA
Minister for Energy and Decarbonisation; Manufacturing; Skills and TAFE;
Pilbara
5th Floor Dumas House
2 Havelock Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Via: Minister.Sanderson@dpc.wa.gov.au

Dear Minister Sanderson,

**REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF COST APPORTIONMENT: NORTH BASSENDEAN
TARGETED UNDERGROUND POWER PROJECT**

I want to thank your team of advisors for facilitating the meeting on 4 June between the Town of Bassendean's CEO, Cameron Woods, and myself to discuss the North Bassendean Targeted Underground Power Project (TUPP).

The Town remains strongly supportive of the project and wants to work collaboratively with the State Government and Western Power to address emerging concerns and ensure the project proceeds successfully.

During the meeting, I raised concerns about the impact of project delays and cost escalation on community confidence. The project has experienced significant delays, during which total project costs have increased from approximately \$13.4 million in 2022 to \$25.7 million in 2026. The Town's contribution has also increased from approximately \$3.8 million to \$4.6 million.

Western Power's presentation on 10 March 2026 outlining the revised project costs provided the Town with insufficient time to undertake meaningful community consultation, assess the revised cost modelling, and consider the Co-funding Agreement before being advised that any delay in execution could result in the project being deferred or the existing overhead network being replaced on a like-for-like basis

As a consequence, the Town must fund Western Power's full cash call within the first year of the project while recovering costs from property owners over a number of years. This requires the Town and impacted ratepayers to carry the associated borrowing and interest costs throughout the repayment period, notwithstanding that Western Power receives full payment in the first year for the entire project – which is a poor outcome particularly for residents experiencing cost-of-living challenges.

Subsequent to our meeting a further issue has been raised by members of the community regarding the inclusion of Blockley Way, Culworth Road, Culworth Place, Mickleton Terrace and Elsfield Way within the project area. These streets have had street-wide underground electricity infrastructure and underground consumer connections since the mid-1980s.

Residents have questioned why they are being asked to contribute to a project intended to replace overhead electricity infrastructure when that outcome was achieved in their streets approximately 40 years ago.

The Town also understands that other nearby streets in Bassendean with existing underground electricity infrastructure have not been included within the chargeable project area. Applying a different approach to streets with similar underground infrastructure both within and outside the Western Power project area raises legitimate concerns about consistency, equity and fairness.

Where street-wide underground infrastructure already exists, the renewal, upgrade or integration of that State-owned infrastructure should not form part of the recoverable costs of the North Bassendean TUPP. The TUPP is intended to fund the conversion of overhead electricity networks to underground infrastructure. Applying the same cost recovery model to streets that already have underground infrastructure appears inconsistent with that purpose.

Local governments participate in TUPP programs as an instrument of the State Government, providing a mechanism through which a portion of project costs is recovered from ratepayers. That model supports the delivery of new underground networks, however it is difficult to justify where whole streets already have established underground infrastructure, and the works primarily involve the renewal or integration of existing State-owned assets.

Accordingly, I respectfully seek your support to:

- Direct Western Power to review the North Bassendean TUPP and its cost apportionment, with a view to reducing the costs attributable to the Town of Bassendean and, by extension, affected ratepayers.
- Recalculate the overall project cost to exclude properties on Blockley Way, Culworth Road, Culworth Place, Mickleton Terrace and Elsfield Way, recognising these streets already have street-wide underground electricity infrastructure.

This approach would preserve the integrity and intent of the TUPP while delivering a fair and fiscally responsible outcome. As project costs and resident contributions have not yet been finalised, there remains an opportunity to resolve this matter before financial obligations are imposed.

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the Town's request further. Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathryn Hamilton", written in a cursive style.

Kathryn Hamilton
MAYOR
TOWN OF BASSENDEAN