



ENQUIRIES: Dr. Bob Hay 9235 8128

OUR REF: 99/0275-03

YOUR REF:

Mr Paul Kelly
ECCC Chairman
Level 6
197 St Georges Terrace
PERTH 6000

Dear Mr Kelly,

The Department of Indigenous Affairs (DIA) has considered relevant sections of the Electricity Code Consultative Committee's (ECCC) *Review of the Code of Conduct (For the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers)* draft review report February 2007. DIA has paid particular attention to Part 9, 'Pre-payment Meters in Remote Communities', and supports the changes to the Code of Conduct noted in the draft review report. It should be noted that amendments to clause 9.6(b) of the Code of Conduct have already been approved by the ECCC.

DIA supports the changes contained in Part 9 of the draft review report because these changes will enable pre-payment meters to operate effectively in Indigenous communities. Both the Commonwealth and Western Australian governments are parties to the implementation of the Aboriginal and Remote Communities Power Supply Project (ARCPSP). Also, the WA government continues to regularise electricity for town reserve communities.

DIA is concerned that, because this Code of Conduct only regulates electricity provided to Indigenous communities via the ARCPSP or the Town Reserves Regularisation Program, other communities that have 'unregulated' pre-payment meters are not subject to provisions of the Code. Electricity to these communities is provided via a master meter by Horizon or Synergy, and then distributed to customers via pre-payment meters, with this system overseen by an Aboriginal corporation or a community housing organisation. Such a system does not provide the level of service to customers that is available under the Code of Conduct.

And so, consideration should be given in future as to how such electricity system provisions can be regulated. This is at issue not just due to the level of service needed, but also because more communities will likely be regularised in the future, since this is an aim of the *Bilateral Agreement on Indigenous Affairs 2006-2010*.

Yours sincerely /

Irevor Iann
Assistant Director, Policy and Innovation Branch
5 April 2007