



**Shire of Ashburton**

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9 March 2018

Attn: Mr Noel Ryan  
Acting Director, Energy Networks  
Public Utilities Office  
Department of Treasury  
Locked Bag 11  
Cloisters Square WA 6850

By email: [PUOSubmissions@treasury.wa.gov.au](mailto:PUOSubmissions@treasury.wa.gov.au)

Dear Mr Ryan

**Design Consultation Paper – Regulatory Framework for the Pilbara Electricity Networks**

We note the Design Consultation Paper recently published for the new regulatory framework proposed to facilitate third party access to the North West Interconnected System (NWIS).

The Shire of Ashburton is concerned that the proposed regulatory regime designed to facilitate third party access will be restricted to Karratha and Port Hedland, despite the Public Utilities Office receiving feedback from various stakeholders (including City of Karratha and Town of East Pilbara) during the initial consultation process that the Pilbara as a whole should be included in the process.

The Shire of Ashburton covers an area in excess of 105,000 square kilometres, including the coastal town of Onslow; and the inland towns Tom Price, Paraburdoo and Pannawonica. The Shire hosts a range of significant mining and resource operations, contributing over 30% of Gross Regional Product to the Gross State Product. The Shire has supported recent Horizon Power initiatives in Onslow including the Pilbara Underground Power Project and the Onslow Power Project. Inland, the mining towns are supplied by Rio Tinto's private electricity network.

Limiting the scope of design to exclude areas such as Onslow and the inland Pilbara does not consider the broader benefits and economy of scale that may be realised by a more holistic approach, and restricts the ability to deliver better outcomes for electricity consumers in the Pilbara region and assist in driving regional development.



In particular, further development of 'junior' mining and resource activities may be limited by the lack of universal access to electricity infrastructure, which may be an additional incentive for third party providers.

The provision for other network owners (such as Rio Tinto in the inland Pilbara) to 'opt-in' to the regime under their own accord does not provide any commitment for future inclusion, particularly when Rio Tinto stated in its submission that "We therefore do not support further interconnection of the Rio Tinto electricity network with other providers or customers on the basis that it poses a significant risk to our operations and the communities to whom we supply power".

Based on this information, and the significant power requirements of users within the Shire of Ashburton, we request that the scope of design for the regulatory framework be extended to include all Pilbara regions such as the Shire of Ashburton and Town of East Pilbara.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Paull', written over a large, stylized, and somewhat illegible signature.

**Rob Paull**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Shire of Ashburton