WILLEM WESTRA VAN HOLTHE
MEMBER FOR KATHERINE
MEDIA RELEASE

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INSULATING REMOTE AREAS FROM A POLICY BACK-FLIP

Member for Katherine Willem Westra van Holthe has written to Federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett to honour the Commonwealth Government’s $1600 Home Insulation Program pledge.

Earlier this month, Mr Garrett announced the Commonwealth was reducing the rebate from $1600 to $1200, effective from November 16th.

Mr Garrett announced that transitional arrangements would apply for anybody who had accepted a quote but were waiting for work to be done – provided that work was completed by November 16th.

But Mr Westra van Holthe wrote to Mr Garrett seeking an assurance existing contracts – and contracts signed before November 16th – receive the original $1600 rebate.

“The changes he announced are grossly unfair and discriminate against householders in remote areas like Katherine,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“I pointed out to Mr Garrett that the closest credible insulation installer to Katherine was 320km away in Darwin,” Mr Westra van Holthe said.

“Due to occupational health and safety regulations, installers are only able to complete the insulation at a rate of 1 house each morning.

“As a result, there is a considerable backlog of houses to be completed in Katherine – with contracts having been entered into long before the announcement was made by the Minister to reduce the rebate.

“Why should people in remote areas have to pay an additional $400 because Peter Garrett’s original policy announcement was flawed?”

In his letter, Mr Westra van Holthe asked Mr Garrett to consider the legal implications should contracts become compromised as a result of his policy back-flip.

“Mr Garrett would be well served changing the transitional arrangements to allow existing contracts to be fulfilled under their original terms.”

Further comment: Willem Westra van Holthe 0414 778 430