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**Undergrounding of Nightcliff Power Cost Blow-Out**

Shadow Minister for Essential Services, Dr Richard Lim said that he has been concerned about rumours that the cost of undergrounding power in Nightcliff has blown out and work is behind schedule.

Dr Lim said that he put questions to Power and Water Authority at the Government Owned Corporation Scrutiny hearings today, but was disappointed that many of the answers were not available and the questions had to be taken on notice.

“All there have been rumours that the cost of the project to underground power in Nightcliff has blown out significantly and that the project is behind schedule,” Dr Lim said.

“And when I put my concerns to Power and Water, it was not able to confirm for me what the cost of the project has been to date and how much more it has spent on the project so far above its original estimate.

“All I could get from Power and Water was that over the last 12 months a further 80 allotments in Nightcliff have had their power underground and that the costs have increased by 20% per allotment above what was originally estimated to cost. That is a significant blow out in costs.

“At the rate it is going, and at costs that are now 20% above estimates, it is unlikely that the project can be completed within the next 20 years.

“The rest of the northern suburbs will be waiting a long time to get power underground.

“Several questions have been put on notice for Power and Water to respond to once it is able to get the figures together. The questions were:
- What is the stage of the project at this time?
- What percentage of the project has been completed? and
- What has it cost so far?

“What all this tells me is that the Martin Labor government’s promise made 4 years ago was a badly thought out promise, and has now lumbered Power and Water with a project that it finds difficult to fulfil.”