



Funding boost for power poles

MERREDIN and Koorda will share in a \$154.5 million injection recently approved by the state government to enhance the electricity network in the regions/districts.

The funding will be used for Western Power's pole replacement and reinforcement programs, as well as bushfire mitigation.

Merredin will benefit from 540 wood pole replacements, 232 wood pole reinforcements and 205 pole top reinforcements.

Koorda will benefit from 389 wood pole replacements and 219 wood pole reinforcements.

Additionally, bushfire mitigation work to be carried out includes installing 29 fire safe fuses and improvements to more than 300 overhead lines in Merredin and Koorda.

Agricultural Region MLC Brian Ellis said the upgrades would ensure rural residents had a secure and reliable power supply.

"For farmers, in particular, power outages mean they lose internet access to market reports and weather forecasts, they lose airconditioning in the bush heat and they can't operate shed equipment," Mr Ellis said.

Energy Minister Peter Collier said the increased investment would continue to improve safety and power reliability for the whole of the South West Interconnected System.

"There is a challenge in managing an ageing infrastructure that requires increasing maintenance and replacement," he said.

"The government will continue to invest in the safety and reliability of our electricity network, as part of Western Power's long-term improvement plan."

Western Power managing director Doug Aberle said funding was being invested in priority areas, such as the Wheatbelt.

He said the upgrades would begin straight away, but resources would have to be redirected if other emergency work arose.