

**MANNINGHAM**  
BALANCE OF CITY AND COUNTRY

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House of representatives Standing Committee on Economics, Finance and Public Administration	
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Secretary: .....	

8 November, 2002

Mr David Hawker MP  
Chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics,  
Finance and Public Administration  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Hawker,

**Inquiry into Local Government and Cost Shifting**

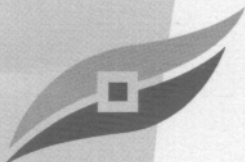
Firstly, could I thank you and the Committee for taking the time to hear from Local Government representatives at the Public Hearing held on Tuesday 5 November 2002 in Alice Springs.

You will recall at the presentation a question related to cost shifting for the clearance of vegetation around power lines and there was an undertaking given by Manningham City Council to advise the Committee with specific detail.

Tree clearance in Victoria is done under legislation within the Electrical Safety Act and under a Code of Practice for Electric Line Clearance and Local Government has the responsibility for clearance of vegetation of street trees.

This specifically impacts on Manningham City Council in that the owner of the network asset previously had responsibility for clearing around power lines and the standards were set and regulated by gazettal from the Chief Electrical Inspector. Standards and regulations around power lines became the centre of significant debate some years ago in that Council's and the community demanded a more responsible approach than the heavy lopping that was undertaken at the time. To add to this, the utility companies also have a choice in that they can upgrade their power lines from naked wire to aerial bundle conductors however they demand that Council as the owner of the vegetation, maintain clearance around the power line asset and subsequently regulated to require Council's to put in management plans for pruning vegetation along power lines.

In terms of cost shifting, tree management and overall risk of working around naked power lines is high and there is existing technology such as aerial bundle conductors that offer low risk, particularly in those where bushfires may be of concern and there is a lack of will to invest to improve in safety and the local amenity.



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I trust that this response answers the query raised at the hearing and once again thank you for the opportunity to address the committee.

On behalf of Manningham City Council, we look forward to the outcome of the Inquiry and an overall better deal for local government.

Yours sincerely

**GEOFF DRAPER**  
**Director Community Services**

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