

ORIGINAL



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BY:

**MINISTER FOR TOURISM; RACING AND GAMING; SMALL BUSINESS;
DEFENCE ISSUES; CITIZENSHIP AND MULTICULTURAL INTERESTS**

Our Ref: 70-07374

Mr Garry Itzstein
Executive Director, NECA WA
National Electrical & Communications Association
PO Box 782
BALCATTWA WA 6914

Dear Mr Itzstein

SYNERGY AND THE SOLAR PANEL AND BATTERY MARKET

Thank you for your letter dated 10 January 2018 regarding Synergy's entry into the solar panel and battery market and its impact on small businesses in the industry.

The Government's Plan for Jobs makes current and future small businesses a priority in order to drive employment and economic prosperity in the State. This includes a focus on supporting the growth and diversification of small businesses by growing the economy and ensuring a fair operating environment.

I am concerned to read about the competitive pressures on small businesses operating in the solar panel and battery storage industry from the State-owned electricity generator and retailer, Synergy. Though its entry in recent years into the solar industry is not a core business activity, I appreciate that it is likely to be having an impact on those businesses involved in this highly competitive market.

Given the situation, I have written to the Treasurer and Minister for Energy, the Hon Ben Wyatt MLA, and asked him to investigate this matter further. Specifically, I have asked that he review the role of Synergy in the solar panel and battery storage industry in regard to competing with the private sector and whether this complies with the Government's Competitive Neutrality Policy.

I will advise you of the outcome of the Treasurer's consideration of this.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R' followed by a long horizontal stroke.

**HON PAUL PAPALIA CSC MLA
MINISTER FOR SMALL BUSINESS**

19 FEB 2018