




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Gympie Electorate, Power Supply

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (7.13 pm): I table a nonconforming petition from 869 residents and a photo of a substation on Curra Estate Road.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding the upgrade and establishment of infrastructure to ensure a sustainable and reliable power supply in Curra and surrounds [314](#).

Tabled paper: Photograph depicting a Curra substation site [315](#).

This petition adds to the one organised by Celeste Rigby and tabled on Tuesday. Curra residents are fed up. They are forced to endure rolling extended power outages. It is unacceptable. *Gympie Today* called it Third World conditions. One resident said, 'It feels like we are stuck in the Middle Ages.' There have been more than a dozen outages since just before Christmas. Some have lasted days; all during heatwaves. It is untenable. This has been ongoing for decades and the situation keeps getting worse. Constant assurances it is being fixed are unreliable. Claiming they have been caused by weather events is gaslighting. Residents are keeping tabs on when and how long these outages are. They know they are not planned and caused by weather events. They are sick of the excuses.

When you gaslight residents they wonder what you are hiding. Has this resulted from years of ignoring problems and deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of care, of maintenance and planning for a growing region? The government has form. Residents point to an unused substation which is overgrown with weeds and is a dumping site for equipment. Ergon says it is for anticipated future development. The site was purchased more than a decade ago. Since then 140 homes have been built just 200 metres away.

The blackouts are creating significant risks and massive health, personal and financial hardship. A palliative care nurse had to transfer a dying patient to the hospital because medical equipment and air conditioning would not work. Ergon told her to call emergency services. An elderly couple were trapped in their electric controlled chairs. Residents are vulnerable when fridges do not work, medications which require temperature controlled storage are compromised, personal hygiene is compromised, communications do not work and essential home healthcare equipment does not work, home water pumps do not work, you cannot shower, toilets do not flush, life-saving equipment either does not work or is damaged, the same with computers and CPAP machines. Residents are cut off, unable to communicate because they cannot charge phones, devices or access TVs. Under soaring cost-of-living pressures the last thing people need is lost productivity from the inability to work from home, unreliable medical equipment and appliances or lost food. Many on low incomes or pensions feel forced to buy generators and employ an electrician to ensure connection. The minister says it will be fixed at the end of the month; Ergon says the middle of the year. No-one has faith.