

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 216

asked on Tuesday, 27 April 2004

MR HOPPER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY (MR ROBERTSON) —

QUESTION:

Is he aware of the power shortages in the Jondaryan and Bowenville areas and what are his plans to address this problem?

ANSWER:

I am aware that, despite considerable work undertaken in recent times, the Bowenville feeder has not been performing as expected over the recent storm season. Ergon Energy is closely monitoring the performance of the feeder.

The Bowenville feeder is a long rural feeder that traverses from Oakey towards Jondaryan and then out to Bowenville.

Approximately one half of the outages on the feeder over the previous 12 months, related to the Bowenville Single Wire Earth Return (SWER). These outages have affected the 40 customers supplied from that spur off the Jondaryan feeder. Ergon Energy has advised that all of the outages outside the October 2003 to March 2004 storm season on the Bowenville SWER were planned outages during upgrades to the SWER.

Ergon Energy has recently undertaken works to improve the power supply which have included the completion of the vegetation management program on the Jondaryan and Bowenville sections of the Jondaryan feeder. The vegetation management program on the Bowenville SWER section of the feeder is to be completed in the 2004-05 financial year. Further maintenance works on the Bowenville SWER were completed earlier this year.

In 2002-03, sectionalisers were installed along the Jondaryan feeder to allow for supply to be maintained to more customers when faults occur. The key benefit of this has been to customers further back up the line, including customers in the Jondaryan township who can now be returned to supply sooner, particularly when an outage occurs at the end of the feeder near the Bowenville SWER.

Further improvement works include partial powerline upgrades to the Jondaryan feeder backbone to improve capacity and reliability, and revised voltage regulation settings to improve voltage at the SWER end of the feeder. The distribution transformers have also been upgraded to improve local voltages.

To improve the reliability of supply to the area, the 33 kilovolt Carrington Road feeder which supplies the 11 kilovolt Jondaryan feeder, is to be included in Ergon Energy's new asset inspection program for early 2004-05.

In addition, the upgraded capacity of the Oakey Substation should generally improve reliability for the Toowoomba to Dalby region.

In February this year, the Government announced an independent review of the performance of Queensland's electricity distribution networks. The independent panel is currently considering the information provided through the public submission process and other investigations. It is anticipated that the independent panel will report its findings and recommendations to the Government.