

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 807

asked on Tuesday, 17 August 2004

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

QUESTION:

With reference to the “Secret Hit List” as mentioned in the article in The Courier-Mail of 17 August—

- (1) What is the number of load shedding incidents in the past twelve months and the areas affected from July 2003 – June 2004?
- (2) Will he list the towns/areas affected in order of the number of times each has been affected?
- (3) Will he list the number of load shedding incidents from July 2002 – June 2003 and where?
- (4) What formula is used to decide where the load shedding occurs?
- (5) Does Queensland have the ability to isolate its consumers from interstate catastrophes?

ANSWER:

(1) (2) (3) (4) & (5)

On 13 August 2004, load shedding in Queensland was not due to Queensland Generators being out of service.

It resulted from an explosion in a transformer in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales which triggered load shedding across the national electricity network.

The Power System Incident on 13 August 2004 was the first major load shedding incident in the National Electricity Market comprising New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, ACT and Queensland. It is the first and only incident to impact on the five States and Territory.

There have been no major load shedding incidents as a consequence of system security reasons on the interconnected electricity grid which have impacted Queensland in the two year period from 1 July 2002 to 30 June 2004.

Under the National Electricity Code, load shedding blocks are designed to ensure no supply interruptions occur to essential infrastructure and community assets, that is, hospitals, large industrial users, community and emergency service providers such as airports and railways, police, ambulance, fire services and the SES.

In light of the events of 13 August, I have requested that ENERGEX and Ergon review their loadshedding protocols to minimise inconvenience to domestic customers while ensuring essential services maintain an uninterrupted power supply.

In joining the National Electricity Market in December 1998, the Queensland Government's priority has been to provide a safe, secure and reliable electricity supply to consumers to minimise the possibility and impact of the events that occurred on 13 August 2004.

In fact, Queensland has had the greatest level of investment in committed generation since the national market for electricity began in 1998, equal to approximately 3,750 megawatts of generation capacity.

Of the \$6.3 billion which has been committed to new generation investment in the National Electricity Market, \$4.7 billion of that investment has occurred in Queensland.

The ability for power to flow freely across State boundaries provides Queensland consumers with insurance in the unlikely event that multiple power stations fail in Queensland. The competitive advantage the National Electricity Market has delivered for Queensland is reflected by the ability of Queensland generators to sell excess power to the southern states.

The market outcomes from reforms to the Queensland electricity industry have clearly delivered substantial benefits to customers, through the provision of low cost power to Queensland businesses and increasing the competitiveness of industry in the State.