

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

**No. 943**

**asked on Tuesday, 31 August 2004**

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MR LINGARD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY (MR MICKEL)—

QUESTION:

With reference to Ergon staffing levels for 2001, 2002 and 2003 –

Will he provide details for each Ergon office (reported separately) (a) for each of the above years, what is the number of full-time permanent (i) electrical field workers, (ii) apprentices and (iii) other staff employed and (b) as at 30 August for each of the above years, what is the number of full-time (i) electrical field worker positions, (ii) apprentice positions and (iii) other staff roles that were unstaffed?

ANSWER:

In answer to the Member's question, I am advised as follows:-

(a) (i), (ii) and (iii)

As at August	Electrical Field Workers	Apprentices	Other Staff
2001	1399*	178	1570 <sup>#</sup>
2002	1807*	144	1968 <sup>#</sup>
2003	2149*	134	2236 <sup>#</sup>

\* Includes Electrical Field Workers employed by contractors to Ergon of 214 in 2001, 626 in 2002 and 925 in 2003.

<sup>#</sup> Includes Other Staff employed by contractors to Ergon of 160 in 2001, 358 in 2002 and 532 in 2003.

(b) Ergon does not keep historical data on unstaffed positions.

Ergon has developed field workforce plans to address the staffing requirements of maintaining the distribution network to the standards recommended in the ESDS Review Report. These plans, which are being progressively implemented, require increased recruitment of field staff. In a climate where such skills are in demand nationally, this is being achieved via national recruitment campaigns using a variety of channels and by expanding apprentice and trainee programs.

Substantial gains in cost effectiveness and efficiency have been achieved since the formation of Ergon Energy in 1999. These gains have been achieved through restructuring the organisational along business rather than geographical lines and progressively moving to a more appropriate workforce skills and mix to manage peaks in work volumes.

Changes to internal staff numbers since 1999 have been achieved consistent with the policy of no forced redundancies as required by the State Government and in accordance with the Corporation's enterprise bargaining agreement. Changes to workforce mix overall, including the establishment of more sustainable contracting arrangements, have been made with due regard to regional employment implications, ensuring that total internal and external field staff numbers have increased over the period and allowing service standards to be maintained and/or improved.

In line with the EDSD Review Report recommendation 10.7, Ergon is developing a fully documented 5-10 year resourcing plan for completion by 31 December 2004.

Consistent with this recommendation, Ergon is planning to significantly increase resourcing over 2004-05. Currently, 78 apprentices, 57 field positions and 47 other positions are under active recruitment.