

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 347

asked on 7 May 2014

MR KATTER ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND WATER SUPPLY (MINISTER McARDLE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the cutting of 55 Ergon jobs in Townsville which threatens the service delivery levels in western areas such as Mount Isa with delays for switchboard approvals now extending from what was normally 48 hours up to three weeks—

How will the Minister resolve this inhibitor to growth in an industry rich area in the context of workforce rationalisations?

ANSWER:

I advise that at no time has Ergon Energy announced that it is “cutting 55 jobs in Townsville”. As part of its Field Force Automation (FFA) project Ergon Energy proposes to centralise its dispatch function to one location in Rockhampton. This will see 48 full-time equivalent Centralised Dispatch positions and 7 Business Support positions based in Alma Street, Rockhampton.

Statements regarding switchboard approval timeframes and the impact to service level delivery are misinformed. The FFA project is expected to provide systems and technologies to enhance Ergon Energy’s operational performance through centralised dispatch and automating field force operations by using field computers and smart-technology devices. Currently, the management and allocation of work to field staff is primarily driven by paper-based processes.

The project will enable business efficiencies across a variety of tasks including planned work, asset maintenance, electronic time-sheeting, switching and field mapping. Centralised dispatch will provide a single-point of accountability for Ergon Energy’s dispatch function and provide improved customer service delivery and an enhanced customer experience.

The FFA project is aligned to Ergon Energy’s strategy to reduce operational expenditure while maintaining a safe and reliable electricity network and will help ease the upward pressure on electricity prices for customers in regional Queensland.