

Question on Notice
No. 1409
Asked on Tuesday, 29 November 2022

MR N DAMETTO ASKED MINISTER FOR ENERGY, RENEWABLES AND HYDROGEN AND MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS AND PROCUREMENT (HON M DE BRENNI)

With reference to power outages at Black River and between Bluewater and Balgal Beach continuing to aggravate Ergon Energy customers with some residents reporting up to 6 unplanned outages over the past week alone (21-28 November 2022) and as the reliability of electrical distribution and transmission assets in this area continues to be a major contributing factor to these outages—

Will the Minister commit to funding the necessary maintenance and upgrades to the Energy Queensland infrastructure to ensure reliable power distribution to this area?

ANSWER

Ergon Energy Network, a subsidiary business of Energy Queensland, is committed to delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity supply to regional Queensland communities, including Townsville's Northern Beaches.

With respect to the power outages at Black River and between Bluewater and Balgal Beach, I am advised that Ergon Energy Network's electrical asset maintenance program identified an issue with the electrical equipment at the Ingham zone substation. As a result, some reconfiguration of the local electricity network has been required to ensure the safety of the community, Ergon Energy personnel, and to protect the substation equipment.

This temporary reconfiguration of the local network has meant that the 38 kilometre long 66 kilovolt powerline that normally supplies customers between Black River and Rollingstone now temporarily supplies an additional 176 kilometres of high voltage powerline resulting in additional exposure to any faults.

This has resulted in additional power outages to those communities and longer duration transient power outages due to storm activity since late October 2022. While Ergon Energy takes the best endeavours possible to maintain the highest reliability of power supply, it is impossible to guarantee that customers will not experience any power outages, particularly as its network can be impacted by external factors such as severe storms, damaging winds, lightning, vegetation, and animals.

Ergon Energy Network has fast tracked an upgrade project to replace the equipment concerned, with this project already well progressed. The delivery of the project has been impeded by supply chain issues associated with critical materials and equipment required for the works. It is expected that, weather permitting, the project should be completed by the end of December 2023. The estimate for this network upgrade is \$470,000.

Once these vital works are complete, Energy Queensland has advised that the electricity network will be returned to its normal configuration.