

**Question on Notice
No. 877
Asked on Tuesday, 30 August 2022**

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

With reference to 16 power outages in Highfields in the last 18 months—

Will the Minister advise what infrastructure upgrades are planned to ensure reliable power is provided to this area?

ANSWER

In the Highfields and Meringandan areas, four projects targeting distribution feeder infrastructure and improving network reliability and protection capabilities are being undertaken at an expected cost of \$1 million. This is in alignment with Ergon Energy Network's ambition to provide safe and reliable power supply to all its Regional Queensland customers, and will be completed over the next three years.

Ergon Energy Network has advised that a review of the distribution network to Highfields revealed there are no systemic issues causing increased outages in this area. The severe weather experienced across 2021/22 has been the major contributor to outages, typically caused by vegetation contacting powerlines, lightning strikes and powerlines clashing due to high winds.

In addition to these projects, in the broader region of North Toowoomba and north of Highfields, improvement works are planned on Ergon Energy's high and low voltage networks to maintain the safe operation of the infrastructure in the area.

The 2022-23 State Budget provided funding for a new \$16.1M Kleinton Substation, which when completed in future years will increase network capacity and improve the security of electricity supply to the region.

In March 2021, Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk announced that Toowoomba would be one of five locations across regional Queensland to host a large-scale network connected battery as a part of a trial undertaken by Energy Queensland, aimed at supporting the state's continual uptake of renewable energy.

The Toowoomba battery, located at Kleinton, is currently energised and undergoing performance testing ahead of it becoming fully operational towards the end of October 2022.

The battery will assist in managing network capacity and stability, as well as support the uptake of further rooftop Solar PV systems in the Highfields area.