

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1498

asked on Tuesday 9 November 2004

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

QUESTION:

Will he update the House on the work undertaken by ENERGEX to improve the availability of information about supply status?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for his Question.

ENERGEX has invested significantly in the upgrade of services provided by its main contact centre. Over 150 additional staff have been trained in order to increase the core staff capability to answer telephone calls in times of network emergency. Under an alliance with Telstra, new capacity has been installed to allow up to 4,000 calls per hour to be answered by customer service representatives. In addition, capability has been added to the automatic Interactive Voice Response (IVR) information system which can now provide basic power outage information based on the caller's locality for up to 25,000 calls per hour. Beyond this capability, the ENERGEX telephone network can provide recorded power outage information to an additional 75,000 calls per hour. This represents a world class capability for utilities.

In addition, new computer facilities within the contact centre display detailed information regarding previous calls and fault restoration progress related to a customer's specific address, significantly increasing the timeliness and detail of power outage information available to customers.

Through the media, in particular radio, frequent updates of power outage extent and restoration times are available. ENERGEX has established a major event media centre at the network control centre, with facilities to provide detailed and up to date information to media outlets. A formal arrangement has been established with community radio station 96.5 FM to enable ENERGEX to call in local broadcasting facilities at any time of day, and receive dedicated programming time for the provision of power outage restoration details. A public internet information service is also available at times of storm-related, or major power outages, giving details of areas affected by power outages and expected times of restoration.

ENERGEX has also invested in a wide-ranging training program and provision of specialist communication facilities which allow field staff to provide up-to-date information, such as arrival time to the fault, repair progress, cause and expected time of repair. This information is automatically relayed to the external information systems, including the contact centre, the automated telephone information systems, the internet and the media.

I am advised by ENERGEX that in the storms of early November 2004, the impact of the investment in these improvements was evident. The average time for customers to find out about power outages was halved, and providing information from radio broadcasts resulted in calls to the ENERGEX contact centre from customers inquiring about supply restoration falling by almost 30 percent.

In October ENERGEX released a detailed summer readiness public information campaign. The '*Get Set for Summer*' campaign provides the community with information on what ENERGEX is doing toward strengthening the network and improving its communication with customers, and importantly advises the community, residents have a role to play in being properly prepared for storm season.