

Andrew Barr MLA

Chief Minister

Treasurer

Minister for Climate Action

Minister for Trade, Investment and Economic Development

Minister for Tourism

Member for Kurrajong

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE**Questions on Notice Paper No 44****28 JUNE 2024****Question No. 2038****JAMES MILLIGAN MLA:** To ask the Treasurer

- (1) What is the Government doing to prevent power outages (occurring up to three times a night) being experienced by constituents in Casey, Ngunnawal, Nicholls, Taylor, Moncrieff, and Jacka.
- (2) What compensation is available for residents and businesses that have suffered from damages caused by these power outages.
- (3) Are there infrastructure upgrades planned for these suburbs to ensure a reliable and consistent power supply.
- (4) Will the Government be conducting a thorough investigation into the causes of the repeated power outages in these suburbs.

ANDREW BARR MLA - The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

- (1) Power outages are the responsibility of Evoenergy, which owns, operates and maintains the ACT electricity network in accordance with rules and standards set by the Utilities Technical Regulator (ACT), the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and the Australian Energy Market Operator. As part of its involvement in the Energy and Climate Change Ministerial Council, the Government has a role in supporting transition of the energy system to net zero while maintaining affordable, secure and reliable energy, through improving regulatory certainty for renewable energy, storage and nationally significant transmission projects. The Territory continues to work with the Commonwealth, State and Territory Energy and Climate Change Ministers, as well as relevant energy institutions, through that Council, to support this outcome.

In addition, the Government is investing in battery technology at all levels to boost grid resilience. The Territory has:

- partnered with Eku Energy to deliver a 500MWh battery at Williamsdale that recently received Development Approval;
- has installed 9 site-scale batteries at Government facilities, with a further 2 to be installed early next year; and
- has partnered with the Commonwealth and Evoenergy to deliver 3 medium-sized neighbourhood scale batteries in Casey, Dickson and Fadden.

In relation to the localised Gungahlin outages, Evoenergy's website acknowledges ongoing network faults affecting customers in parts of Casey, Taylor, Moncrieff, and Ngannawall. Since February 2024, electricity outages have increased in these areas for a range of reasons and, most recently, exacerbated by the cold weather and increased load on the two main feeder cables supplying power to the area.

Evoenergy advises that it has carried out a series of actions in response to the outages experienced by the affected suburbs, including conducting repairs to the network across the affected areas, investigating the causes of the outages, and establishing communications with affected customers.

- (2) Under the Consumer Protection Code 2020 (the Code), customers are entitled to rebates from the energy retailer or energy distributor if they fail to meet Guaranteed Service Levels (GSLs). These amounts range from \$20 to \$300 per failure and depend on the severity and type of failure. These rebates are automatically credited to the affected customers.

Customers can also make a claim for compensation for damage to their property (such as to appliances or for loss of food in an unplanned outage). Claims are assessed on an individual basis and compensation offered by Evoenergy reflects the fair and reasonable cost for loss or damage. Further information is available at: <https://www.evoenergy.com.au/Your-Energy/Make-a-claim>.

- (3) Evoenergy's five-year network plan for the 2024-29 period, recently approved by the AER, includes network developments to support increasing electricity demand in the Gungahlin area.
- (4) As noted above, Evoenergy is responsible for the management of power outages in the ACT and is required to meet performance standards. These include national standards regulated by the AER) and jurisdictional standards set by the ACT Government and regulated by the UTR.

The Technical Code(s), made under the *Utilities (Technical Regulation) Act 2014* (the Act), sets out the network performance targets which Evoenergy is required to report against every year. Evoenergy was compliant for the 2022-23 Financial Year.

The network performance is reported as performance of ‘the entire network for over a year’ and does not report at either the suburb level and/or any specific period of the year. If any reduced network performance is identified in the 2023-24 Financial Year reporting, the UTR can direct Evoenergy to undertake further detailed investigation on the reduced performance.

The UTR will engage with Evoenergy on the recent outage issues in Gungahlin as part of its ongoing processes on performance matters relevant to the objectives of the Act and/or relevant Technical Codes.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Andrew Barr MLA
Treasurer

Date: 29.7.24

This response required 400 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$688.