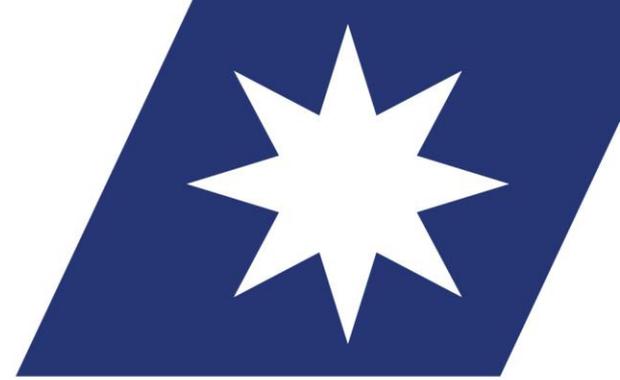


NICK DAMETTO

Member for Hinchinbrook



MEDIA RELEASE

20/12/2018

Ergon meeting addresses community concerns

A MEETING to discuss community concerns over several recent power outages in Townsville's northern beaches has left Hinchinbrook MP Nick Dametto feeling confident in the area's electricity network.

Organised by Ergon Energy last week, the meeting involved Ergon managers, Bluewater community representatives and Mr Dametto himself to address several topics including growing frustration by the local community over recent outages, an explanation for why those outages occurred and an overview of the electricity network in the northern beaches.

"I am pleased Ergon took this proactive step to address community concerns about the spate of recent power outages in the Bluewater area," Mr Dametto said.

"It was important Ergon did this to allay fears that there was insufficient infrastructure to cope with a growing population and bust the myth of load shedding, which does not occur."

Ergon managers have assured the network has more than adequate capacity to handle electricity demands in the Bluewater area and the network was well sized to manage peak demand in the evening.

Backup generators are also available in the event of outages and other generators are available to deal with peak load demand, include a gas-fired generator at Yabulu.

The meeting addressed the major unplanned outages of December 13, which was attributed to a lightning strike which struck some equipment on the network. Other faults to have occurred this year have been attributed to bats making contact with a section of powerline along Toolakea Road. The Toolakea automatic switch failed during this period which resulted in the whole feeder being off supply for a number of hours instead of just the Toolakea section for five seconds. Lightning has also been a contributor to the faults after it damaged a transformer.

"While I understand how frustrating it has been for residents to cop these outages, mother nature is an unpredictable beast and Ergon crews work as fast they can to isolate the fault and restore power," Mr Dametto said.

"It's important to realise the network includes an immense array of poles, wires and transformers that are susceptible the elements.

"I was encouraged to hear that Ergon is planning to install a number of Line Fault Indicators in the Bluewater area, which will help to tell crews where a fault is occurring in the network."

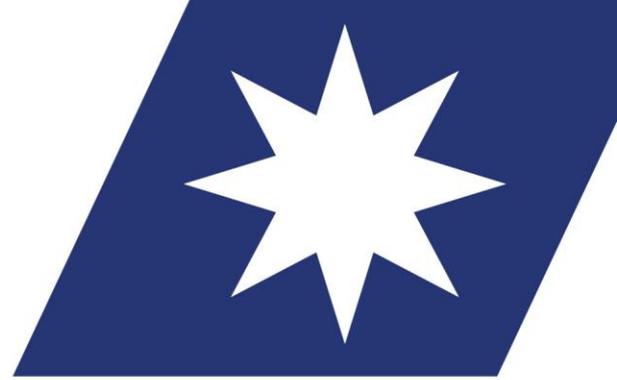
In addition, Ergon runs a vegetation program to keep vegetation away from powerlines and conducts inspection cycles to replace ageing assets before they fail, where possible.

Ergon have also committed to providing better communication to residents about their activities in the area in order to keep locals abreast of things such as outages, equipment repairs and any plans to improve the network.

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“Communication is key when it comes to addressing community concerns so it’s good to hear Ergon will step up their efforts on this front,” Mr Dametto said.

“I will continue to work with all stakeholders on addressing power supply issues in Bluewater and remain ready to provide whatever assistance I can at a State level.”

—ENDS—

Media Enquiries

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