LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

No. 103

WRITTEN QUESTION

K McNamara to the Minister for Essential Services, Hon Steven Edgington MLA:

Questions for Power and Water

These were questions prepared for Power and Water for Estimates, however, due to time restrictions, were unable to be asked.

1. Which regions of the Northern Territory face the greatest challenges in maintaining an acceptable quality level of drinking water?

Power and Water's annual drinking water quality report provides a transparent assessment of drinking water quality in line with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG).

The annual drinking water quality report assesses water quality for a total of 91 potable water supply schemes:

- 5 major urban centres
- 14 minor urban centres; and
- 72 remote communities

The report is available on Power and Water's website.

2. What are the main reasons that the quality of drinking water may be affected?

The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines identify that a wide range of measurable characteristics, compounds or constituents can be found in water and may affect its quality.

Pathogens are identified as posing the greatest risk to drinking water consumer health in the Northern Territory.

3. What impacts do fracking and other mining operations have on the quality of drinking water?

Power and Water advises there are no current impacts from fracking to the drinking water schemes operated by Power and Water.

4. **How does Power and Water rate the risk to drinking water quality in areas where mining / fracking occurs?**

N/A – Refer to response for Question 4

5. **What mitigation strategies does Power and Water have in place to manage this risk?**

N/A – Refer to response for Question 4

6. **A nationwide community battery program is being funded by Australian Renewable Energy Agency (ARENA). Under round 1 of the funding Power and Water will install community batteries with a total capacity of 17MW/36MWh. Can you please provide details of battery size, location, ownership and usage protocol procured or to be procured with funding from arena for round 1 community battery grants.**

A Regulated Electricity System and Investment Plan is currently under development that will influence the type of battery storage the Northern Territory Government will procure. As such detail around the referenced project aspects have not been finalised.

7. **Can you please provide details of any EOIs submitted for round 2 funding from arena for community battery grants?**

Power and Water has not submitted an expression of interest for Round 2 of ARENA's community battery funding.

A key criterion in ARENA's assessment is the lowest $/kWh installed cost. Given the higher project delivery costs in the Northern Territory, due to factors such as remoteness and logistics, Power and Water assessed that the likelihood of a successful Round 2 application would be relatively low at this stage.

8. **Can you please provide details/outcomes of modelling for the impact of home and EV batteries on the network?**

Power and Water reviewed the available modelling on electric vehicle (EV) uptake across Australia as part of its 2024-29 regulatory submission to the Australian Energy Regulator (AER). This strategy is publicly accessible.

The potential impacts of charging were considered in the development of the Future Networks Strategy and Customer Energy Resources (CER) Integration program.

Delivery of the CER program has commenced and includes trials and assessments of technologies and systems designed to monitor CER performance and its effects on the network. Updates to standards for CER that align with industry practice have begun and EV charger standards are currently out for consultation.

Industry modelling of uncontrolled growth in CER, including EVs and home batteries, will have significant impacts on the network if charging is not coordinated with the availability of solar generation and within the capacity limits of existing infrastructure.

In addition to technology to monitor and eventually control CER, the plan includes electricity tariff trials, focussed customer engagement and education to ensure utilisation of existing infrastructure is maximised and to avoid unnecessary additional investment in 'poles and wires' and maintain downward pressure on electricity prices.

The CER Integration proposal submitted to the AER (formerly known as DER Integration) was approved and is available on the AER website.

9. You have budgeted the purchase of one Synchronous Condenser at an estimated cost of $67.7 million. Is the synchronous condensor being procured by power and water the same project as the gas turbine at channel island being transformed into a synchronous condensor or are these separate projects for two separate synchronous condensors?

These are two separate projects:

The $67.7 million budgeted by Power and Water is for the procurement of a new synchronous condenser.

Power and Water is not responsible for projects involving the existing gas turbines at Channel Island.

10. What is the status of amendments to the system control technical code to include a dispatch framework for batteries and the synchronous condensers being procured?

Amendments to the System Control Technical Code to establish a dispatch framework for batteries and synchronous condensers are being progressed as part of broader energy market reforms led by the NT Government's Electricity Reform Taskforce (ERT), including the future structure of the NT National Electricity Rules (NT NER) and supporting market rules.

These reforms will create a mechanism for the provision of essential system services provided by both batteries and synchronous condensers, and create certainty for future investment and operation of these assets in the NT.

Timeframes for implementation of these reforms will be determined by the NT Government.