

ENERGY — OUTAGES — KALGOORLIE

1020. Dr D.J. Honey to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the power blackout that affected Kalgoorlie for several days from 17 January 2024, and I ask:

- (a) Was the Minister aware of the existence of the gas powered back up plant in January when Kalgoorlie was left without power for several days;
- (b) Did the Minister ask why the backup power plant wasn't utilised with urgency, and if so, what was the agency response;
- (c) If there were problems with the backup plant, what were the problems that precluded the use of the power plant for several days;
- (d) How long did it take to have the backup plant supplying power to Kalgoorlie;
- (e) Was the Minister aware in mid-January that a major private power plant in Kalgoorlie is connected to the grid and could supply power to Kalgoorlie in such situations;
- (f) If Yes to (e), did the Minister ask about using that option to alleviate the outage problem for Kalgoorlie; and
- (g) Why wasn't the private power plant utilised urgently to deliver power to Kalgoorlie during the blackout period?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

- (a) This response is provided on the presumption that the facility referred to in the member's question is the Parkeston gas generation facility. The Minister was aware of Parkeston's existence.
- (b)–(g) To restart the Eastern Goldfields part of the South West Interconnected System (SWIS) while it is in an islanded state (that is, when it is disconnected from the rest of the SWIS), a 'black start' service is required. The Parkeston facility has not previously provided a black start service to the SWIS. In response to the outage on 17 January 2024, Western Power investigated the potential to use the Parkeston facility to black start the Eastern Goldfields.

In consultation with the Parkeston facility's owners, Western Power determined that the facility did not have the capability to black start the Eastern Goldfields when in an islanded state. This was due to the technical characteristics of both the facility and the way it is connected to the network.

The Parkeston facility was utilised once reconnection of the Eastern Goldfields Island to the SWIS had been established and customers were being progressively reconnected. This is in line with its requirement to be available, as a generator receiving payment under the Reserve Capacity Mechanism.