

DOMESTIC GAS SUPPLY — SANTOS SHUTDOWN

803. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Premier:

I refer to the Minister for Energy's statement yesterday that Santos's natural gas production shutdown is not expected to have an impact on power supply to the south west interconnected system or gas supply to homes and businesses, yet this morning news broke about the Yara ammonia plant in the Pilbara shutting down due to the lack of gas supply from Santos because of the gas leak. Does the Premier support his minister's claim yesterday that there will be no impact on homes and businesses from Santos's natural gas shutdown, given that negative ramifications for businesses have manifested within 24 hours?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

Just to put a little bit of context around this, there is an offshore platform called the *John Brookes* platform, which is in commonwealth waters. It has had some sort of a leak. That obviously requires repairs by Santos. That platform supplies gas to Varanus Island, which then feeds into the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline. Obviously, a loss of supply there is something that we have to take account of in terms of electricity production. Contrary to the Varanus Island explosion back in 2008, there is now much more diversity of supply of energy, particularly into the south west interconnected system. I think that is the point that the minister was making. There are outages in the system every day. Birds sit on powerlines and cars hit power poles. There was a bushfire down my way this morning. It may well have impacted the powerlines. If we cannot get in to repair them, there are outages. That happens every single day. Sensible people understand that. There is never a 100 per cent guarantee that incidents will not occur that impact supply, but we are doing our best to manage a difficult situation. We have diversity of supply. We are confident we can manage it. But over the Christmas period, for a range of reasons, particularly the heat and all the various things that can occur that impact the electricity network, there are often outages. It has always been that way and I suspect it always will be.