

Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety

Inquiry into the electricity outages affecting Far West NSW in October 2024

Written Questions

NSW Department of Education

1. We have heard through submissions that NSW Education was able to successfully minimise disruption to students during the period of the outages.
 - a. How was the Department able to source generators for all schools by 23 October 2024?
 - b. Where were these generators sourced from?

Response

The Department of Education's priority was to source generators quickly to minimise the impact on public schools. Five days after the storm, the department had sourced, delivered and installed two generators to meet the immediate needs of high schools supporting HSC students. These department-owned generators were transported from Sydney to Broken Hill.

This effort was quickly followed with the hiring and transporting of additional generators from South Australia, to support the remaining 10 public schools. These were installed 6 days after the storm.

Generators remained in place in schools for up to a week following the restoration of transmission lines on 1 November 2024. When power was restored, the department coordinated the disconnection and removal of generators followed by reconnection to mains power.

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2. How did the remoteness and distance of the outlying communities affect the Department's response to the outages?
 - a. Will any measures taken by the Department in response to the outages be implemented as permanent measures?
 - b. The Department provided information on staff and schools going 'above and beyond' to support students and their communities. How was this support facilitated and been recognised by the Department?

Response

NSW public schools play a central role in their local community and they are well-prepared to respond to challenges such as flood, bushfires and other emergencies. There is a dedicated crisis response and recovery function in the department to support schools.

In response to the Far West region power outage, delivering support in such a short time was achieved through good planning, coordination and a commitment to finding solutions.

On the ground, support was coordinated by each principal in partnership with the local asset management team and with the support of central education support teams. Our submission highlighted some of the efforts of our staff.

These efforts were acknowledged and commended personally by the Director Educational Learnership for this region and were [publicly acknowledged](#) on the department's website.

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3. Have you heard any feedback from schools about any impact this has had on students and staff about the impacts of the outages and the uncertainty around them?

Response

We recognise and are grateful for the care and resilience of all staff during the power outages, many of whom were also managing impacts in their homes, while also providing support to their communities.

Throughout the power outage, teams across the department were in regular contact with school staff to ensure support was provided. Our submission outlines some of the communication channels that were stood up during this event. At the time, schools provided positive feedback regarding this support.

A key priority was to ensure minimal disruption to HSW examinations. We are pleased to report that there was no direct disruption to HSC exams in the Far West region associated with the power outage. Schools applied to NESA for HSC misadventure considerations as required.