



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Committee on Environment and Planning

5 June 2025

### MEDIA RELEASE

## **Report tabled: The electricity outages emergency from October 2024 highlights how Far West NSW deserves better energy and mobile reliability**

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

The NSW Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning has tabled their report into the electricity outages which affected the Far West region of NSW from October 2024, which resulted from a severe storm late on 16 October. The damage to towers on the single high-voltage transmission line that left Broken Hill and the Far West region, which includes the remote towns of Wilcannia, Menindee, Tibooburra and White Cliffs, without reliable power for weeks.

The Committee adopted the inquiry in November 2024. As part of the inquiry, the Committee visited the region in March, to hear directly from the affected communities about their experiences during that time through public hearings and informal town hall meetings.

'The Committee is deeply grateful to every person who came out to speak directly with us, particularly in Menindee, Tibooburra, White Cliffs and Wilcannia,' said Mr Clayton Barr MP, Chair. 'Directly hearing accounts of their personal experiences from those community members brave enough to share their story with us has been invaluable to this report.'

The Committee heard compelling evidence about the severe impacts of the electricity and telecommunications outages on individuals, and local businesses. The inquiry received 48 submissions and heard from 27 town hall attendees and 73 witnesses, including representatives from 42 organisations, at five open-door town hall meetings and six public hearings held in both Sydney and the Far West.

'Without the contribution of many people and businesses across the region, the Committee could not have predicted or understood the diversity of experiences, or the seclusion, barriers and severity of the impacts of the electricity and telecommunications outages in the region.'

The report made 20 findings relating to existing vulnerabilities and gaps in energy and mobile telecommunications reliability, emergency management and response, and the impacts of geographical isolation and distance on all aspects of the October 2024 emergency.

Mr Barr noted that the Australian Energy Regulator (AER) and the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) are both conducting independent investigations into the October 2024 outages, to determine if there has been any breach or contravention of the energy regulation and licencing framework at the Commonwealth and NSW level respectively. He said, 'While these two inquiries are ongoing, we look forward to seeing the outcomes of those investigations and hope that some accountability is served for the affected communities of the Far West.'

The Committee has made 20 recommendations to support long-term reliability of power supply in the Far West region and to improve the management and response of electricity supply emergencies moving forward. Some key recommendations to the NSW Government and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal NSW (IPART) include:

- impose new requirements on energy providers to report to IPART and relevant emergency management committees
- work with the Commonwealth to consider reviewing the Generator Performance Standards for energy generation assets in the region and require telecommunications carriers to ensure minimum backup power reserves at mobile towers
- continue supporting the establishment of 'microgrids' in the region to better support long-term reliable power supply
- improve and strengthen the emergency management arrangements and preparedness of the region, including supporting adequate representation and training on relevant emergency management committees, tailored emergency plans for the Far West region, establishing communication protocols during telecommunications outage, and ensuring appropriate support for critical and emergency services organisations to have appropriate emergency arrangements to manage future power and telecommunications outages
- consider improvements to better support Life Support Customers and other residents relying on critical medical electrical devices, and to better vulnerable residents in the Central Darling Shire and Far West Unincorporated Area.

The report can be found on the inquiry's [webpage](#).

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