



Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Standing Committee on Health and
Community Wellbeing

Inquiry into the West Belconnen supercell thunderstorm

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing

Approved for publication

Report 7
10th Assembly
September 2022

About the committee

Establishing resolution

The Assembly established the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing on 2 December 2020.

The Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Health and health system
- Justice health
- Mental health
- Homelessness and housing services
- Prevention of domestic and family violence
- Families
- Community Services

You can read the full establishing resolution [on our website](#).

Committee members

Mr Johnathan Davis MLA, Chair

Mr James Milligan MLA, Deputy Chair

Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

Secretariat

Dr Adele Chynoweth OAM, Committee Secretary (from 1 July 2022)

Dr David Monk, Committee Secretary (until 1 July 2022)

Ms Sophie Milne, Assistant Secretary

Mr Dikshes Patel, Administrative Assistant

Contact us

Mail Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
GPO Box 1020
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Phone (02) 6207 5498

Email LACommitteeHCW@parliament.act.gov.au

Website parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees

About this inquiry

Under Standing Order 216, standing committees can self-initiate an inquiry into any subject area for which it is endowed responsibility by the establishing resolution. The Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing resolved to conduct an inquiry into the West Belconnen supercell thunderstorm on 8 March 2022.

The Committee circulated a media release announcing the new inquiry on 10 March 2022.

Terms of Reference

In relation to the storm on 3 January 2022, the Committee will inquire into the following:

- a) the recovery following the recent storms;
- b) the appropriateness of the communication strategies used to reach out to those affected;
- c) the service delivery options of various agencies throughout the storm period and in the weeks afterwards, to repair, redress and clean up the storm debris and support the community in these matters;
- d) the social, emotional and financial costs of those who have experienced storm damage;
- e) the lessons for the ACT Government, and other agencies, in:
 - i) recovery and the necessary steps for subsequent clean ups;
 - ii) considering the future community need for services provided in the immediate aftermath of a storm event; and
 - iii) considering what should be in place to enable social recovery following such events;
- f) the value of establishing, and possible roles of, a further tier of support to help with the clear up of storm damage, once the immediate emergency is over; and
- g) any other matter the Committee considers relevant.

The Committee is to report back to the Assembly by 1 September 2022.

Contents

About the committee	i
Establishing resolution	i
Committee members	i
Secretariat	i
Contact us	i
About this inquiry	ii
Terms of Reference	ii
Acronyms	v
Recommendations	vi
1. Introduction	1
The supercell thunderstorm	1
The Inquiry	1
2. Recommendations	5
Communication following the thunderstorm	5
Communication with residents	5
The Higgins community information hub	6
Evoenergy	7
Implications for the ACT Government and other agencies	10
Evoenergy annual reports	10
Consumer protection	11
Tree management	12
Costs relating to tree damage	16
Organisation of disaster relief	17
3. Conclusion	20
Appendix A: Submissions	21
Appendix B: Witnesses	22
Friday, 1 July 2022	22
Appendix C: Questions taken on notice	23
Questions taken on notice	23
Appendix D: Evoenergy rebate table	24

Acronyms

Acronym	Long form
ACT	Australian Capital Territory
DRA	Disaster Relief Australia
TCCS	Transport and City Services
SES	State Emergency Services

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertakes a gap analysis of communication with affected residents following emergencies.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government more clearly communicate the purpose of and intended users of emergency hubs in disasters.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy increase its minimum staffing levels over holiday periods.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy develop an improved communications system that provides a regularly updated priority work list and regularly updated ‘place in queue’ advice to callers seeking a response to a major power outage issue.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that with respect to privacy law and associated ethical protocols, Evoenergy establish a vulnerable persons list similar to the life support equipment register to support appropriate liaison with community organisations that may be able to offer direct assistance to persons on that list.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy be listed as a territory owned corporation in the *Territory-owned Corporations Act 1990*, in order for their annual reports to be considered by Legislative Assembly Committees during yearly annual and financial reports inquiries.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Consumer Protection Code for the ACT be amended to add provisions for penalties to utility service providers that fail to meet service reliability targets, including compensation to affected consumers.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the appropriateness of tree species as part of future urban planting with regard to risk of damage from severe weather events.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the criteria impacting removal of potentially hazardous trees or branches that threaten infrastructure.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with Evoenergy to more closely align the definition of a potential hazardous tree to permit action, by either party, to reduce the threat of damage to infrastructure.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing assistance to those residents experiencing challenges of difficulties in removing debris from their property after a severe storm event.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the activities of the ACT Community Recovery Sub Committee be reviewed to achieve more co-ordinated outcomes from severe weather events whereby all parties seek to contribute their relevant expertise.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews the process of integration of all Directorates and services to respond more effectively to severe weather events.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the role of the Multi-Hazard Advisory Council be reviewed to determine how outcomes could be improved and to assess the valuable contributions of community groups and services.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Emergencies Act 2004 be amended to allow for suitably qualified and available support organisations to be included in the ACT Emergency Plan.

1. Introduction

The supercell thunderstorm

- 1.1. In January 2022, Canberra experienced higher than average rainfall and a number of thunderstorms. On the evening of Monday 3 January, the areas of Belconnen and Gungahlin were particularly hard hit by a supercell thunderstorm which included strong winds and hail.¹ Extensive property damage was reported, including instances of fallen trees, localised flooding, and roofs collapsing under the weight of water.² According to the Canberra Times, the ACT Emergency Services Agency received nearly 800 callouts for help following the storm.³
- 1.2. Evoenergy, the company that operates the electricity infrastructure in Canberra, reported thousands of homes being left without electricity, due to extensive damage to power lines:

At the height of the storm, we had around 21,000 homes and businesses without power across Belconnen and Gungahlin and as of Wednesday 5 January 2022, 2,497 remain without power. We are rotating all available Evoenergy staff on shifts to manage the response and restore power as quickly and safely as possible, however expect some homes and businesses may remain without power until tomorrow.⁴

- 1.3. Four days after the storm event, 780 Evoenergy customers remained without power.⁵ The next day, this had been reduced to 434 customers.⁶ On 9 January 2022, Evoenergy circulated its last media release concerning event recovery, reporting that by the end of the day, 35 customers would remain without power, due to their homes needing repairs before they could be reconnected to the grid.⁷

The Inquiry

- 1.4. During the next sitting week of the Legislative Assembly, the Assembly passed the following motion:

That this Assembly:

- (1) notes that:
 - (a) storms are a regular occurrence in the ACT, with 26 severe storms recorded in the last 10 years, that have included significant rainfalls contributing to flooding

¹ Bureau of Meteorology, *Monthly Climate Summary for the Australian Capital Territory*, 2 February 2022, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/current/month/act/archive/202201.summary.shtml#:~:text=The%20mean%20daily%20maximum%20temperature,temperature%20reached%2018.7%20%C2%BC>, accessed 12 July 2022.

² Lanie Tindale, 'Canberra thunderstorm warning: Blackouts as severe wind brings down power lines, hailstones break windows in the ACT', *The Canberra Times*, 3 January 2022.

³ Hannah Neale and Lanie Tindale, 'Blackouts continue after storm hits parts of Canberra', *The Canberra Times*, 4 January 2022.

⁴ Evoenergy, 'Evoenergy's emergency storm response continues', *Media Release*, 5 January 2022.

⁵ Evoenergy, 'Evoenergy crews continue on storm response', *Media Release*, 7 January 2022.

⁶ Evoenergy, 'Evoenergy crews continue on storm response', *Media Release*, 7 January 2022.

⁷ Evoenergy, 'Final storm repairs and clean-up', *Media Release*, 9 January 2022.

- events, hail causing major damage, and strong wind gusts leaving a trail of debris;
- (b) storm events will, due to climate change, become more frequent and damaging;
 - (c) the storm season in the ACT runs from September to February each year;
 - (d) storms cause high social, emotional and financial costs;
 - (e) the 3 January supercell thunderstorm event caused significant damage to many homes and streetscapes;
 - (f) the State Emergency Services responded to, and completed, more than 1023 jobs; however, some areas of Belconnen were without power for six days and storm debris clean up has taken more than a month and is still ongoing;
 - (g) the effectiveness and adequacy of the ACT Government and wider community's resilience and responsiveness is crucial in light of likely increased storm frequency and damage, due to climate change; and
 - (h) in addition to responding to requests from the community, ACT Government crews prioritised assessment and clean up of roads and paths in the immediate aftermath of the storm, proactively assessed verges in every Belconnen suburb throughout the month of January and identified more than 1400 jobs in need of action, and have now commenced proactive auditing of open spaces;
- (2) draws this motion to the attention of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing and requests the Committee consider an inquiry relating to the recovery following the recent storms, the appropriateness of the communication strategies used to reach out to those affected, and the service delivery options of various agencies throughout the storm period and in the weeks afterwards, to repair, redress and clean up the storm debris and support the community in these matters;
- (3) further requests the Committee have regard to the:
- (a) social, emotional and financial costs of those who have experienced storm damage;
 - (b) lessons for the ACT Government, and other agencies, in:
 - (i) recovery and the necessary steps for subsequent clean ups;
 - (ii) considering the future community need for services provided in the immediate aftermath of a storm event; and
 - (iii) considering what should be in place to enable social recovery following such events;
 - (c) value of establishing, and possible roles of, a further tier of support to help with the clear up of storm damage, once the immediate emergency is over; and
 - (d) any other matter the Committee considers relevant; and
- (4) requests the Committee to:
- (a) encourage participation by affected individuals and groups by providing interpreter services, inviting confidential submissions, taking evidence in camera, holding documents in confidence where it considers it appropriate to do so, and otherwise making the hearings family-friendly and held virtually where applicable;

- (b) consider whether to publish a discussion paper by 29 April 2022 and whether to provide an interim report before 9 June 2022; and
 - (c) report back to the Assembly by 1 September 2022, before the next storm season.⁸
- 1.5. At a private meeting on 8 March 2022, the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing (the Committee) resolved to conduct an inquiry into and report on the West Belconnen supercell thunderstorm (the Inquiry).
- 1.6. A media release advising the public of the Inquiry and inviting submissions was published on 10 March 2022, and the Inquiry was also advertised on the Assembly's social media pages.⁹
- 1.7. Twenty-three submissions were received from a range of individuals and organisations. These are listed in **Appendix A**.
- 1.8. The Committee conducted a site visit to West Belconnen on Tuesday, 17 May 2022. The Members toured the Magpies Golf Course to view storm damage from fallen trees and visited a local resident's house which had been badly damaged from water ingress during the storm.



Figure 1: Members of the Standing Committee on Health and Community Wellbeing, Magpies Belconnen Golf Course (L-R: Mr Milligan MLA, Mr Davis MLA, Mr Pettersson MLA).

- 1.9. On 1 July 2022, the Committee conducted a public hearing into the Inquiry. Witnesses who appeared at these hearings are listed in **Appendix B**.

⁸ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings No 39*, 10 February 2022, p 503.

⁹ ACT Legislative Assembly, 'New Inquiry', Facebook post, 11 March 2022.

- 1.10. The Committee had nine Questions Taken on Notice from the public hearing. These are listed in **Appendix C**.

2. Recommendations

Communication following the thunderstorm

Communication with residents

- 2.1. Of the 23 submissions received in the Inquiry, 12 referred to inadequate or inaccurate communication in the aftermath of the storm. Residents of storm-affected-suburbs felt they did not receive reliable information about the timing of power restoration and debris clearance, as reported by one resident:

While assisting residents in Ginninderra after the storm, one particular concern was shared by all people I talked to. The government response was not good enough and not well communicated.¹⁰

- 2.2. Specific problems identified in the evidence before the Committee include:

- imprecise or no information about the clean-up: residents were unable to find out exactly when the clean-up crews would arrive in their area,¹¹ and some were frustrated by the lack of response when they reported potentially dangerous trees;¹²
- lack of certainty concerning the restoration of power. This created difficulties for residents who had to make alternative living arrangements such as motel accommodation;¹³
- electronic communications are ineffective during power outages. For example, not all households were able to maintain charged mobile devices, and some senior residents who do not have access to the internet, and instead rely on landlines, were completely disconnected¹⁴ and
- difficulties accessing customer service representatives by phone: Evoenergy experienced a 1200 per cent increase in calls in the week following the storm¹⁵

- 2.3. During the public hearing, Evoenergy and the ACT Government were asked if they had considered doorknocking or undertaking letterbox drops to provide information to residents. Both responded that these methods were considered too labour intensive and slow during a time-sensitive and rapidly evolving situation. As representatives from Evoenergy explained:

Mr Billing: We certainly did not consider doorknocking. We do not have the staff to be able to do that. [...]

Ms Davis: We did not consider a letterbox drop, mainly because of the intense nature of staffing in having someone out to do a drop, but our field crews were

¹⁰ Mr Joseph Stubbs, *Submission 17*, p 2.

¹¹ Mr Bruce Wright, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 4 and p 8.

¹² Mr Stephen O’Neil, *Submission 8*, p 2.

¹³ Mr Bruce Middleton, *Submission 7*, p 2.

¹⁴ Ms Ethel Pooley, *Submission 4*, p 2.

¹⁵ Question Taken on Notice 1.

talking to residents and some of our office-based staff were also out talking to customers and checking in with crews.¹⁶

The ACT Government also considered doorknocking and letterbox drops unfeasible and potentially unsafe in the aftermath of a disaster situation.¹⁷ Instead, it was deemed more efficient to provide a single point of contact for responding to people's questions, and opened a communications hub at Higgins,¹⁸ which is discussed in the section below, 'The Higgins community information hub'.

- 2.4. Since the January storm, Evoenergy has adjusted their communications strategy according to feedback from customers:

We received extensive feedback from residents impacted by the storm that they want to be notified via SMS when we detect power interruptions within our network. As a result, we are upgrading our systems to introduce an SMS notification for unplanned outages to ensure Canberrans have the latest information about power supply at their property.¹⁹

- 2.5. The Committee believes that the ACT Government should similarly explore the communication needs of ACT residents during and after an emergency to ensure subsequent effectiveness.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government undertakes a gap analysis of communication with affected residents following emergencies.

The Higgins community information hub

- 2.6. A community information hub was opened at the Rural Fire Service Molonglo Brigade in Higgins in the days following the storm. The hub provided charging stations, ice for eskies, washing machines, and food waste disposal facilities.²⁰ Representatives from Evoenergy and the ACT Government were present to answer questions from the community and to connect people with support services such as food aid. It was noted that most people who attended the hub used it as a source of information and human interaction, rather than for material aid.²¹
- 2.7. Another observation from the hub was that it attracted a lot of offers of assistance from people wanting to help others:

¹⁶ Mr Peter Billing, General Manager, Evoenergy, and Ms Alison Davis Strategy Lead, Evoenergy, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 28.

¹⁷ Ms Emma Davidson, Assistant Manager for Families and Community Services, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 51 – 52.

¹⁸ Mr Jason Jones, Acting Commissioner, Emergency Services Agency, Justice and Community Services Directorate, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 49.

¹⁹ Mr Billing, Evoenergy, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 26.

²⁰ ACT Emergency Services Agency, *Community Information Hub – RFS Molonglo Fire Station*, 5 January 2022, <https://esa.act.gov.au/community-information-hub-rfs-molonglo-fire-station> (accessed 15 July 2022).

²¹ Mr Jones, Justice and Community Services Directorate, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 50.

A lot of community groups offered food. Seven or eight community groups offered to cook food for us, and supply food and food hampers. It grew to a point where it almost became unmanageable because of the amount of community support offered to the hub.²²

- 2.8. Although the ACT Government reported positive feedback²³ from the 600 reported people who came to the hub,²⁴ the Committee also heard evidence that people were either unaware of the hub, or did not believe it was appropriate for them to access:

Anecdotally, again, there was a question of whether it was for me. You know: “That is for people really doing it tough.” Does that mean it is for me, if my power is out and I need to recharge my phone, or is that for someone who has lost their actual house, not knowing the level of damage out there?²⁵

Unfortunately, some residents missed out on the hub’s services which would have provided much-needed support in the days immediately following the storm. One resident bemoaned the loss of their entire supply of all their frozen food due to the Belconnen shops having sold all its ice. This exemplifies the lack of awareness of the services provided by the Higgins hub, which included free ice.²⁶ As discussed in paragraph 2.2, some residents complained about the inability to charge their phones, thus not being able to contact their electricity providers.²⁷ Again, the hub would have been able to provide both charging stations and direct contact with Evoenergy, had they known about the service.

- 2.9. The Committee is concerned that people affected by the storm may have missed out on the useful services provided at the Higgins hub because of lack of information about its existence and purpose. The Committee would like to see future communications about emergency hubs tailored to reach all people in the community, and to reassure people that that they are eligible to access these types of services.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government more clearly communicate the purpose of and intended users of emergency hubs in disasters.

Evoenergy

- 2.10. Evoenergy operates and maintains the electricity and gas networks in the Canberra region. This consists of 2,358 square kilometres of electricity infrastructure including poles and wires, and over 4,563 kilometres of gas mains pipes. As the sole owner of these utility

²² Mr Jones, Justice and Community Services Directorate, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 50.

²³ Mr Jones, Justice and Community Services Directorate, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 49.

²⁴ ACT Government, *Submission 12*, p 9.

²⁵ Mr Matt Watts, Deputy Chair, Belconnen Community Council, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 16.

²⁶ Ms Ethel Pooley, *Submission 4*, p 2.

²⁷ Mr Brett Baker, *Submission 16*, p 3, and Mr Graham Cutler, *Submission 14*, p 2.

networks, Evoenergy is the monopoly provider for over 200 000 electricity and 146 000 gas customers in the ACT and parts of NSW.²⁸

- 2.11. Evoenergy is owned through ActewAGL Joint Venture. Half of its shares are owned by the ACT Government through a subsidiary of Icon Water Limited (named Icon Distribution Investments Limited). The balance of Evoenergy's shares is held by Jemena Ltd, a private company, also via subsidiary (Jemena Networks (ACT) Pty Ltd).²⁹ The full detail of the joint venture is illustrated below:

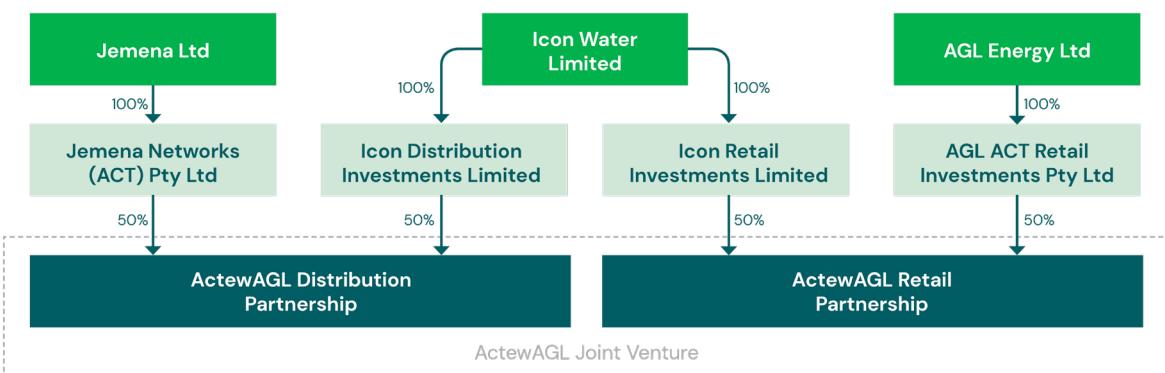


Figure 2: Graph from Evoenergy – Exhibit 1

- 2.12. Possibly the most notable feature of this storm was the scale and intensity of the damage to the power grid. Evoenergy faced a difficult task to assess and repair the power lines and other grid elements:

Evoenergy Acting General Manager Alison Davis says the damage to the electricity network is the most severe observed in the ACT for many years.

"At Evoenergy we've seen serious and extreme conditions, but the weather on Monday afternoon has resulted in some of the worst damage to our network on record. Our crews are highly trained and are continuing to work as safely and quickly as possible, but working to repair the type of damage we've assessed over the past two days is complex, time-consuming and incredibly challenging."³⁰

- 2.13. On the day of the storm, there were seven Evoenergy electrical workers on shift. Over the next two days this increased to over 80,³¹ including additional staff from Endeavour Energy in New South Wales who helped to clear damage to the electrical assets.³² Contact centre staff, who look after customer enquiries, were also increased following the storm during to increase in customer calls.³³

²⁸ Evoenergy, 'Our focus', *About us*, <https://www.evoenergy.com.au/about-us> (accessed 19 July 2022).

²⁹ ActewAGL, 'Who owns ActewAGL?', *About us*, <https://actewaglJV.com.au/joint-venture#:~:text=and%20corporate%20services.-Retail%20Partnership,Energy%20Ltd%20via%20subsidiary%20companies> (accessed 14 July 2022).

³⁰ Evoenergy, 'Evoenergy's emergency storm response continues', *Media Release*, 5 January 2022.

³¹ Question Taken on Notice No 4.

³² Mr Peter Billing, General Manager, Evoenergy, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 25.

³³ Question Taken on Notice No 2.

2.14. Evoenergy noted, during the hearing, that many of their staff were on annual leave during January and were unable to return on short notice.³⁴ The Committee understands how this lack of staff would have contributed to an already strained workforce who were dealing with an unprecedented situation. The Committee considers that Evoenergy, as an essential service provider, should maintain its core staff member levels throughout the year to ensure continuity of operations in case of emergencies. The Committee also believes that Evoenergy's customer service procedures should be improved so that people can access more accurate and timely information during power outages.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy increase its minimum staffing levels over holiday periods.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy develop an improved communications system that provides a regularly updated priority work list and regularly updated 'place in queue' advice to callers seeking a response to a major power outage issue.

2.15. The Committee notes that Evoenergy maintains a register of people who rely on electricity supply for life support equipment. As a result, after the storm, Evoenergy prioritised their calls to those on that register.³⁵ However, these are not the only vulnerable people who suffered directly because of the power outage. Several submissions revealed that the experiences of elderly people were more difficult, such as the following from a resident who is over 85 and lives alone:

No power means, no lights, no way to cook any meals, no hot water to have a cup of tea, no NBN therefore no phone. I don't have a Mobile Phone therefore I was left stranded. [...]

I had to crawl into bed before dark, as the only light I had was a torch which was running out of power.³⁶

2.16. Another submitter was in COVID-19 isolation with their family, including two young children, when they lost power. They were not able to make alternative arrangements for accommodation and were not referred to support services when they contacted the ACT Government for advice.

We used a gas burner on our BBQ to make hot water to bathe our kids and wash our dishes. We had to order delivery every day, as we could not store food. They

³⁴ Mr Billing, Evoenergy, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 31.

³⁵ Evoenergy, *Submission 22*, p 2.

³⁶ Ms Ethel Pooley, *Submission 4*, p 2.

Government left us completely unsupported and alone. We were left heavily out-of-pocket from this experience, with no compensation provided.³⁷

- 2.17. The Committee recommends that Evoenergy should revise and extend its register of vulnerable people so that it is not confined to those with essential medical equipment. In addition, the Committee advocates that Evoenergy establish a system whereby its customer service team can recommend necessary support services to these particular residents when necessary.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that with respect to privacy law and associated ethical protocols, Evoenergy establish a vulnerable persons list similar to the life support equipment register to support appropriate liaison with community organisations that may be able to offer direct assistance to persons on that list.

Implications for the ACT Government and other agencies

Evoenergy annual reports

- 2.18. Every year, as a publicly-owned organisation, Icon Water must prepare an annual report and present it to the Legislative Assembly for consideration by the relevant committee. This is regulated through two main legislative instruments.
- 2.19. Icon Water is defined as a territory-owned corporation in Schedule 1 of the *Territory-owned Corporations Act 1990*. This then classifies Icon Water as a ‘territory entity’ under the *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*:

7C Meaning of *territory entity*

- (1) In this Act:
- territory entity* means—
- (a) a territory-owned corporation; or
 - (b) a territory instrumentality; or
 - (c) a body established under an Act declared by the Minister.³⁸

This Act also sets out the rules surrounding preparing annual reports for consideration by Assembly committee:

7D Territory entity annual report

A territory entity must, for a reporting year, prepare a report about the operation of the entity during the reporting year (a *territory entity annual report*).

[...]

³⁷ Ms Natalie Anderson, *Submission 10*, p 2.

³⁸ *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*, part 7C.

9 Consultation about annual report direction

- (1) Before making the annual report direction under section 8, the Minister must—
- (a) give the relevant Assembly committee a copy of the proposed annual report direction; and
 - (b) ask the committee, in writing, for any recommendation about the proposed annual report direction: and
 - (c) consider any recommendation made, in writing, by the committee.³⁹
- 2.20. Through this legislated process, the activities and financial details of Icon Water, and how it implements its social and environmental responsibilities, are made available for public scrutiny and comment through the Legislative Assembly’s committee inquiry process. The ACT Government must also present a response to the committee’s final report within four months of it being presented, which adds another layer of accountability to the public.⁴⁰
- 2.21. Unlike the accountability of Icon Water, Evoenergy’s annual reports are not presented to Assembly committees for consideration. Instead, the *ACTEW/AGL Partnership Facilitation Act 2000* directs the ActewAGL Joint Venture to be audited annually.⁴¹ The audit reports are included in the Icon Water’s annual reports that are presented to the Assembly, but they do not provide a breakdown of Evoenergy’s finances or activities (such as their purchasing history or hiring practices).
- 2.22. In the interests of transparency and public scrutiny, the Committee is of the opinion that the *Territory-owned Corporations Act 1990* should be amended to include Evoenergy as a territory-owned corporation under Schedule 1. This would ensure that an Assembly committee would have the opportunity to review Evoenergy’s operations and consider whether the organisation is using public funds responsibly.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that Evoenergy be listed as a territory owned corporation in the *Territory-owned Corporations Act 1990*, in order for their annual reports to be considered by Legislative Assembly Committees during yearly annual and financial reports inquiries.

Consumer protection

- 2.23. Evidence presented to the Committee detailed instances where storm-affected residents were financially affected due to the ongoing power outage. As previously noted in paragraph 2.8., a common example was the loss of perishable food due to lack of refrigeration.⁴²

³⁹ *Annual Reports (Government Agencies) Act 2004*, part 7D and 9.

⁴⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, ‘SO 254B, Tabling of a Government Response to Committee Report’, *Standing Orders and Continuing Resolutions of the Assembly*, p 73.

⁴¹ *ACTEW/AGL Partnership Facilitation Act 2000*, part 6.

⁴² *Submission 4, Submission 9, Submission 20*.

- 2.24. Evoenergy is required to comply with guaranteed service levels and rebates as set out by the ACT's Consumer Protection Code (the Code). This Code is published by the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, which outlines the basic rights of customers and consumers with respect to access to, and provision of, utility services. A table of the guaranteed service levels and rebates payable if these levels are not met is reproduced in Evoenergy's Customer charter for electricity networks (the Charter) and at **Appendix D** of this report.⁴³
- 2.25. The Charter also includes information concerning claims for 'loss or damage', for customers who suffer 'genuine out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a direct consequence of negligence' on Evoenergy's behalf.⁴⁴
- 2.26. The right to compensation for financial loss because of negligence by utility providers is not regulated by the Code. Part 11.4 of the code states:
- If an Obliged Provider becomes liable under this Code to pay a rebate to a Customer or Consumer, that liability is in addition to, and not in substitution for, any claim for damages that the Customer may have against the Obliged Provider for breach of the Customer Contract, or any right to compensation or damages a Customer or Consumer may have under any other Law.⁴⁵
- 2.27. The Committee considers it necessary that that right of consumers to be compensated for loss due to negligence or fault of utility providers be protected by legislation. The Code should be updated to include provision for such compensation, and penalties for utility companies that do not provide it.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Consumer Protection Code for the ACT be amended to add provisions for penalties to utility service providers that fail to meet service reliability targets, including compensation to affected consumers.

Tree management

- 2.28. A prominent theme in the evidence before the Committee was the tension present in the protected status of the trees which caused most of the damage during the storm.
- 2.29. Trees in the ACT are strictly protected through legislation, mainly by the *Tree Protection Act 2005*. This Act allows the Minister for Transport and City Services to declare 'tree management precincts' in which protection of the existing tree canopy is particularly enforced. Individual trees can also be designated as 'registered' or 'regulated' trees, which imposes requirements for approval before any activities are undertaken which may

⁴³ Evoenergy, *Customer charter for electricity rebates*, June 2020, p 8-9.

⁴⁴ Evoenergy, *Customer charter for electricity rebates*, June 2020, p 9.

⁴⁵ DI2012-149 Utilities (Consumer Protection Code) Determination 2012.

damage or kill the tree, such as pruning, cutting its roots, or excavating the soil around its base.⁴⁶ These protections can apply to trees on both public and private land.

- 2.30. The ACT Government has a target of achieving 30 per cent tree canopy cover in Canberra's urban footprint by 2045, up from an estimated 21 per cent in 2015.⁴⁷ This target has been set for ecological and economic reasons, and to reduce ambient temperature in urban and suburban environments. To achieve this target, the ACT Government has an active tree planting project in conjunction with the strict protections around established trees.
- 2.31. Despite their benefits, trees can also present potential hazards in an urban environment. During the January storm, fallen trees and tree branches caused most of the damage to the electricity distribution network⁴⁸ as well as to public infrastructure, evident in their blocking roadways and stormwater drains and to residents' homes.⁴⁹ After the initial event, the debris from fallen trees posed potentially hazardous obstacles to repair and clean-up efforts, requiring extra machinery such as excavators and woodchippers as well as specialised field crews.⁵⁰
- 2.32. The Committee notes that the feedback it received during the inquiry was that the community is supportive of the tree canopy target and are aware of the benefits trees bring to their suburbs:

Absolutely, there are benefits in having the canopy and benefits in even having dead trees within our suburbs, for their ability to house wild animals and whatnot and for dead trees to be on the ground for all sorts of environmental reasons.⁵¹

- 2.33. Witnesses to the Inquiry explained that the community would like to see a more effective tree management program alongside the tree canopy target:

I think the general feedback that we have had is that people still want to see the urban tree canopy to the levels that the government has prescribed. What they would like to see, on the back of what happened in January, is a more vigorous program for assessment, maintenance, and removal and replacement.⁵²

- 2.34. During their site visit and on reviewing the submissions, the Committee noted the prominence of large mature eucalyptus trees in suburbia as a specific issue. These species are shallow rooted, making them more likely to fall over during storms, and are prone to dropping limbs. They are also tall growing, often overshadowing power lines.⁵³

I live in [redacted] and this issue with the number of mature trees in the neighbourhoods necessarily means that old and shallow root trees will continue to fall taking out not just the power lines but homes as well. It seems to be the

⁴⁶ City Services ACT, *Information about Tree Protection on Leased Land*, <https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/information-about-tree-protection-on-leased-land>, (accessed 28 July 2022).

⁴⁷ ACT Government, 'ACTION 2: Living Infrastructure Targets', *Canberra's Living Infrastructure Plan: Cooling the City*, p 19.

⁴⁸ Evoenergy, *Submission 22*, p 3.

⁴⁹ ACT Government, *Submission 21*, p 3.

⁵⁰ ACT Government, *Submission 21*, p 6.

⁵¹ Mr Matt Watts, Deputy Chair, Belconnen Community Council, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 13.

⁵² Mr Glen Hyde, Chair, Belconnen Community Council, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 13.

⁵³ Mr Sesterka, *Submission 9*, p 3.

nature of eucalypts and pines to have shallow roots and when big rains and winds come, they are prone to falling.⁵⁴

- 2.35. Submitters commented that it would be more appropriate to plant smaller, less hazardous trees in Canberra's suburbs than the commonly found eucalyptus or pine trees:

Trees could be replaced without incurring the ire of residents if the ACT Government expanded its range of street trees to include smaller native trees (5-10 metres) that do not pose a risk in storms yet do provide food and habitat to urban wildlife. The range of smaller cultivars of native trees is extensive yet the Government appears to not be currently utilising this option in its tree planting programs.⁵⁵

- 2.36. Evoenergy also detailed the issues which they encounter with large trees near powerlines on public land:

Many trees that have been planted in line with a power easement are of a species that grow considerable higher, with half of the canopy overhanging the lines. Often you will see these trees have needed to be pruned such that they look sliced straight down the middle, but ideally, they would be replaced with a more suitable species or removed entirely.⁵⁶

- 2.37. The Committee notes that it is current Government practice to replace removed trees with trees of the same species wherever possible:

Can I change the species of tree on my nature strip?

No. Where a street's designated species is no longer suitable, City Services will replant with a similar, more suitable species to maintain the original landscape design.

In locations where City Services carries out a strategic street tree replacement program, a new species where required may be chosen in consultation with the community.⁵⁷

- 2.38. During the hearing, the Committee asked Evoenergy if it were possible to relocate the electricity grid underground to prevent damage from trees and other vegetation. Evoenergy noted that this occurs in new suburbs, as developers bury the electricity wires and that cost is included in the price of the land package.⁵⁸ However, to move existing powerlines underground would be complicated and expensive, and costs would be the responsibility of the customers:

⁵⁴ Ms Katherine Powers, *Submission 12*, p 2.

⁵⁵ Belconnen Community Council, *Submission 19*, p 7.

⁵⁶ Evoenergy, *Submission 22*, p 4.

⁵⁷ City Services ACT, *Frequently asked questions about urban trees*, https://www.cityservices.act.gov.au/trees-and-nature/trees/frequently_asked_questions_about_urban_trees (accessed 28 July 2022).

⁵⁸ Mr Billing, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 36.

MR MILLIGAN: It sounds like that Evoenergy would bear all the cost to change that infrastructure. Is ACT government at all responsible or obliged to also put in funding for this type of upgrade?

Mr Billing: No, they are not. As a regulated business—so the Evoenergy side of ActewAGL—we do not operate any unregulated activities. We are purely a regulated business. We are ring fence associated; we actually have a requirement not to try and raise money in any other way. All of our funds come from customer bills.⁵⁹

- 2.39. The Committee notes that the ACT Government has recently tabled a bill to replace the *Tree Protection Act 2005*, the Urban Forest Bill 2022.⁶⁰ The Committee believes the Government should use this opportunity to consider the criteria for selection of tree species for new planting projects as well as the maintenance program of current trees to ensure an appropriate balance between protecting trees and the potential hazards they can cause to people and property in built-up environments.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider the appropriateness of tree species as part of future urban planting with regard to risk of damage from severe weather events.

- 2.40. During the Inquiry the Committee heard a concerning number of reports of incidents in which trees that caused significant damage during the January storm had previously been reported as dangerous to the ACT Government.⁶¹
- 2.41. In several submissions before the Committee, individuals identified structural weaknesses in trees, such as white ants or softening of branch joints, which increase the likelihood that heavy limbs, or the entire tree itself, may fall. These trees were reported as potential hazards to City Services, in line with legislation. However, the submitters either received no response or the tree was inspected and deemed ‘safe’, so no action of pruning or removal was taken. Unfortunately, during the supercell storm, these previously-identified trees caused damage to roofs, powerlines, and other infrastructure.

I was told by residents in Holt, Hawker, Higgins and Macquarie, that trees that had fallen during the storm had previously been reported to the ACT government as dangerous trees that had a history of shedding large branches. These residents had either had no response from the government or had been told the tree was safe.

In every instance, these residents told me they would’ve been happy to replace the tree if the government had removed it. These residents feel that the

⁵⁹ Mr Billing, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 35.

⁶⁰ ACT Legislative Assembly, *Minutes of Proceedings* No 55, 3 August 2022, p 757.

⁶¹ Mr David Fordyce, *Submission 18*, p 3. Mr Joseph Stubbs, *Submission 17*, p 3. Mr Stephen O’Neill, *Submission 8*, p 2.

government is placing trees over the safety of themselves, their families and their property.⁶²

- 2.42. Currently, when Evoenergy identifies vegetation encroaching on powerlines from public property they notify Transport and City Services (TCCS). However, during the past financial year, Evoenergy made 22 requests for tree removals, and six urgent requests for tree removals, and as of August 2022, only 16 of these requests had been fulfilled, including the aforementioned urgent cases.⁶³ Therefore, Evoenergy advocate for a more efficient system of reporting and maintaining potentially hazardous trees:

Given there are thousands of trees across the ACT that may potentially impact powerlines, it is a difficult and time-consuming exercise. We are seeking a collaboration with the ACT Government to increase the inspection program as the trees are predominantly in Territory land or protected under the Tree Protection Act.⁶⁴

- 2.43. The Committee is concerned that the legal protections given to trees in Canberra may be causing some potentially dangerous trees to be left without pruning or removal, further increasing that chance that they will cause damage in future weather events or during drought. The Committee feels that a better balance needs to be struck between protecting trees and the safety of people and property.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government review the criteria impacting removal of potentially hazardous trees or branches that threaten infrastructure.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government work with Evoenergy to more closely align the definition of a potential hazardous tree to permit action, by either party, to reduce the threat of damage to infrastructure.

Costs relating to tree damage

- 2.44. The Committee also identified the problem of costs borne by private citizens for damage to their property by protected trees during the storm.
- 2.45. Submitters told the Committee that they or their neighbours had been quoted sums of up to thousands of dollars for the removal of fallen or dangerous trees.⁶⁵ Residents are also responsible for associated costs such as blocked gutters and roots finding their way into sewage pipes or lifting driveways. The residents often do not have the option to remove

⁶² Mr Joseph Stubbs, *Submission 17*, p 3.

⁶³ Question on Notice No 6.

⁶⁴ Question on Notice No 6.

⁶⁵ Mr Watts, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 13, Mr Sesterka, *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 9, Mr Bill Fulton, *Submission 3*, p 3.

the tree due to its protected status. Some believe that they should be subsidised for these costs:

The ACT Government provides or has provided rebates for various matters considered to be environmentally beneficial (e.g. replacement of wood heaters, installation of solar panels). Similar rebates should be considered for costs associated with protected trees on residential properties.⁶⁶

- 2.46. The Committee notes that in other jurisdictions, post-storm clean-up of residential properties can be performed free-of-charge by organisations such as Disaster Relief Australia (DRA).

Specifically in relation to the storm cells, obviously you have thousands of fallen trees. If people do not have the ability to either resolve that situation themselves or pay for others to do that then they are often stuck. Some may or may not have insurance. We have teams of chainsaw operators and chainsaws, equipment and vehicles that basically come into those situations. We assist those individuals to remove, cut up and in some instances dispose of all of that waste, and the expectation is nothing. We do not expect to be paid. We do not expect anything in return. We are just there to help the individuals.⁶⁷

- 2.47. The Committee notes that private residents cannot control overhanging neighbouring trees, and in the case of severe weather events, these can cause considerable damage to their property, resulting in financial loss. The Committee considers it appropriate that the ACT Government consider helping residents if they are having financial difficulties in removing tree debris from their property after storm events.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government consider providing assistance to those residents experiencing challenges of difficulties in removing debris from their property after a severe storm event.

Organisation of disaster relief

- 2.48. Although in their submission the ACT Government reported that feedback on their response to the storm had been positive,⁶⁸ other submitters shared with the Committee that the response had appeared disorganised and slow. Community perception of the clean-up was that it was haphazard and lacked supervision.⁶⁹

On criterion (e), the lessons for the ACT government and other agencies, the job was huge but it seemed not to occur to anyone in government to look for extra

⁶⁶ Mr Sesterka, *Submission 9*, p 4.

⁶⁷ Mr Michael Young, Manager, ACT Disaster Relief Team, Disaster Relief Australia (DRA), *Committee Hansard*, 1 July 2022, p 19

⁶⁸ ACT Government, *Submission 21*, p 16.

⁶⁹ Mr Sesterka, *Committee Hansard*, p 7.

resources. I have been in cyclones and things, and it has been routine that local governments, when a cyclone hits, get help from nearby local governments. We did not see any of that. It was some weeks after the storm when we saw a statement in the Canberra Times saying that a few people had been moved from one area of government to the other. Otherwise, there just seemed to be no urgency; none at all.⁷⁰

- 2.49. During the hearing, ACT Government representatives explained the process behind the storm recovery, which involved many organisations and directorates across Government. Once an initial event has moved from the emergency to the recovery phase, the ACT Recovery Committee (a subcommittee of Security and Emergency Management Committee of Cabinet), assesses the recovery needs, formulates a plan and calls upon resources from across Government for associated implementation. On this occasion, the Recovery Committee requested staff from Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS) and Parks and Conservation for the clean-up of debris.⁷¹ These staff performed a visual inspection of the storm-affected suburbs and triaged jobs based on safety concerns. These processes took time and may have contributed to residents' frustrations at not seeing a visible Government response.⁷²
- 2.50. The submission from Disaster Relief Australia (DRA), notes that this not-for-profit organisation has 160 volunteers in the ACT who are trained and qualified in chainsaw operation and debris removal, for example, and has permanent sites with tool storage in Hume and Kambah.⁷³ However, DRA also noted that the ACT Government did not seek its assistance in the aftermath of the January storm.
- 2.51. As noted in the DRA submission, other agencies which were involved in the recovery effort, such as the State Emergency Services (SES) or ACT Fire and Rescue, are limited in their approach to disaster recovery as they are focused immediate emergency response.
- 2.52. During the public hearing, the Committee asked DRA whether they knew why they had not been asked for help. Mr Young, manager of their ACT Disaster Relief Team, theorised that it was because the storm response was being run through the Community Services Directorate, who was not aware of their capabilities, despite DRA having worked with them previously during COVID lockdowns to deliver food hampers.⁷⁴
- 2.53. The core responsibility of the Security and Emergency Management Division is to provide strategic policy advice and coordination on security and emergency management matters, 'with a focus on coordination and collaboration across government and industry.'⁷⁵ As this body's ACT Recovery Subcommittee was responsible for organising the recovery event, the

⁷⁰ Mr Wright, *Committee Hansard*, p 5.

⁷¹ Mr Jim Corrigan, Acting Director-General, Transport Canberra and City Services (TCCS), *Committee Hansard*, p 45.

⁷² Mr Corrigan, TCCS, *Committee Hansard*, p 45.

⁷³ Disaster Relief Australia, *Submission 13*, p 4.

⁷⁴ Mr Young, DRA, *Committee Hansard*, p 20.

⁷⁵ Justice and Community Safety Directorate, 'Security and Emergency Management Division', <https://www.justice.act.gov.au/annual-report-2020-21/b2-performance-analysis-output-11-policy-advice-and-justice-programs/security> (accessed 5 August 2022).

- Committee was surprised that it missed an opportunity to request assistance from DRA to help the substantial clean up.
- 2.54. The Multi-Hazard Advisory Council, which is established by the *Emergencies Act 2004*, also has a role in providing advice on matters relating to natural disaster, specifically to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and the ACT Emergency Services Commissioner.⁷⁶ The Committee believes that this body would benefit from a review into how they assess the potential contributions of non-governmental organisations.
- 2.55. The Committee believes that the organisational functions within Government which work on recovery from disasters and emergencies should be reviewed to ensure that future recoveries are better co-ordinated and resourced.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the activities of the ACT Community Recovery Sub Committee be reviewed to achieve more co-ordinated outcomes from severe weather events whereby all parties seek to contribute their relevant expertise.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that the ACT Government reviews the process of integration of all Directorates and services to respond more effectively to severe weather events.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the role of the Multi-Hazard Advisory Council be reviewed to determine how outcomes could be improved and to assess the valuable contributions of community groups and services.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the *Emergencies Act 2004* be amended to allow for suitably qualified and available support organisations to be included in the ACT Emergency Plan.

⁷⁶ *Emergencies Act 2004*, sec 130.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The Committee makes 15 recommendations.
- 3.2. The Committee would like to thank everyone who contributed to this inquiry, including all witnesses who appeared at the hearing and those who made a written submission.

Mr Johnathan Davis, MLA
Chair
13 September 2022

Appendix A: Submissions

No.	Submission by	Received	Published
1	Bruce Wright	22/03/2022	23/03/2022
2	Marilyn Brocklebank and Rory Brocklebank	14/04/2022	20/04/2022
3	Bill Fulton	15/04/2022	20/04/2022
4	Ethel Pooley	15/04/2022	20/04/2022
5	Wendy Witham and Lloyd Hooper	19/04/2022	20/04/2022
6	Name withheld	20/04/2022	21/04/2022
7	Bruce S Middleton	20/04/2022	22/04/2022
8	Stephen O'Neill	20/04/2022	22/04/2022
9	Peter Sesterka	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
10	Natalie Anderson	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
11	Beth Rogers	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
11a	Beth Rogers	6/07/2022	19/07/2022
12	Katherine Powers	31/03/2022	04/04/2022
13	Markus Bucy	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
14	Graham Cutler	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
15	Name withheld	21/04/2022	22/04/2022
16	Brett Baker	22/04/2022	22/04/2022
17	Joseph Stubbs	22/04/2022	26/04/2022
18	David Fordyce	22/04/2022	26/04/2022
19	Glen Hyde	25/04/2022	27/04/2022
20	Philippa Carmichael	27/04/2022	27/04/2022
21	Andrew Stead CSD DLO	6/05/2022	09/05/2022
22	Peter Billing/Lauren Wachniewski	6/05/2022	09/05/2022
23	Robert Yallop	19/05/2022	19/05/2022

Appendix B: Witnesses

Friday, 1 July 2022

- **Mr Peter Sesterka**, Individual
- **Mr Bruce Wright**, Individual

Belconnen Community Council

- **Mr Glen Hyde**, Chair
- **Mr Matt Watts**, Deputy Chair

Disaster Relief Australia

- **Mr Michael Young**, ACT Manager

Evoenergy

- **Mr Peter Billing**, General Manager
- **Ms Alison Davis**, Strategy Lead

ACT Government

- **Ms Emma Davidson**, Assistant Minister for Families and Communities
- **Ms Tamerra Rogers**, Executive Branch Manager, Communications and Engagement, Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development
- **Mr Jason Jones**, Assistant Commissioner, Risk and Planning, Emergency Services Agency, Justice and Community Safety Directorate
- **Mr Jim Corrigan**, A/g Director General, Transport Canberra and City Services

Appendix C: Questions taken on notice

Questions taken on notice

No.	Date	Asked of	Subject	Response received
1	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Average call wait times	29/07/2022
2	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Number of staff taking calls	29/07/2022
3	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Job list and subsequent amendments	29/07/2022
4	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Number of ground crews	29/07/2022
5	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Number of field staff	29/07/2022
6	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Hazardous trees	29/07/2022
7	1/07/2022	Evoenergy	Funding for undergrounding powerlines	29/07/2022
8	1/07/2022	Community Services Directorate	Number of employees for general suburban maintenance	15/07/2022
9	1/07/2022	Community Services Directorate	Number of people at the hub offering assistance to others	response not received

Appendix D: Evoenergy rebate table

Subject of the standard	Guaranteed service level	Rebate payable for unmet service levels
Customer connection times	We will connect you by your nominated, required date.	\$60 per day (maximum \$300)
	For same day connection a request must be received from your retailer by 2pm on a business day	
Wrongful disconnection	We will not disconnect your supply in error.	\$100
Responding to complaints	We will try to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible. We will acknowledge receipt of your complaint within 2 business days.	\$20
	We will provide a response within 20 business days.	
Notification of planned interruption to your electricity supply (single event)	Where your premises will be directly affected, we will give you at least four (4) business days' notice of a planned interruption to the electricity supply in your area.	\$50
Restoring your electricity supply after an unplanned interruption in your area	We will take all steps that are reasonable and practicable to restore your electricity supply within a period not exceeding 12 hours of unplanned sustained interruption.	\$80
Total duration of interruptions (cumulative)	We will take all steps that are reasonable and practicable to minimise the cumulative hours for all unplanned, sustained interruptions impacting your premises in a financial year.	\$100 (>20 to <30 hours) \$150 (>30 to <60 hours) \$300 (>60 hours)
Frequency of unplanned interruptions	We will take all reasonable and practicable steps to ensure unplanned sustained interruptions impacting your premises do not exceed nine per financial year.	
Response time to notification of a network fault	We will respond to notification of a fault, problem or concern with the network which could affect public health or harm the public or property within 6 hours, and in all other cases 48 hours.	\$60 per day (maximum \$300)
	We aim to resolve at time of attendance. Where this is not possible you will be advised a timeframe for resolution.	

Figure 3: Evoenergy, 'Table of guaranteed service levels and rebates', *Customer charter for electricity networks*, June 2020.