



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS]

Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Chair), Michael Pettersson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Andrew Braddock MLA

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
22 February 2022

Asked by MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA on 22 February 2022: RAY HEZKIAL took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 22 FEBRUARY 2022, Page 19]

In relation to:

MR PETERSSON: Thank you. I was hoping you could provide some more information to the committee about the reliable water supply performance indicator. The results for the year was an average disruption of 146 minutes, which is right on the boundary of what is acceptable. What caused that result and are there plans to try and make it better for future years?

Mr Hezkial: We are always looking for opportunities to improve. Typically, our service levels are closely linked to a balance between the cost to deliver the service, the risks associated with the system and the performance levels we are targeting. In effect, those response rates are typically met. They relate to response times to attend and correct a fault, and we are always looking for ways to improve those. But in terms of specific reasons for that particular performance result, I think there would be a myriad and probably a case by case basis in terms of how each response evolves, but typically we work well within those targets and we do meet our timeframes.

MR PETERSSON: So how many unplanned interruptions were there in the reporting period?

Mr Hezkial: I do not believe I have that information available, but if you have a look at—if I have a look at interruptions to the system—if you just bear with me. We sort of range in the order of about 400 burst water mains per year. That is unplanned, reactive kind of work. And somewhere in the order of 3,000 odd sewer blockages that we clear each year.

And that is also supplemented by sort of the proactive sewer mains cleaning that we do and also any water mains renewal activities that we have as part of our capital works programs. And so we try and tackle it from both directions. We try and improve the way we respond to faults as they occur and then we also try and do some preventative maintenance programs to try and reduce those blockage rates.

MR PETERSSON: So would unplanned interruptions—that would only cover burst water mains and sewer blockages? It would not include upgrades?

Mr Hezkial: No, it would not include upgrades. So typically it involves network faults and emergencies, things of a reactive nature. So yes, a sewer blockage or a burst water main or a leaking water main that requires us to shut a segment of the network while we undertake the repair.

MR PETERSSON: So what was the longest unplanned interruption in the reporting period?

Mr Hezkial: I would have to come back to you with that to give you an accurate estimate, but it does depend on, obviously, the magnitude of the fault.

MR PETERSSON: I would love if you could take on notice—and hopefully you have got the data for this. But I would love the actual data spread of interruptions just across the spectrum.

Mr Hezkial: Like, case by case or—

MR PETERSSON: Yes. I do not necessarily need nitty gritty details, but I would just love to see a breakdown of that spread of durations and times.

Mr Hezkial: Certainly. We can have a look at that.

ANDREW BARR MLA: I sought advice from Icon Water and the answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

An unplanned water interruption commences when water is no longer available at the customer's first cold tap and ceases when 'normal' service is restored. The table below shows the duration of unplanned water interruptions in 2020–21.

Interruption time	Number of interruptions
0 - 1 hour	90
1 - 2 hours	116
2 - 3 hours	93
3 - 4 hours	59
4 - 5 hours	42
5 - 6 hours	22
> 6 hours	19
> 12 hours	1

The longest unplanned water interruption in 2020–21 occurred on 25 October 2020 with a duration of 17 hours and 30 minutes, affecting 12 properties. A large water main (600mm diameter) burst in O'Malley, rupturing approximately 4 metres of water main and disrupting water supply to 1,000+ customers. ACT Fire and Rescue and SES attended the site. An alternative supply was identified through re-routing the network and restored supply to a significant number of customers. The main was isolated and repaired. Bottled water was provided to customers without water for more than 12 hours. A technical post-incident review concluded that the incident did not indicate that other pipes in the main are susceptible to bursting.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Signature: 

Date: 3.3.22

By the Treasurer, Andrew Barr MLA.

