



Inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2026–2027 and Appropriation (Office of the Legislative Assembly) Bill 2026–2027

Answer to question on notice

Asked by: Mr Taimus Werner-Gibbins MLA

Addressed to: Minister for City and Government Services

Reference: City Services – City and Environment Directorate

Hearing: 22 July 2026

In relation to: CDS Erindale Reverse Vending Machine

Question received: 28 July 2026

Answer Due: 6 August 2026

(1) During Estimates hearings, officials acknowledged ongoing service reliability issues affecting the Reverse Vending Machine at Erindale. What are the identified causes of these reliability issues and what specific actions are being undertaken to address them?

(2) Does the Directorate or scheme operator collect data on the reliability, downtime, breakdown frequency and outage duration of individual Reverse Vending Machines? If so, please provide data for the Erindale RVM for the last 12 months.

(3) What is the long-term intention for the Erindale Reverse Vending Machine? Specifically, are current power supply issues being permanently addressed rather than managed on a reactive basis, and what is the plan if the reliability issues can't be resolved?

Tara Cheyne MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

1. The following factors were identified as contributing to the reliability issues:

- Power supply instability due to the site's solar-powered configuration, resulting in low battery events, charging interruptions, and system shutdowns.
- Container blockages and conveyor jams caused by damaged, crushed, or otherwise unsuitable containers entering the machine.
- Customer misuse, including the insertion of non-eligible items, forcing containers through the intake chute and overloading the system.
- Failed personal computer due to overheated motherboard.
- Reliability limitations associated with an older-generation Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) technology platform, which has proven less suited to Australian operating conditions.

Actions taken by Return-It to address reliability issues include:

- Increased servicing frequency and multiple daily site inspections.
 - Continuous remote monitoring of machine performance and fault conditions.
 - Rapid response processes for outages and operational issues.
 - Targeted customer education initiatives aimed at reducing contamination and misuse.
 - Inclusion of the Erindale RVM within the broader ACT technology upgrade program.
 - Ongoing assessment of site viability and evaluation of alternative power solutions to address the site's underlying power supply challenges. Should power reliability not be achieved, the Erindale RVM will be relocated.
2. No, the technology platform does not automatically record historical reliability metrics such as downtime, outage duration, or breakdown frequency. Return-It is proposing replacement technology to include the capability to capture and report these performance metrics. This is currently undergoing governmental approvals. In early 2026, Return-It manually identified the following data:
- Approximate uptime of 75% for the Erindale RVM between January and March 2026.
 - Mean Time to Attend of between 30 and 60 minutes for reported outages and operational issues.
3. Return-It's long-term intention is to relocate the Erindale RVM with mains power source.

Operational experience has demonstrated that solar power is not an optimal long-term solution for equipment. As a result, Return-It has incorporated power supply improvements into its broader remediation and technology upgrade planning. In addition, the site's automatic generator start systems have been updated so they activate when battery levels fall below operational thresholds, reducing the likelihood of service interruptions.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2026–2027

Signature:



Date:

7/8/26

By the Minister for City and Government Services, Tara Cheyne MLA