

COAL-FIRED POWER STATIONS — CLOSURE

148. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the joint media statement from the Premier and the Minister for Energy of 14 June 2022, which announced that “Western Australia’s State-owned coal power stations will be retired by 2030”.

- (1) Will the state’s gas-generation units be used to provide additional baseload power as the coal units are shut down?
- (2) Will gas-generation units have to increase their production during the transition away from coal to compensate; and, if so, by how much?
- (3) What was the average hourly electricity output of each of the current gas stations during 2022?
- (4) What will the average hourly electricity output of each of the current gas stations have to be in the future as the transformation process occurs?
- (5) Is there enough capacity in the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline to allow for this additional generation from gas?

Hon JACKIE JARVIS replied:

On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Energy, I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Energy.

- (1) Baseload demand for electricity in the south west interconnected system is falling each year. “Baseload” refers to the minimum demand, which in 2022 fell to under 600 megawatts. The south west interconnected system is transitioning to a high level of renewable energy production and will be firmed with dispatchable generation such as energy storage and gas-fired facilities that can respond as needed. This mix will ensure that supply continues to meet demand at all times.
- (2) The utilisation of gas generators is determined at their time of dispatch into the wholesale electricity market. Utilisation considers point-in-time demand for electricity, volume of renewable generation in the market, system requirements and network requirements.
- (3) There was 7 182 gigawatt hours of gas generation that was sent out into the south west interconnected system in 2022. The output of gas into the wholesale electricity market at every trading interval is data held by the Australian Energy Market Operator.
- (4) The utilisation of gas generators will be determined by future energy demand in the wholesale electricity market and will be determined by point-in-time demand for electricity, volume of renewable generation in the market, system requirements and network requirements.
- (5) All system planning undertaken for the future energy system considers the limitations of the Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline.