

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1237

asked on Tuesday, 09 September 2008

MR LEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY (MR WILSON)—

QUESTION:

Will he provide details about the Government's support for the development of renewable energy in Queensland?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his question.

The Bligh Government is committed to supporting and encouraging investment in renewable energy to ensure a clean energy future for all Queenslanders.

In September 2008, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, Premier of Queensland outlined her Government's long-term vision for Queensland in *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*. Q2 creates bold targets that will drive Premier Bligh's vision for a strong, green, smart, healthy and fair Queensland.

Renewable energy currently accounts for approximately 4.9 per cent of generating capacity in Queensland, and that figure is growing as the Bligh Government's focus on greenhouse gas reduction pays off.

With reference to support for the development of renewable energy in Queensland, the Bligh Government's investments into renewable energy initiatives include the Solar Homes Program, Solar Schools, Solar Cities, Solar Bonus Scheme, Cloncurry Solar Thermal Power Plant feasibility work, Windorah Solar Farm, Burke Shire Project, Solar Thermal Pre-Feasibility Study (Clinton Foundation), Solar Atlas, Solar Scholarships, Queensland Renewable Energy Fund (QREF), SolarGas One feasibility work, Geothermal Centre of Excellence, Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund (QSEIF) and the Birdsville Geothermal Power Station. In addition, two wind farm projects are currently being developed by industry in consultation with the Queensland Government. They are the Archer Point Wind Farm and the Coopers Gap Wind Farm.

Renewable Energy Investments – Queensland Government

Project	Description
Solar Homes Program	On 5 March 2008 the Queensland Government announced the Queensland Solar Homes Program to provide 1 kilowatt (kW) solar photovoltaic (PV) systems for 1,000 households in south-east Queensland and the regional council areas of Cairns, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and Fraser Coast.
Solar Schools	A \$60 million commitment to fit every Queensland State school with solar panels. The Solar Schools program was developed to help reduce the cost of electricity in schools, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide an educational opportunity for students.
Solar Cities	The Townsville Solar City Project will receive up to \$15 million from the State Government and its Government-Owned Corporation Ergon Energy. The project will see the installation of 500 solar panels and 2,500 smart meters, deliver 1,700 energy audits and trial new approaches to electricity pricing within selected homes and businesses on Magnetic Island and in the central Townsville area. Townsville is one trial site under the Australian Government's \$75 million Solar Cities Trial Program.
Solar Bonus Scheme	The Bligh Government's Solar Bonus Scheme provides a feed-in tariff for the surplus electricity generated by solar photovoltaic systems and exported to the grid on an instantaneous net metering basis. The Solar Bonus of 44 cents per kilowatt hour is paid for surplus electricity fed into the grid at any instant the customer's electricity usage is less than the solar panel is producing, ie whenever there is a surplus each second of the day.
Cloncurry Solar Thermal Power Plant	The Queensland Government has announced \$7 million funding which, subject to a satisfactory feasibility assessment will support the development of the proposed \$31 million 10 megawatt (MW) solar thermal power station in the north-west Queensland town of Cloncurry. The project is being led by a private consortium that includes Lloyd Energy Systems (LES) Pty Ltd and Snowy Mountain Engineering Corporation Developments Australia Pty Ltd.
Windorah Solar Farm	Queensland Government-Owned Corporation, Ergon Energy, is investing \$4 million in Queensland's first solar farm at Windorah in the state's south-west. The Windorah project will incorporate five 35 kW concentrated photovoltaic dishes producing up to 175kW of electricity. This project will significantly reduce diesel generation, replacing up to 100,000 litres of diesel and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by up to 350 tonnes a year.
Burke Shire	A project in the Burke Shire will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from diesel powered electricity generation. The project will include solar PV generation, battery storage, and diesel generator backup tailored for the needs of individual residences and businesses along with a number of energy efficiency measures such as energy audits, face to face training and support, rebates to support replacement of inefficient household appliances, insulation and air-conditioning.
Solar Thermal Pre-Feasibility Study (Clinton Foundation)	The Queensland Government is collaborating with the Clinton Foundation to undertake a preliminary assessment of the potential to establish a large scale solar thermal park in Queensland. The assessment will coincide with the Solar Atlas initiative.
Solar Atlas	The Queensland Government has committed \$250,000 to a joint venture with the Victorian Government to develop a map to aid industry in identifying suitable locations for solar power generation.

Project	Description
Solar Scholarships	A joint venture with the Victorian Government to fund 6 scholarships up to \$30,000 each, for Australian solar thermal energy researchers or industry participants to work with leading solar thermal firms.
Queensland Renewable Energy Fund (QREF)	QREF is a \$50 million investment by the Queensland Government to take renewable energy technologies from demonstration stage to commercialisation.
SolarGas One	Through the QREF the Queensland Government has committed \$7.5 million towards the proposed SolarGas One project, which subject to satisfactory feasibility assessment, will build the world's first multi-tower solar array system deploying SolarGas technology. Developed by the CSIRO and private enterprise, the technology combines natural gas and solar energy to produce a synthetic gas that is used to produce electricity. SolarGas has a 25 per cent higher energy content than natural gas, meaning a 25 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions per unit of output.
Geothermal Centre of Excellence	Through the QREF, the Queensland Government will establish a nation-leading Centre of Excellence to ensure Queensland is best placed to take advantage of the emerging source of 'hot rocks' or geothermal energy. The Queensland Government will provide \$15 million over the next five years to establish the Queensland Geothermal Energy Centre of Excellence. The University of Queensland will contribute a further \$3.3 million for the Centre's establishment.
Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund (QSEIF).	QSEIF, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, assists Queensland based organisations to develop innovative technologies that reduce consumption of fossil fuels, water or greenhouse gas emissions. Since 1999, QSEIF has committed over \$6 million in funding to over 60 projects in Queensland.
Birdsville Geothermal Power Station	The only geothermal power station currently in Australia is operated by Ergon Energy and located at Birdsville in far south-west Queensland. The power station provides up to 100 per cent of Birdsville's electricity needs at night. Operation of the geothermal power station utilizes hot bore water and reduces greenhouse gas emissions by up to 430 tonnes per year.

In addition, two wind farm projects are currently being developed by industry in consultation with the Queensland Government.

Archer Point Wind Farm	The proposed wind farm will be established south of Cooktown. It is a \$250 million project comprising 60 wind turbines each capable of producing 2 megawatts (MW) of electricity. The proposed wind farm would have an initial capacity of 33 – 66 MW and could expand to approximately 120 MW over a three year period.
Coopers Gap Wind Farm	The proposed wind farm will be located approximately 180 km north west of Brisbane in south eastern Queensland This project would generate approximately 1,330,000 MWh of electricity per annum.