



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Millmerran Power Project

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central— ALP) (Premier) (9.40 a.m.), by leave: I want to outline to the House today a number of clear demonstrations of what this can-do Government is achieving. I am delighted to inform the House that my Government has delivered on a major power project for Queensland. Last week we gave the go-ahead for the \$1.4 billion Millmerran power project on the Darling Downs. The Deputy Premier, Jim Elder, the Minister for Mines and Energy, Tony McGrady, and I presented a licence to generate to the project partners to build an 840 megawatt power station.

The project will involve construction of two 420 megawatt generating units and the development of a new coalmine to fuel supply. A mining lease has been granted for the new Millmerran coal mine. That project has been subjected to rigorous checks involving consultation with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Mines and Energy and the Australian Greenhouse Office. This is a major project, not just for the Darling Downs but for the whole of Queensland. It will generate 1,300 jobs, drive economic activity on the Darling Downs and help meet the increasing Statewide demand for electricity.

Demand for electricity is increasing by 3% a year, a surge that reflects growth in economic activity and investment in Queensland. The generation licence for the Millmerran project authorises the Intergen operating company to connect the proposed power station to the State's electricity grid. Intergen has advised that construction could be started as early as next month, and that means possible connection to the grid in June 2002.

We are not only delivering in the electricity industry; we also have a vision for this State's gas market. I believe Queensland has the potential to be the fastest-growing gas market over the next decade. Three years ago Queensland had the smallest market of any mainland State. But, as a direct result of a gas strategy developed by Labor, the gas market has increased by more than 50%. I believe that, if we continue to work with the private sector, we can expect that trend to see a 400% increase in the size of the current market by 2006. This increase would come from major gas-based industrial development and the increasing use of gas for power generation. I should mention that in relation to the Millmerran project they are also planning to plant two million trees as part of their commitment.
