



Speech by

Hon. T. McGRADY

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

Hansard 11 March 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electricity Industry

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: I am pleased to inform the House that a new era of consultation in the electricity industry will soon begin for communities throughout Queensland. Over coming days, advertisements will appear throughout the State seeking expressions of interest from people who can make a real contribution to the future directions of the Queensland electricity industry.

As part of a restructure of the Government owned component of the electricity industry, we are establishing regional electricity councils to provide a community voice and to provide community input into the State's electricity system. This is in line with a commitment for the industry to provide a high level of service in line with community expectations, and greater accountability from electricity corporations.

These aims require more effective input and greater communication to achieve the best results. With the reduction in the number of existing distribution corporations from seven to two, an opportunity is provided for this community input to occur from right across the State. Based on the geographical boundaries of the seven existing distribution corporations, members of the councils will be able to represent the views of communities right across the State. They will be able to evaluate how the system is performing and operating in their particular area. They will monitor power outages, and help to identify community issues and solutions.

These councils will not replace the old boards and they are not intended as replacements for boards. However, the councils will have direct input to the board and they will provide a true community-based view of the electricity industry. There are very valid reasons for providing a mechanism for communities to have a say on how the electricity industry is serving them.

For example, when I visited Mareeba a couple of weeks ago the Mareeba Chamber of Commerce expressed concern that some of its problems with electricity matters had been going unheard for years and they had no representation on the board. That group was excited about the prospect of finally being able to have a representative of their community presenting their views and concerns directly to the relevant board. I urge all members of this House to seize this opportunity and encourage community members in their electorate to consider putting up their hand for inclusion on one of these councils.
