



Speech by

Hon. T. McGRADY

MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

Hansard 20 July 2000

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cleaner Energy Strategy

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy and Minister Assisting the Deputy Premier on Regional Development) (9.41 a.m.), by leave: The new energy policy titled A Cleaner Energy Strategy and launched by the Premier in May made clear the Government's commitment to supporting renewable energy projects in Queensland. One of the new initiatives announced in the Cleaner Energy Strategy was the Government's commitment to increase from 1 July this year the amount of renewable energy purchased annually by the Government from 2% to 5%.

Once this target is reached, it will make the Queensland Government the largest purchaser of green power in Australia. I am therefore pleased to announce that Parliament House is the latest Government building to join the Government's green power purchasing program. The Queensland Legislative Assembly has signed a new electricity supply contract with Energex Retail which includes the purchase of 4.2 gigawatt hours per year of green power through the Earth's Choice program. This green power purchase is equivalent to 100% of the Parliament House and annexe consumption. This commitment will provide support to new renewable energy projects such as the wind farm at Windy Hill in far-north Queensland, the K5 mini-hydro project on the Tully River and the Rocky Point sugarmill power project near Beenleigh.

The Government is already supplying four major buildings in central Brisbane with green power—the Executive building, the State Government building, the Precinct Centre and, of course, the Queensland Minerals and Energy Centre. The Government has also recently signed up seven Government offices to green power programs in regional Queensland, specifically Townsville, Rockhampton, Cairns, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gladstone.

Since first subscribing to green power products in February 1999, the Government's green power purchase program has already helped to save over 30,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

I am also pleased to announce that the Queensland Government has recently implemented one of its major green power election commitments by signing up to the National Green Power Accreditation Scheme. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have signed an agreement establishing the National Green Power Accreditation Scheme and I am pleased to announce the scheme is now operational in Queensland.

Green power schemes, such as Energex's Earth's Choice and Ergon's Clean Energy programs allow customers to contribute a premium through their electricity account which is based on their consumption level. This premium allows retailers to source an equivalent amount of renewable energy on behalf of the customer. Through the provision of accreditation, the National Green Power Scheme gives assurance to green power customers that their voluntary contributions are being used to source electricity from renewable energy generators and to support the development of new renewable energy generators.

All green power purchased by the Government, including here at Parliament House, comes from accredited green power products. The green power schemes have growing support from business and domestic customers who see them as an opportunity to support investment in renewable energy projects. There are already over 15,300 domestic customers and nearly 300 business customers supporting green power in Queensland.

The national accreditation scheme also requires retailers to source increasing amounts of renewable energy from new projects as a means of encouraging development of new renewable energy resources. The green power schemes have enabled a number of renewable energy projects to proceed, including the Windy Hill wind farm at Ravenshoe in far-north Queensland; the Rocky Point sugarmill power project; the Caloundra-Maroochy hydro scheme at Landers Shute and the K5 micro-hydro expansion at the existing Kareeya hydro scheme near Tully.

Access to green electricity will become an increasingly important part of the services being demanded by customers in these modern times and the Queensland Government is at the forefront of ensuring that these options are indeed available.
