



Speech by

**Hon. Geoff Wilson**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

Hansard Wednesday, 14 March 2007

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Electricity Supply**

**Hon. GJ WILSON** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (9.58 am): The worsening drought has changed the way we lead our everyday lives. We are all conscious of the need to preserve water and we are also taking steps and making sacrifices; some big, some small. Importantly, we are all working together to meet those challenges.

Last week, I advised the House of the proposed restrictions by the Queensland Water Commission and their impacts on water used by the Tarong North Power Station and the Swanbank power stations from Wivenhoe Dam. Separate from this, since January, the big one—Tarong Power Station—has reduced its electricity generation by 25 per cent to save water. Today, Tarong Power Station is taking further action to meet the twin objectives of conserving water and securing a reliable bulk supply of electricity.

Tarong Power Station has advised this morning of an announcement to the market that it will reduce generation from 30 March by a further 45 per cent. This announcement complements the restrictions accepted by Tarong North and Swanbank power stations last week. Accordingly, Tarong Power Station has advised its intention to continue to operate two units at part load and temporarily take two units offline from the end of March. The part loaded units can increase output if required, and one of the offline units can be restarted within 36 hours. In that way extreme hot weather demands can be managed. Tarong Power Station is looking long term and has advised me that no jobs will be lost—jobs will be secure.

Tarong Power Station will closely monitor the new generating profile, and projections will be upgraded in light of actual water consumption, rainfall and inflows. It has advised that further adjustments may be made on that basis. Advice from the government task force, which includes Powerlink, is that these actions will provide sufficient supply options from southern Queensland power stations, central Queensland and the national grid to reliably meet the bulk power requirements of customers in south-east Queensland. We have also consulted with NEMMCO, the National Electricity Market Management Co., which is the national organisation that oversees power system security. This is all about striking the right balance between providing a secure and reliable electricity supply and meeting the water needs of the people of south-east Queensland—they are both vital. This means that, despite the drought, the bulk electricity supply to homes and businesses in south-east Queensland will remain secure.