



Speech by

Hon. Geoff Wilson

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Hansard Tuesday, 22 May 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Electricity Supply

Hon. GJ WILSON (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Mines and Energy) (10.19 am): This drought is the worst in living memory and has put pressure on our most vital commodities: water and power. They go hand in hand. We cannot have one without the other. We need power stations to provide us with electricity to get on with our daily lives.

A report on the impact of the drought on electricity by NEMMCO, the National Electricity Market Management Company, is expected to be released on Friday after the Ministerial Council on Energy has had an opportunity to consider it. The impact of the drought paints a grim picture for everyone. We are not alone. The consequences of the drought are being felt right across all the eastern states and Tasmania. We are in it together. And Queensland, like other states, has its eye on the ball. Several months ago I set up a special task force made up of key stakeholders from across government and industry to analyse in depth what the drought meant for electricity. The expert advice to the task force is based on a range of complex estimates and assumptions, including hydrology modelling. The task force meets every fortnight and monitors the situation every step of the way.

The state government is working with the power industry on ways to save water while at the same time maintaining a reliable and secure bulk electricity supply. We will shortly appoint an independent expert to double-check the work that has been done. This is 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.

Power stations are also playing their part. The Tarong Power Station has made significant water savings by reducing its generation by 70 per cent, the Tarong North Power Station will reduce its generation by 40 per cent, and the Swanbank site by 25 per cent. CS Energy also decided to further reduce Swanbank B's generation to two units for much of May to save more water. Advice from the task force is that Queensland is taking the right action to maintain a reliable and secure bulk supply of electricity for homes and businesses in south-east Queensland.

We are building now to meet future electricity needs. The recycled water pipeline will provide recycled water to Tarong and Swanbank. What we are putting in place now is our investment in the long-term future of each and every Queenslanders.