

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 790

asked on Wednesday 25 May 2005

MR ENGLISH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POLICY (MR MICKEL)—

QUESTION:

What are the benefits to business and Queensland of the successful ecoBiz Program?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for his strong and continuing interest in ecoBiz and the benefits this State Government initiative provides business. As you are aware the Government launched the ecoBiz program last year to encourage the State's business sector cut its potable water use, use more recycled water, and implement energy and resource saving measures.

ecoBiz is now supported by \$3 million a year in funding, and has attracted over 80 businesses to the program since its launch last June. The Redland Shire Council is the first ecoBiz program ally and has recruited 7 local businesses to the program, all of which are well on the way to improving their business performance. ecoBiz enables businesses to use inputs such as raw materials, water, energy and labour more productively, offsetting the costs of improving environmental performance, increasing productivity and therefore making companies more competitive.

Businesses can access a rebate if they can demonstrate a clear business case for investing in water, energy, and resource efficiency projects. Businesses have been motivated by the attractive returns on investment that eco-efficiency initiatives can generate, while others have been relieved that doing the right thing doesn't have to cost them money and contributes to the bottom line.

By showcasing what businesses can achieve through water, energy and resource efficiency improvements, the ecoBiz program encourages others to adopt similar practices and realise similar gains. An investment in one business becomes an investment in the entire industry sector across the State.

The water, energy and resources saved become available for further economic investment and productivity. Reductions in potable water use, energy consumption, and tradewaste defer costly upgrades of new energy and water generation and treatment plants, or eliminate them altogether.

The State's investment in ecoBiz has numerous multipliers with water, resources and energy saved at each step along the way. The examples show some of the intangible benefits including reduced pollution levels, increased production output and quality, improved staff morale, greater market access through improved environmental credentials, and insulation from changing environmental standards.