

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 547

asked on Tuesday, 17 April 2007

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**MR WEIGHTMAN** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR MINES AND ENERGY (MR WILSON)—

QUESTION:

Will he inform the people of the Cleveland Electorate what actions have been taken by this government to further the prospect of the use of geothermal energy as a sustainable alternative energy source for the people of Queensland?

ANSWER:

Geothermal energy has the potential to provide base-load power and is not hindered by intermittency issues associated with other renewable energy sources such as wind. However, the first step in making geothermal energy a sustainable alternative energy source, is to make land available for exploration and production.

The *Geothermal Exploration Act 2004* and the *Geothermal Exploration Regulation 2005* commenced on 25 March 2005. The *Geothermal Exploration Act 2004* provides a tender process for releasing land. The first geothermal release in Queensland was announced on 26 October 2005 and closed on 3 March 2006; and the second geothermal release for ten areas was announced on 1 December 2006 and closed on 5 April 2007.

We have now commenced a process to amend the existing *Geothermal Exploration Act 2004*, so that it can also deal with the production of geothermal energy. The amended legislation will enable the granting of production tenures, and a mechanism whereby an explorer who has identified geothermal resources may retain land for a defined period until production becomes economically viable.

On 12 April 2007, I opened a full day workshop in Brisbane to consult with industry and their legal advisers, as an important step in developing the new legislation. My department recognised that some key players in the geothermal industry were not able to attend the workshop, so written comments were also accepted on the discussion paper prepared for the workshop. These submissions will be used in the policy development process.

There will be further consultation with the public on a draft bill later in 2007 or early in 2008.