

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1583

asked on Wednesday, 29 October 2008

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

QUESTION:

With reference to works that are about to begin by Powerlink on a new high voltage transmission line between South Pine substation and the Sandgate substation at Deagon—

Will he advise how Powerlink will reduce the impact on the natural environment in the long-term?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question.

The Bligh government is looking beyond the horizon, planning and building now, for tomorrow's Queensland. Powerlink, a government-owned corporation, is playing an important role in meeting the future power needs of our fast-growing region. To meet the increasing demand for electricity, Powerlink is building new high voltage powerlines between the South Pine substation and the Sandgate substation. This is about delivering a secure and reliable electricity supply to households and businesses. Powerlink has advised it takes its environmental and social obligations seriously and carries out its work in full consultation with the community.

I have been advised by Powerlink that:

- (1) The new transmission line is a 275 kilovolt (kV) line to be built as 7 kilometre (km) of overhead line and, where there is insufficient space for an overhead line, 2 km of underground cable. Powerlink has completed a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the project, which included consultation with landowners, stakeholders and the local community late last year.
- (2) Powerlink is building the new transmission line largely alongside an existing ENERGEX sub-transmission line. The easement on which the existing ENERGEX line has been built has been widened in places, to accommodate the new transmission powerline.
- (3) The towers for the new powerline are similar in design to the existing ENERGEX towers and, where possible, will be erected in-step with the existing ENERGEX towers. This will help reduce the visual impact of the line and allow a number of existing ENERGEX access tracks to be used during construction and maintenance of the line.
- (4) To prepare for the new transmission line, selective vegetation clearing will be needed to ensure there is room for the towers and to ensure the new powerline is at a safe distance from tall vegetation. Powerlink commissioned Hollow Homes, (who design and install nest boxes for most Australian hollow-dependent fauna), to install fauna and nesting boxes near the section of the new line between the North Coast Railway line and Cabbage Tree Creek.

- (5) Construction on the new transmission line began in October this year and is expected to be completed in summer 2009-2010. In advance of construction work, Powerlink installed 40 fauna and nesting boxes near the new line to provide homes for species such as squirrel gliders, boobook owls, small parrots etc. The nesting boxes will remain in place, after the transmission line is completed.
- (6) The location of the new nesting boxes was determined following a review of Powerlink's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Environmental Management Plan (EMP), associated studies and the Cabbage Tree Creek Squirrel Glider Action Plan.
- (7) A fauna survey will also be carried out and a fauna management plan will be prepared and implemented by a qualified and experienced fauna spotter and catcher prior to any selective vegetation removal. Powerlink's selective vegetation removal practices give careful consideration to any sensitive vegetation which has been identified.
- (8) Powerlink is committed to ensuring all activities associated with the construction of the project are undertaken in accordance with the approved Environmental Management Plan (EMP). A Powerlink-appointed project environmental advisor will monitor construction works to ensure they adhere to the strict guidelines outlined in the project's EIS and the EMP.
- (9) Powerlink is also working closely with landowners along the length of the transmission line to determine opportunities for vegetation screen planting.
- (10) Powerlink is also working with local community groups to monitor any impacts on wildlife, sensitive vegetation and waterway.