

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 197

asked on Wednesday, 27 February 2008

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

QUESTION:

Will he detail what his department does for householders to encourage them to install solar energy in their homes?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government has committed to reducing emissions from stationary energy sector through the Smart Energy Policy. As communities and households, we also have a responsibility to contribute to reduce emissions and mitigate the effects of climate change.

I would like to highlight four key initiatives my department is leading of behalf of the Queensland Government to support domestic solar energy applications.

The first initiative, recently announced by the Premier, is the Solar Bonus Scheme which is a feed-in tariff to pay domestic and small energy customers for the surplus electricity generated from roof-top solar systems that is fed back into the Queensland Grid. Customers signed up to the scheme will be paid 44 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh) of surplus electricity fed into the grid which is around three times the current general domestic use tariff. The scheme is designed to make solar power more affordable for Queenslanders and stimulate the solar power industry.

The Department of Mines and Energy is also contributing \$5 million towards the Townsville Solar City project. This flagship solar energy demonstration project involves the installation of 5,000 solar photovoltaic (PV) systems along with 2,500 smart meters and 1,700 energy audits. Ergon Energy, one of the Queensland Government-owned Corporations, is leading this concerted effort which encourages households to embrace solar power and adopt energy conservation activities.

My Department is also encouraging households to consider using solar energy options through a package of energy conservation materials being developed under the expanded EnergyWise program. The energy self audit kits will assist households better understand their energy use. The kits will include a range of tips to reduce energy use and information on switching to more greenhouse-friendly energy options – such as solar hot water systems. The EnergyWise kits will be rolled out progressively across the State in the near future.

My Department also supports renewable energy generation through involvement in the National GreenPower Accreditation Program. At the end of December 2007, just

over 155,000 Queensland households and businesses voluntarily purchased renewable energy accredited by GreenPower.

In addition to the initiatives promoted by my Department, the Premier recently announced the Queensland Solar Homes Program which will involve the Government assisting 1,000 households in selected regions to purchase solar energy systems at a reduced cost. Currently, the out-of-pocket expense for these solar energy systems is between \$4,500 and \$5,000. By bulk-buying 1,000 1kW solar power energy systems, the Government can reduce the upfront costs of each individual system by up to \$3,500. In conjunction with the federal government rebate, households will have an out-of-pocket expense of around \$1,000 to \$1,500.