

Question on Notice
No. 395
Asked on Thursday, 13 March 2008

QUESTION:

MR FINN asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) — With reference to recent media reports highlighting the challenges presented by peak oil — What action is the Government taking to tackle these challenges?

ANSWER:

Oil is a finite resource and, if measures are taken now, it is a resource that we can use sustainably for a long time.

Before I was appointed as Minister, I chaired the Taskforce that investigated Queensland's Vulnerability to Rising Oil Prices. A report was prepared, which identified communities in outer urban and remote areas, and the transport, mining and primary industries sectors as the most vulnerable.

One of the key recommendations of the report was to develop an Oil Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan to prepare Queensland for a future of rising oil prices.

This is an opportunity for Queensland to provide leadership in responding early to the issue of peak oil and I am pleased to inform you that the Queensland Government is acting on this recommendation. An Oil Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan are being led by the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the Queensland Government.

The Strategy will send a clear signal to industry and community that the Government recognises that oil is a finite resource and active steps are needed to plan for the impacts.

The Strategy will include the clear steps needed to help Queenslanders lessen their reliance on liquid fossil fuels, encourage the development and use of alternative fuels, and prepare for demographic and regional changes as Queenslanders alter travel, work and living habits in response to rising fuel prices.

The future availability of fossil fuel and alternative energy supplies is one of the main sustainability issues facing society today.

The significance of this issue means that Queenslanders and people all around the world will need to address the increasing price and diminishing availability of oil in coming years.

By developing a strategy sooner rather than later, the Queensland Government can work to protect the lifestyle of Queenslanders and their need to travel, without needlessly damaging the environment.