

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 1744

asked on WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2009

MS DARLING ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND ENERGY AND MINISTER FOR TRADE (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

What part will geothermal energy play in Queensland's move towards cleaner energy sources and what specific geothermal initiatives has the government committed to?

ANSWER:

The Bligh Government is committed to supporting and encouraging the geothermal energy industry in Queensland.

The Government's Queensland Renewable Energy Plan was released on 12 June 2009. This Plan highlights an uptake target of 250 megawatts of geothermal energy by 2020.

To assist in achieving this, the Government has developed a number of initiatives including:

- A framework to support geothermal energy production in Queensland by preparing draft legislation which was released earlier this year for public comment. The proposed legislation responds positively to a number of issues raised by industry, such as removing the existing tender process for obtaining authorities; introducing retention status for exploration permits; and increasing the maximum authority areas that can be applied for;
- the release of an additional 3,450 square kilometres for geothermal exploration across the following six sites; Longreach, Peekadoo, Epsilon bore, Tooley Wooley, Wallawanny and Bulloo. The potential geothermal resources in this area now total around 40,000 square kilometres, and have the potential to create hundreds of green energy jobs;
- investing \$15 million over five years in the Geothermal Centre of Excellence, in partnership with the University of Queensland. This centre through its research and development, aims to position Queensland and Australia as leading technology providers in the growing international geothermal energy sector; and
- investing \$5 million to investigate additional sources of geothermal energy through drilling of purpose-specific wells close to existing transmission lines. The project will involve the collection and analysis of geo-scientific data to identify potential areas of high heat flow in geological belts along the coastal strip of eastern Queensland. A key component of this Coastal Geothermal Energy Initiative is a \$3.3 million drilling program. Drilling is expected to commence in mid 2010.

The Government was also pleased to be a sponsor of the 2nd Annual Australian Geothermal Energy Conference and trade show hosted by the Brisbane Hilton on 10-13 November 2009. This conference provided significant exposure for Queensland's geothermal industry to national and international delegates by providing information both on the opportunities within the state and the range of initiatives being undertaken by this Government. Over 400 delegates attended this conference. This is yet another example of this Government showing leadership in the renewable energy sector.

Geothermal is just one of the exciting renewable energy options the Bligh Government is pursuing as part of our Q2 vision to manage climate change and ensure a clean energy future for Queensland.