

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 899

asked on Tuesday, 14 June 2011

MRS ATTWOOD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENERGY AND WATER UTILITIES (MR ROBERTSON)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister provide an update on the energy conservation communities program in South East Queensland?

ANSWER:

Peak electricity use and providing a network to meet it is one of the key drivers of power prices, and the Energy Conservation Communities program is one part of the Queensland Government's strategy to meet this challenge. The Energy Conservation Communities program was launched in early 2010 and is one of the four programs of work contained within the \$44.7 million Energy Conservation and Demand Management Package funded by the Queensland Government. It is also part of *ClimateQ: Toward a Greener Queensland*, a Queensland Government initiative aimed at providing energy savings and emissions reductions.

Energy Conservation Communities is a large-scale community engagement project that is providing South East Queensland communities with education and technology to help address the issue of peak demand. Peak demand is one of the key pressures forcing the distributors, ENERGEX and Ergon Energy, to make large capital investments in the electricity network.

ENERGEX is partnering with local councils to implement awareness campaigns and to leverage off existing government or community programs within chosen geographical areas. In the member's own electorate, Mount Ommaney, there are 12 suburbs participating in the Brisbane Conservation Community.

The program helps residents with air-conditioning or a pool to reduce their electricity demand by using advanced load control technology and off peak tariffs, and by promoting energy efficiency measures.

The Energy Conservation Communities program aims to have 15 megawatts of load under control by June 2015. This reduction in demand will result in savings of over \$50 million from deferring investment in electricity generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure.

The program has made excellent progress towards its targets and is running ahead of schedule with more than 2600 households actively participating. Load management devices have been installed for 3336 air-conditioners and 596 pool pumps to reduce network demand, bringing nearly 4 megawatts under load control — over 25 per cent of the program target.

Three Energy Conservation Communities have already been launched in the Sunshine Coast, Redlands and Brisbane Centenary suburbs. The fourth Energy Conservation Community was officially launched on the Gold Coast on 28 June 2011. A further new community in Ipswich is planned for launch in September this year.

The Energy Conservation Community program will also help inform the implementation of the Queensland Energy Management Plan, which aims to save the State up to \$3.5 billion in network infrastructure costs by driving a range of initiatives that directly engage electricity customers, distributors and the broader community. Ultimately it is these programs that will provide us with new tools and ways to work with the community to more effectively manage electricity demand and ease upward pressure on electricity prices.