



WIND POWER / RENEWABLE ENERGY Thursday 22 July 2004

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): I rise to support the amendment and I thank the member for Bright for his kind words. The original motion by the member for Enfield is totally inaccurate and certainly improperly reflects my opinion. However, it does give me the opportunity to speak about one of my favourite subjects. I am delighted that I can now expect that the Labor government will support some things on which I have had my heart set for the past 10 years.

First, I am expecting that by next September (when we sit again) the Labor government will announce that it will have a 5 per cent renewable energy target for this state—and perhaps it can convince some of the other Labor governments that they might do so as well—because, unless this is just words, it has the opportunity to do just that. It can set a 5 per cent renewable energy target and that would certainly bring investment to South Australia.

In addition, I am expecting that there will be no more of this nonsense talk about putting a line between South Australia and New South Wales to bring in that dirty coal-fired power (which is causing such a problem to the environment) and encouraging them to develop that further. Help instead to put that regulated line on Eyre Peninsula so we can have a link into the grid and put the wind power energy from Eyre Peninsula into the grid to supply over 1 500 megawatts of power. That is about 20 per cent of the state's power. It could all come from Eyre Peninsula. All I need is the commitment from this state government to get behind it and put in that regulated line, or not even a regulated line, just a line. It has just spent \$64 million on subsidising gas for the people on the gas line from Moomba.

Obviously that \$64 million will not do anything for renewable energy but, if it had been put into renewable energy on Eyre Peninsula, it would have put that line in and it would have released 1 500 megawatts of renewable energy from wind turbines and started a whole massive new industry for South Australia. Perhaps we would not have lost the blade manufacturing to Victoria, which, I understand, will now be at Portland. We had a very good chance of getting it in South Australia. A report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu says that, if we could have got the wind power going quickly in South Australia, it would have meant \$4 billion for the economy of South Australia. That means that this Labor government has turned its back on \$4 billion worth of development and real jobs, which would have meant that people would not have to be on the dole or unemployed—that is,

\$4 billion of employment activity.

One of the areas where it is most needed is Whyalla. I visited the Whyalla Fabrications and Structural Engineering Company only a few weeks ago and, in anticipation, it had already bought steel rolling and cutting equipment ready to make the towers. However, because there has not been a commitment by the state government, equipment is standing idle. They could make the towers for the whole of South Australia, just as we could have made the blades.

Instead, that equipment is idle and Portland is going to get blade manufacturing. They are already making the towers in Portland. We could have been doing that in Whyalla, a Labor stronghold which badly needs new employment in a state which needs to raise the level of employment and, of course, it would do so much for renewable energy and cutting greenhouse gases. Unless the Labor government puts its money where its mouth is and does something practical and something positive, I suggest that it had better be quiet.

With respect to the federal government's white paper, I have been thrilled that the MRET target of 2 per cent was put in place, otherwise none of this would have happened. When I started speaking about wind power 10 years ago this was not in place and not much was happening. I can remember going to the state electricity company then, and one of the people there told me, 'Liz we have a wind turbine at Coober Pedy and it doesn't work', in other words, 'Go away, you silly little girl. This is never going to happen.' But once the federal government came on board and started showing an interest in cutting greenhouse gases it did begin to happen and we were able to get the first of the wind power companies, Babcock and Brown, to come and look at Eyre Peninsula.

Since then, we have had the first company build its towers and the energy is going into the grid. And, on Eyre Peninsula Hydro Tasmania is just starting its foundations to put another 33 towers there, and about 60 megawatts of power on Eyre Peninsula. But, as I said, 60 megawatts is nothing compared with the 1 500 megawatts that I could have on Eyre Peninsula. That would mean that I would have the triangulation of the power on Eyre Peninsula, which would back up existing industry we have. At the moment, there is a very old 132 kV line running down the east coast of Eyre Peninsula, which is about 30 to 40 years old and which badly needs an upgrade. If we could do that, we would be able to put in the new powerlines that are necessary—one along the west coast and one along the east coast—and take out wind energy. That would mean we would have adequate wind power to start developing other resources such as iron ore, gold and diamonds, and we would be able, as I have mentioned before, to desalinate enough water to start using the *terra rossa* soils that are right across the region.

People do not realise that we have to have something like that or we will lose our hospitals and our schools on Eyre Peninsula. There are 10 hospitals and 72 education facilities and, unless we have more development in the region, there will not be enough people to warrant these schools and hospitals. Because the area is so big, it will mean that there will be fewer people because there will be fewer jobs. So, I am asking that that investment be made.

I think that we could easily double the population on Eyre Peninsula from 22 000 to

44 000 voters. I would then have half the area to cover, and it would mean that the Premier would be able to start looking at possibly fulfilling his commitment to have the export industries triple in 10 years. He is certainly not going to do that unless there is this kind of support in infrastructure.

I am thrilled with the federal white paper, because it is giving funding for things like \$20 million to the development of systems to hold renewable energy. I have recently had a look at the vanadium battery on King Island. The vanadium battery will take out the fluctuations in power that is found in wind energy because the wind, as they keep telling me, does not blow all the time. But I am a lot more interested in what is called the graphite block energy storage system, especially as I happen to have one of the biggest graphite mines in the world, south of Port Lincoln. If that could be used to make these graphite blocks we could sell them around the world, and I would have another huge world-class green industry exporting from Port Lincoln, where we have the deepest natural deep water harbour. These graphite block energy storage systems, I think, may be able to hold enough energy not just to take out the fluctuations in the wind energy but also to hold it for peak power. At the moment, you can not hold wind energy for the periods of peaking power. To be able to put it into the grid when you want to would mean that the whole viability of using green energy from wind power would be changed and we would be able to use it all the time instead of people saying, 'Well, it's only reliable for part of the time.' The graphite block technology is a brand new invention. The first one is located at Cooma in New South Wales. I am hoping to get there to have a look at it and find out whether it really is going to be as good as it sounds.

So, before September, I am expecting a 5 per cent renewable energy target from the state government. I do not see that it has to be held to the federal government—or perhaps it does not think we need state governments. The state government could do it if it wanted to. I think it would be a huge attraction for wind energy. I am expecting that all talk of this interconnector between here and New South Wales and those dirty coal-fired power stations will be dropped. I am also expecting that there will be money (and I do not think that I even need as much as the \$64 million that was given to subsidise the gas industry; I think we could do it for less than that) to put the transmission lines around Eyre Peninsula, down the west side—a new one on the east would be nice—and put wind power into the grid. So, that would be 1 500 megawatts of power, 20 per cent of the state's power, coming from green energy. Perhaps the government could also help with the graphite block technology, which would mean that we could hold power for peaking, and then I think we would make a significant contribution to green-house gas abatement in this world.