

## ELECTRICITY (WIND POWER) AMENDMENT BILL – July 22 2010

Adjourned debate on second reading.

(Continued from 1 July 2010.)

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (11:11):** I rise to support this bill. I note that the Hon. Acting Speaker currently in the chair brought this matter to the house and I think it is very sensible legislation. The objectives of the Electricity Act 1996 are to promote efficiency and competition in the electricity supply industry; promote establishment and maintenance of a safe and efficient system of electricity generation, transmission, distribution and supply; establish and enforce proper standards of safety, reliability and quality in the electricity supply industry; establish and enforce proper safety and technical standards for electrical installations; and protect the interests of consumers of electricity.

The bill seeks to amend Division 3AB—Feed-in mechanisms of the Electricity Act 1996. Section 36AC—Interpretation will be amended in relation to the definition of a 'qualifying generator'. Currently the definition is associated with a small photovoltaic generator. However, the amendment would add a second definition to therefore include the small wind turbine generator.

The wind turbine generator will be operated by a 'qualifying customer' and will comply with any standard prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this definition. It will also be connected to a distribution network in a manner that allows electricity generated by the wind turbine generator to be fed into a network. As I said earlier, I commend the member for Finniss in bringing this bill to the house. It does seem odd that we can have solar power and get the benefit of having feed-in tariffs for that and not for another great renewable energy source—wind power—as an addition to photovoltaic cells.

We have a government that keeps telling us how great they are at dealing with renewable energy sources in this state. The sad thing is that so many of these renewable energy sources are so far from being developed. We on this side of the house certainly do back geothermal power as baseload power and we certainly understand the economics of providing baseload power which is being developed under solar, with different technologies moving forward there (that is a good word; moving ahead I should say. I will have to get Hansard to fix that up) with the option of new solar power being able to be run over 24 hours where the power is stored when it is captured during the day and then can be utilised obviously at night.

Certainly we have heard a lot from this government about how much wind power there is in this state, but you have to remember that wind power is capable of operating for only a small percentage of time. Sometimes there is no wind and sometimes there is too much wind, but it certainly is not a baseload power. Certainly, for individual operators, whether they be in outback areas or too far away to connect to the grid, people for a long time have been used to using things such as free light towers and wind power to provide power in their situation, and a lot of these people tie that in with solar power. Obviously, if you are disconnected from the system, you cannot get the benefit of getting any feed-in tariff. However, it certainly shows the initiatives individuals can take on an individual basis, because of the effort involved in shifting power lines or even to shift a power pole.

A bit of work was done on a road entrance into the T&R meatworks. I stand to be corrected, but there was a major pole on the corner of the road and to shift it was going to cost \$240,000, which is just absolutely ridiculous. In the end, T&R and the people involved in adjusting the road managed to put the road up as hard as they could, within reason and legalities, to this pole. Returning to wind power, as I have said before, we have many wind farms in this state. People have different views about wind farms, but there is certainly a lot of production going on, which is good. Let's not ever shy away from the fact that we are a long way from having sustainable green energy of a baseload nature in this state.

In relation to geothermal energy, I have been on the site at Innamincka, where they have been trying to tackle the great pressures and heat of geothermal energy. The rig is sited about 15 kilometres out of Innamincka. They have brought in bigger rigs to dig deeper holes. It is all about managing to control the water flow and controlling it as water that comes up to the surface and where it comes out.

I hope they harness it in the future but, in the shorter term, there should be the opportunity for people who live wherever there is wind, and in most places there is. South Australia is well known for wind power—the Mid North, the West Coast, Yorke Peninsula, Cape Jervis and even through quite a bit of Adelaide, especially in the Adelaide Hills. There are plenty of spots where people, with the right amount of incentive, could generate green power for themselves, which would certainly ease the load on the coal-fired power stations in this state.

Let's never shy away from the fact that, while it seems to be taboo to debate nuclear power in this state, we will have to rely on coal-based generation for our main baseload generation needs for a long time yet. There are many factors involved in that: it is so cheap and it is easily accessible. In fact, I noted the other day that, as far as our coal exports out of this country are concerned, there is a port near Mackay that at times has 51 empty coal ships waiting to load at any one time to export the product.

This is where the federal government, under former prime minister Rudd, did not seem to understand, when it brought in its 40 per cent mining tax, the impact it could have on the Australian economy in regard to regional people and regional employment and also the gross wealth of the nation. The federal government just wanted to tax the mining industry to bits, and I believe that was the final death nail for Kevin Rudd and when Julia decided to throw the knife in.

However, be that as it may, I do commend this motion. I think it is a very sensible piece of legislation. We should all be doing our best to generate as much green power as we can. I note that the Premier comes into this chamber and keeps talking about the 100 gegalitre desalination plant that will be hooked into green power. Well, no, what will happen is that the desalination plant will be plugged into essentially the black grid and we will pay more for the power. It will just be a feel good option that, supposedly, we are running on 100 per cent green energy. Well, if the government can guarantee that the wind will be blowing all the time and that the sun will be up all the time, which I don't think it can, it will not be running full time on green energy.

We do support green energy on this side of the house, but we know the realities of generating it and we know the vagaries of when it is available, and it is certainly not available all the time. However, anything we can do to ease our load as our population grows is worthwhile so that people can feel good about themselves in their own small way. In fact, we will have people who will virtually be able to wean themselves off the grid, but it does take a big investment. So, there is certainly that disincentive for people. However, people need options such as wind power so that they can make it economical.