

ENERGY — TECHNOLOGIES

96. Ms J.J. SHAW to the Minister for Energy:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to delivering cleaner and greener energy, diversifying our economy and supporting new sustainable job-creating industries.

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is responding to imminent challenges facing WA's energy sector?
- (2) Can the minister outline how this response will create new jobs for Western Australians?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

I am pleased to answer the question. I want to acknowledge the hard work that the member for Swan Hills did in the last Parliament as the chair of the committee that inquired into microgrids and congratulate her on those insights that are assisting the government's response to rising distributed energy resources in Western Australia.

- (1)–(2) The government is dedicated to making our electricity system cleaner, greener and ready for the future. In the last 12 months, 300 megawatts of additional solar has been put into the south west interconnected system. To put that into scale, that compares with the largest single power station in the south west interconnected system, the Collie power station, which is 340 megawatts. That is, basically, an entirely new power station paid for by mums and dads. We want to make sure that that type of investment is at the heart of our energy transformation.

I congratulate Stephen Edwell and the Energy Transformation Taskforce, whose work is just about complete, on the road map that it has provided to the government to deal with this changing energy environment in Western Australia and globally. The key element of that strategy is our distributed energy resources road map, with which we are trying to build distributed energy resources into the system. Rather than having installations that are additional to the system, we want to embed them so that the system can work with high levels of rooftop solar. Unlike the crazy plans of the member for Cottesloe, we want a sensible plan that rewards families for their investment into the system. As part of that, Western Power has installed 10 PowerBanks—that is, batteries that are embedded into the distribution network. We are now testing this globally important piece of work to see what additional response we can get out of that. Those embedded batteries will continue to be installed across the south west interconnected system.

We are trialling a tariff that rewards people's energy consumption, so if they consume electricity in a manner that supports the grid, they will be rewarded for that. It is pleasing to see the 400 people on that trial responding very positively to the opportunity that they are engaged in.

We are also about to launch Project Symphony, we hope, in the electorate of Southern River. That will bring together, through Western Power, Energy Policy WA, Synergy, the Australian Energy Market Operator and a range of universities, the coordination of rooftop panels, behind-the-meter batteries, embedded batteries and appliances so that they can act as a virtual power plant. That will show that it is about not just increased supply, but also the use of demand to make sure that we can manage the system. That globally significant project will be done here in Western Australia. I want to congratulate everybody involved in that project.

Finally, I want to talk about standalone power systems. Western Australia is uniquely placed to take advantage of this. I am pleased to say that last year, we launched a second round of standalone power systems, all manufactured here in Western Australia. During the election campaign, the Labor Party committed to building 1 000 additional standalone power systems here in Western Australia. Western Australian manufacturing businesses are leading the globe in this technology. I also want to let people know that Horizon Power is, in fact, investing directly in the manufacture of these standalone power systems. One of the companies involved in Western Australia is called Boundary Power. It is a joint venture between Horizon Power and Ampcontrol, a leading supplier of technological solutions to the global energy sector. Boundary Power is now a joint venture that will be manufacturing here in Western Australia to support the rollout of standalone power systems. They will be delivering 17 SPSs on the edge of the grid over the next period of time. It is an exciting opportunity.

Here in Western Australia we have technology that is leading the globe and we are trying to support businesses to export their technology to other parts of Australia and the rest of the world, which is exactly what was recommended by the member for Swan Hills in the excellent report that she did in the last Parliament. The good news is that the McGowan Labor government is committed to a greener energy future. We want to make sure that those technologies are being developed here in Western Australia.