

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET

**217. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Energy:**

- (1) Can the minister update the house on how the government is fulfilling its obligation to meet the federal government's renewable energy target?
- (2) Can he advise whether the state has been properly prepared to meet these obligations; and, if not, why not?

**Mr B.S. WYATT replied:**

- (1)–(2) I can. I have some good news for the house. As members are aware—I think all members are aware—the federal government's renewable energy target requires us as a state to produce a certain amount of renewable energy by 2020 and to maintain that level through to 2030. I think it has been well debated. The member for Warren–Blackwood, who is not here today, has brought on a range of debates in this space, particularly in this area. But we are required to do a couple of things. We can pay a penalty or we can buy certificates. I think the Liberal opposition's position is to buy certificates as opposed to building anything—just going on what has been said on radio.

Today we announced the first stage of what hopefully will be broader renewable regeneration in Western Australia. A joint venture between Synergy; Dutch Industry Fund, a Dutch investor; and, importantly, Cbus Super, a large industry super fund, have established Bright Energy Investments to deliver stage 2 of the Greenough River Solar Farm. The member for Geraldton can thank me later! Of course, we are going to refurbish—work has already started—the Albany wind farm, which at the moment is reaching the end of its life. It was to close by the end of this year due to safety reasons, but this announcement will secure the life of the Albany wind farm through to 2026 and will increase the capacity of Greenough River Solar Farm from 10 megawatts to 40 megawatts.

I am surprised that this approach has been critiqued by the Leader of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Energy around private sector investment in providing renewables.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister for Tourism, you are standing in between the Speaker and your own speaker.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** There was a fierce dispute in the former government about whether it should proceed with something similar, admittedly without the involvement of a super fund. There was a fierce dispute between the former Treasurer and the former Minister for Energy, which in itself is not unusual, but somewhat surprising because he was of course the same person in the former government. As a result, the former Minister for Energy, after telling Synergy that he supported the Synergy renewable fund and taking it through to cabinet, fiercely opposed it as the former Treasurer. Ultimately, it was the palindrome side of the Leader of the Opposition who fiercely opposed this particular proposal who won. That is why the question has been put: how could we land a position on this issue when the Minister for Energy and the Treasurer in the last government fought so furiously over it? When I came to government I said, “We're nearly there. We've got to plan for our obligations.” Everyone looked at me blankly—we have got this! Unfortunately, the former Treasurer and former Minister for Energy fought furiously in the former government on this matter. I happen to have both portfolios as well, but I do not want to fight with myself. I thought, “Why doesn't Energy and Treasury come up with a considered plan that everyone can support?” They did that.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I was able to bridge the huge gap that the Leader of the Opposition had between his two personalities of Energy and Treasury and land a position that Treasury and Synergy supports. That has now resulted, I think, in a good outcome of private sector investment in renewable energy generation in Western Australia.

**Dr M.D. Nahan** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, you are on three.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I am disappointed, Leader of the Opposition, that you could not get it up as Minister for Energy, but I also commend you as former Treasurer for managing to get rid of it in that capacity.

It is a good outcome. We are already seeing good work happening down in Albany. I expect, no doubt, that after this the member for Geraldton will embrace me warmly.