

ENERGY — SUPPLY

523. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:

I have a supplementary question. When will the minister reveal the detailed plan to demonstrate that we can have a reliable power supply with the Collie power stations closed?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:

The member must not read the budget papers.

Dr D.J. Honey: That is not a plan.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I do not understand. This shows the depth of the ignorance of the member for Cottesloe. No wonder he was dumped as shadow Minister for Energy! The Australian Energy Market Operator operates the electricity system in the south west interconnected system. What we are doing in our investments is replacing the coal-fired power stations in Collie, and we have a detailed plan. It is not some future plan; it is currently being implemented. Let us understand that KBESS 1 and 2 and CBESS will provide 800 megawatts of instantaneous energy capacity. That is more than is currently available in the coal-fired power stations.

Dr D.J. Honey: For a couple of hours. Where is your modelling? Where is it?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: As I keep saying to the member, it is just mind-blowing how little he understands about the electricity system. It will have 800-megawatt capacity. I am not talking about its storage capacity; I am talking about its instantaneous capacity to discharge electricity. That means it will have more capacity to put electricity into the system than the coal-fired power stations combined. Remember, peak time is only a few hours. That is why the Australian Energy Market Operator has not asked for long-term energy storage. When the Australian Energy Market Operator recommends—it is the one that makes those decisions—that we need long-term storage, it will go to market and ask for it. At the moment, it is asking for what is called four-hour storage, and that is exactly what the private sector and the public sector are providing. As I keep saying, we are replacing the capacity of the coal-fired power stations. We are going from systems that need 24 hours, 48 hours or three-days' notice to come online to systems that are instantaneously available. It is because the system is based on renewable energy. We are going from one-third renewable to two-thirds renewable within seven years. This is a great celebration. People come from around the world to see how we are managing this transition because we are ahead of the transition in the rest of the world. I understand that the member is stuck in the past, but that is no excuse for ignorance.