

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

**587. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Energy:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to delivering a safe, stable and secure electricity system. Can the minister update the house on this government's work on strengthening the energy supply and bolstering its reliability during summer?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

Over the weekend we had two very significant events in the electricity system, and I am sure the shadow minister is across this as well. We had two record lowest system demands—on Saturday at 683 megawatts, and on Sunday at 626 megawatts of system demand. People often talk about maximum demand, but they do not realise managing minimum demand is equally complex. When I became minister, I was told that this would not be possible, that we could not go below 900 megawatts in Western Australia's south west interconnected system. We are now one-third below that. That is because of the changes we have made to the operating environment, the technical rules and the market structure of the system in Western Australia, and I want to compliment the Australian Energy Market Operator, Western Power and all the participants in the market. That meant that 74 per cent of underlying demand was being provided by people's rooftop solar, because we endorse and celebrate putting on rooftop solar. I know that is opposed by the Liberal Party, but we drive that. That is one of the really great achievements of the people who manage the energy system here in Western Australia.

Yes, we have a challenge now for getting through this summer. I have already given an answer to the shadow minister about coal supply, but people should know about three other things. BP, when it shut its refinery, also shut the cogeneration facility that provided 80 megawatts of capacity in Western Australia. There were two waste-to-energy projects—so strongly supported by the previous government—that have a combined total of 54 megawatts, and they have not been delivered on time because of their own challenges. That is 134 megawatts of supply from the private sector that will not be available to the system this summer because of deliberate actions or failures to act by the private sector. The good news is that the government of Western Australia, working with the Australian Energy Market Operator, is responding to that situation. That is the reason we will have a shortage of capacity this summer; it is not anything to do with Synergy. That is why, by managing the coal supply at this time of year, we are going to keep Synergy in a position to support Western Australia's electricity network. We are taking action, with the Australian Energy Market Operator, to fill the gap left by the private sector through these three failures. That is why that certified capacity is not going to be available to us this year—that certification being run by the Australian Energy Market Operator—but we are going to manage it through the good work of Synergy and Western Power, combining with the Australian Energy Market Operator and some private sector operators, to make sure that we have the capacity we need for this summer.