



LAI UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE
THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT



10/11/04
Queensland
Government

Hon John Mickel MP
Member for Logan

Minister for Energy

Your Ref: 342-04 and 346-04
Our Ref: E/04/01095

- 5 NOV 2004



Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter of 20 August 2004 concerning petition number 342-04 lodged in the Queensland Legislative Assembly from residents in an area north of the Daintree River.

As this area is excised from Ergon Energy's electricity Distribution Authority, these residents rely on the use of Stand-Alone Power Systems for their electricity supply. The petition requests that Parliament order the installation of meters at every house and business and charge all householders and business owners for their electricity consumption at the same rate as the rest of Queensland, and to reimburse all householders and business owners the full cost of properly receipted equipment, fuel, maintenance and equipment replacement costs, less subsidies.

Petition number 346-04 which was also contained in your letter of 20 August 2004 and deals with water supply issues, is a matter for the Honourable Stephen Robertson MP, Minister for Natural Resources and Mines.

I provide the following response to be published on the Parliamentary website in response to petition number 342-04.

'I note the concerns of the petitioners regarding their exclusion from the Queensland Government's Uniform Electricity Tariffs policy as a result of the Government excising an area north of the Daintree River from Ergon Energy's Distribution Authority.

Level 17
61 Mary Street Brisbane Qld 4000
PO Box 216 Brisbane Albert Street
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3225 1861
Facsimile +61 7 3225 1828
Email energy@ministerial.qld.gov.au

Approximately 17,000 hectares between the Daintree River and Cape Tribulation in Far North Queensland is classified as National Park and is part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area. In order to help preserve the natural values of this unique region, the Queensland Government has a clear policy of opposing any further extension of reticulated electricity supply north of the Daintree River. As an alternative, the Government supports the use of Stand-Alone Power Systems incorporating renewable energy technology.

To ensure residents in the Daintree received electricity in the most ecologically sensitive manner practicable, at the same time as it put a halt to extending reticulated electricity supply to this region, the then Labor Government introduced a 'Daintree Remote Area Power Supply Rebate Scheme'. This scheme provided funding support of up to \$15,000 from the State Government, and a further \$7,500 from the Commonwealth Government, for householders who installed Stand-Alone Power Systems incorporating renewable energy technology such as solar panels. This scheme concluded on 30 June 2001, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated approximately 150 residents in the Daintree exclusion zone received a subsidy under the scheme.

There are a number of communities and properties across Queensland, especially in the remote west, that rely on their own Stand-Alone Power Systems for their electricity needs.

The Queensland Government affords financial support to these residents by way of the 'Renewable Energy Diesel Replacement Scheme' (REDRS) which provides a 50 percent rebate for the installation of new renewable Stand-Alone Power Systems.

In addition, residents wanting to upgrade or replace their current systems (including battery banks and enabling equipment) can access REDRS funds provided they simultaneously purchase additional renewable energy components (such as solar panels). In this manner, residents simultaneously increase their use of renewable energy generation, decrease the run time of their diesel generator, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and receive a 50 percent subsidy on their capital costs.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance. Should you have any further enquiries, please contact Mrs Andrea Wold of the Department of Energy on telephone 3239 0046.

Yours sincerely



JOHN MICKEL
Minister for Energy