



MEDIA RELEASE

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RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGET LEADS LABOR'S GREEN ENERGY REVOLUTION

Labor has vowed to push ahead with Western Australia's green energy revolution by establishing a renewable energy target for WA's main electricity grid and investing in new projects such as a solar energy program for schools.

Releasing Labor's \$59.75 million Renewable Energy Policy, Premier Geoff Gallop said Labor's top priority was to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the South West Interconnected System from 1 per cent to 6 per cent by 2010.

The target represents a 50 per cent increase above what would be expected under the Commonwealth's Mandatory Renewable Energy Target (MRET) scheme.

Labor will achieve the target by supporting the expansion of MRET or, if necessary, other mechanisms aimed at delivering renewable energy in a competitive market environment.

"To reach this target, we will need to build the equivalent of another dozen Albany wind farms by 2010," Dr Gallop said.

"Under Labor, renewable energy production in Western Australia will continue to grow and new projects will be developed."

Wind farms and other renewable energy projects across the State currently have a total capacity of about 30MW.

Another 140MW of wind farm projects are either under construction or consideration.

Dr Gallop said Labor's commitment to harnessing the State's world-class renewable energy resources would continue in the second term.

"Building a better future for Western Australia means taking advantage of our abundant renewable energy resources including wind, solar, biomass and wave power," Dr Gallop said.

"During the last four years we have funded renewable energy projects, provided incentives for consumers to utilise renewable energy technology and established the Sustainable Energy Development Office."

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Another new renewable energy initiatives involves installing solar power systems at up to 100 schools across Western Australia during the next four years.

The \$1million Solar Schools program will see both metropolitan and regional schools harness the power of the sun as part of a plan to promote the importance of renewable energy.

Under the scheme, Labor will fund up to 80 per cent of the cost of renewable energy systems for 100 schools, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per school.

Government schools can fund the remainder of costs through five-year Energy Smart Government loans, which will be paid for by savings made on electricity costs.

A 1kW solar system, with photovoltaic power, generally costs \$10,000 to \$15,000 – ongoing costs are minimal.

“Solar Schools will serve as a strong education tool for students to learn more about renewable energy,” Dr Gallop said.

“In the long run, schools will also save thousands of dollars on their electricity bills and deliver a better outcome for the environment.”

Labor will also commit to establishing eight new renewable energy projects in remote towns during the next four years.

Coral Bay on the Ningaloo Coast has already been identified as one of the eight towns to benefit with Labor committing to build a new \$5.7million wind-diesel power system, subject to support from the Commonwealth.

An additional \$1.9million has been set aside to 2007-08 to ensure the undergrounding of the new system and to provide electricity to Coral Bay customers at the uniform tariff rates.

“Western Power has developed world-class renewable energy technology suited to small, isolated communities and fringe of grid areas, where local generation can improve reliability,” Dr Gallop said.

“We will work to secure more flexible funding arrangements for the Commonwealth’s Renewable Remote Power Generation Program to support fringe of grid applications.”

Among other new initiatives, Labor will take a major stake in developing a high-profile renewable energy project in the Goldfields – the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Sun Farm.

Dr Gallop said Labor would provide up to \$2.5million for a 2MW-2.5MW world-class photovoltaic solar generator, in conjunction with the City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder and the Commonwealth.

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The project will use unique Australian technology based on 15m dishes, which track the sun and focus energy on super-efficient solar cells.

The Gallop Government will work with the Commonwealth to utilise Renewable Remote Power Generation funding to help support the project – which has an estimated total cost of \$12million to \$15million.

The Premier said up to \$500,000 would be available for a similar renewable energy demonstration at a high profile location in Perth.

The renewable energy package also includes:

- Ensuring that the new desalination plant is completely powered by renewable energy;
- Completing trials of the mallee-fuelled Integrated Wood Processing technology at Narrogin - based on the outcomes of the trial, a strategy for will be developed for introducing biomass-based renewable energy in agricultural areas.
- Finalising a renewable energy strategy including a renewable energy target for 2020.

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