

Senate Standing Committee on Economics

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Resources, Energy and Tourism Portfolio
Budget Senate Estimates
1 June 2010

Question: BR8
Topic: Mildura solar project
Proof Hansard Page: E39

Senator Eggleston asked:

Senator EGGLESTON-I have a couple of questions. We had a large solar array, did we not, near Mildura? I believe that is no longer operating. Is that the case?

Mr Clarke-I will start, but I will ask Mr Stone, if he is listening, to join us at the table. There have been a number of project announcements and there is a demonstration project in the Mildura vicinity. I am not aware of the status of those Mildura projects.

Mr Stone-Are you referring to the solar systems project?

Senator EGGLESTON-I thought there was a very large experimental solar power station near Mildura, and that that had ceased operating.

Mr Clarke-There is a small demonstration project in the region that was related to the company Solar Systems. The department is not aware of its current operating status. A number of projects have been proposed for the area, including some in our current solar flagships program. For the sake of surety I will take your question on notice.

Answer:

The only solar power project we are aware of in the Mildura region is the proposed Solar Systems power station. Under the Low Emissions Technology Demonstration Fund, the Australian government announced funding of \$75 million in 2006 to Solar Systems Group (SSG) to build a concentrated solar power plant with a capacity of up to 154MW near Mildura. The Victorian Government allocated \$50 million to this project. SSG went into voluntary administration on 7 September 2009.

On 16 March 2010, Silex Systems Ltd announced that it had completed the acquisition of SSG, as a wholly owned subsidiary. The Australian Government is in discussions with Silex about the Mildura Solar Power Project.