

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

Solar Energy

Mr ROBERT (Fadden) (6.51 p.m.)—I recently met with the manager of the Oxenford and Coomera Youth Community Centre in the electorate of Fadden, which is the fastest-growing electorate in the nation. She asked me a very pertinent question with respect to her centre and, indeed, the other centres in the area. The question was: why aren't we eligible for the solar energy conversion funding that is available for schools? I did some research and you can imagine my surprise when the answer from the government was simply: 'We didn't consider youth centres.' Despite the rhetoric, the Rudd government has fallen down on what should be a vital part of Australia's alternative energy strategy. Since elected, the Rudd government has scrapped for solar panel rebate for households earning over \$100,000. In the House, Minister Garrett explained that the rebate program was 'overheating'. Perhaps that is a code word for: 'Far too many people wanted it for a consciousness about the environment and we thought, "Well, we can't possibly have that."' The bottom line for the Rudd government is that far too many indeed want to have the rebate. We should encourage them. We should provide the money for youth centres in the area to allow them to make use of alternative energies. If the government truly believes that alternative energy could be part of the government's strategy to reduce carbon emissions, it should look to expand the number of people and organisations that can take advantage of such schemes.