



Speech by

Mr DOUG SLACK

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Hansard 9 June 1999

BURNETT WATER STORAGE

Mr SLACK (Burnett—NPA) (10.21 a.m.): This Premier and his team of spin doctors have tried very hard to convince this Parliament and any member of the media willing to listen what an honourable, nice guy he is. But is he? In my books, a nice guy keeps his word and an honourable nice guy certainly would not stand in front of a gathering of regional voters and media and make a cynical promise that his Government had no intention of keeping.

It is now 12 months since the then Opposition Leader, Peter Beattie, stood in the marginal electorate of Bundaberg and promised to build the long-awaited major dam on the lower Burnett within five years, matching the coalition's pledge. It took only a few months for political amnesia to set in. First, the Minister for Natural Resources ducked and weaved questions, and then he admitted that another dam on the Burnett is only one of many options under investigation. Last week, Mr Welford dropped the bombshell that it could take another two years before the dam site was even chosen. That comes on top of 18 months of studies and a preliminary impact assessment undertaken already when the coalition was in power.

If this Government thinks that it takes three years to decide on the location of a dam, which they have promised, how long will it take them to conduct a full and comprehensive IAS and then to actually build the dam? It is quite obvious to the people of the electorate that Mr Beattie's Government never had any intention of keeping his promise.

The cavalier treatment of this priority one dam project also sends shock waves along the line to the many other vital water projects scheduled in Queensland. This Labor Government intends to kowtow to the environmental extremists while the water supply and employment situation in regional Queensland, and in the Burnett region in particular, is dire. During the normal to low rainfall periods, there is a very real threat of salt water intrusion into Bundaberg's town water supplies and that existing industries and agricultural output will be cut back.

The five-year time frame pledged by both the Borbidge and Beattie Governments and supported by independent research is both feasible and achievable.

Time expired.
