



Speech by

**KEN TURNER**

**MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA**

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Hansard 7 December 1999

#### **ROSS RIVER DAM**

**Mr TURNER** (Thuringowa—IND) (10.12 a.m.): In June this year, I called on the Townsville and Thuringowa Water Board to open the Ross River Dam for recreational use. An electric fish-stunning program found that there are 17 species of fish available, and a stocking program for barramundi would make the dam an anglers' delight for tourists and locals. The opening of the Ross River Dam will also assist in reducing the impact of fishing on our saltwater species. Not only fishing is being considered. Other water sports, walking tracks and picnic areas would all add to the enjoyment of the area.

The water board has appointed consultants to evaluate the recreational plan. Results, after consultation with all user groups, will be published in March 2000. If this happens, it will provide a boost for Townsville and Thuringowa residents both in recreation and finance. Presently, a home in the Upper Ross is many thousands of dollars cheaper than an equivalent home in other suburbs. I believe that when the bridge across the Ross River is built, connecting Thuringowa to the new hospital and the James Cook University, more people will look to that area for accommodation and residential homes.

Add to this the opening of the Ross River Dam—a water sporting facility in our backyard—and we could expect a rejuvenation of the flagging real estate values in that area. I can foresee a win-win result for Upper Ross residents and all Townsville and Thuringowa residents. I have had preliminary talks with the consultants, and I am looking forward to getting down to more detailed discussions with all parties as soon as possible. I also call on the Minister for Transport to fast-track the State's contribution towards getting the Ross River bridge under way.

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