



Speech by

Hon. V. LESTER

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Hansard 3 March 1999

RICHMOND DAM

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel—NPA) (10.24 a.m.): I refer to the pending axing of the Richmond dam project as suggested by the Minister for Natural Resources. In one fell swoop the Minister has destroyed the hopes of the people involved. The Minister did not even contact representatives of the Richmond Shire Council. The first the mayor heard about this was on the radio. That is not a fair go. This is a pretty poor effort, Minister.

I have been to the area and have been made aware of the hopes of the people involved. However, the project has been destroyed by the Minister in one go. The shire is of the view that the economics of the project are quite favourable. It involves some 620,000 megalitres of water which will allow irrigation for fodder. Items to be produced include vegetables for export, oil seed, cotton and fruits. Hundreds of jobs are involved.

The Minister is suggesting that the project may not pay. I say to the Minister that that is absolute rubbish. The flow-on of the economics would be absolutely tremendous. This project would be great for the State and would create hundreds of jobs. This Minister has been responsible for the axing of the St Helens dam and the Finch Hatton dam. The Paradise dam and the Nathan dam are both on hold. This Minister has, in effect, axed the provision of two million megalitres of water.

I say to the Minister: what about decentralisation? What about a fair go for the bush? I do not know what the Minister is on about. He seems to want to knock over the bush. He does not want to consult with anyone and the people involved are not very happy at all.
