



Speech by

JEFF SEENEY

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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SUNWATER; WATER STORAGE RECREATION AREAS

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (10.25 a.m.): In regional Queensland, recreation areas associated with dams and water storage areas are very important to a range of local communities, both for local use and tourist attractions. They are currently under the threat of closure.

The Minister for Natural Resources is abandoning his responsibility to maintain those areas by using the government-owned corporation SunWater to threaten to close down those recreation areas unless the local authorities take over responsibility for their ownership and maintenance. This is simply unacceptable to communities all over the state. Local authorities are being given no choice but to wear the costs that are rightly the responsibility of the state government. It is not only recreation areas that are involved.

At Fairbairn Dam near Emerald, the road across the embankment, which is an important local link road, is threatened with closure. At Biloela, a similar crossing over Callide creek is to be closed to local residents, denying them access to town and to work.

This so-called corporate approach by SunWater has reached ridiculous levels at the Callide Dam, where the local fish stocking group, a group of volunteers who give their own time and effort to raise money to stock the dam for recreational fishing purposes, have been threatened with eviction from the site. SunWater's corporate approach has also meant that that group has been charged \$300 a megalitre for water that they pump from the dam into an adjacent pond to produce the fingerlings which are put back into the dam. The water is also returned to the dam, yet they are charged 10 times the cost of irrigation water.

This is corporatisation gone well and truly mad. The state government has a social responsibility to those communities, and that responsibility cannot be abdicated by the minister's hiding behind the facade of a government-owned corporation called SunWater. SunWater has the responsibility to maintain those publicly owned assets and to make sure that the public has access to them. The government has a responsibility to, if it is necessary, make a community service obligation payment to SunWater to allow this to happen. The minister cannot hide behind the facade of the GOC.

Time expired.
