



Speech by
**Hon. NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 29 May 2001

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT [BURNETT BASIN] BILL

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (Bundaberg—ALP) (4.24 p.m.): I am very pleased to speak this afternoon to the bill, which represents a major step forward in delivering the Beattie government's commitment to water infrastructure development in the Burnett region as outlined in the government's 10-point plan for Bundaberg. The need for extra water storage is paramount to the future of my electorate of Bundaberg and to the entire Burnett catchment. The urgency of our problem is well known by the minister, the Premier and the government, and planning to meet those needs is being afforded a very high priority.

My electorate of Bundaberg has one of the worst unemployment problems in Queensland and in Australia. This problem cannot be overcome until we get new industries and until we expand existing industries. That is not possible until we get more water and a secure water supply. The Bundaberg irrigation scheme was completed some 30 years ago and was supposed to overcome all of our problems. However, after years of bungling, we were left with severe saltwater intrusion, a scheme that is struggling and one dam instead of two. We are now desperately in need of that second dam.

The member for Callide goes on and on about the Premier's promise being broken, and he goes on and on about the five-year promise. As the Premier and this government have not yet completed three years in office, I would not get too excited about broken promises if I were the member for Callide. I am not quite sure what part of one to five he is not au fait with.

It is ironic to note the words of the member for Southern Downs who in this House on 12 April last year, during a debate on water storage on the Burnett, said—

The farmers want it, businesses want it, employees and other voters in that part of the world want it. This issue is about jobs. It is about delivering to the people of Bundaberg and the Burnett region.

That is exactly what this bill is all about: delivering.

I congratulate our Minister for State Development on putting forward this bill to allow for a quick but thorough investigation and to speed up this project. This is the very best news that the people of Bundaberg could ask for. They have been promised this dam for 30 years. They appreciate that we now have a can-do government in Queensland.

Getting this desperately needed infrastructure will take a lot of hard work, commitment and cooperation from a broad cross-section of government departments and the community to work through the processes. What this bill before the House is all about is hurrying up those processes. On behalf of the people of Bundaberg, I ask all members of this House to support the bill and let us get on with the job as quickly as possible.
