



Speech by

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WATER INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT [BURNETT BASIN] AMENDMENT BILL

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (4.30 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise in support of the Water Infrastructure Development (Burnett Basin) Amendment Bill 2001. This bill has come about due to a comprehensive impact assessment process which demonstrated that the development should proceed and that minor adjustments to the water resource plan 2000 were indeed quite justified. The bill's objective is to ensure that water planning instruments accommodate the proposed Burnett River water infrastructure developments.

Clause 2 states that the act amended is the Water Infrastructure Development (Burnett Basin) Act 2001. The amendment in clause 3 enables the project to be accommodated under the water planning instruments. It removes any doubt that Burnett Water Pty Ltd is able to advance beyond the environmental impact study stage in accordance with the Burnett Water Pty Ltd constitution. Currently, the act allows for Burnett Water to prepare an environmental impact study to facilitate investigations into the feasibility of developing water infrastructure in the Burnett Basin and to access land for investigations in relation to the project. It reiterates the project definition as being significant, new and upgraded water storage and distribution infrastructure for cane irrigation in the Burnett Basin.

Clause 4 provides new parts 3A and 3B to amend the Water Resource (Burnett Basin) Plan 2000 and has effect despite the Water Act 2000 chapter 2 part 3 division 2. It amends section 11(2) by replacing 'maintain' with 'provide for' and replaces table 6 with minor changes to the environmental flow objectives. The purpose of these amendments is to accommodate the proposed new infrastructure developments in the Burnett Basin, particularly the proposal to build a major dam on the Burnett River. The new part B provides transitional provisions for the Water Infrastructure Development (Burnett Basin) Amendment Act 2001 and clarifies that any further amendment or appeal of the plan be made in accordance with the Water Act 2000. Both the new parts 3A and 3B expire after six months. However, the transitional provisions continue to have effect in accordance with section 20A of the Acts Interpretation Act.

Several constituents have raised with me some concerns about this bill. However, it is my belief that their complaints are all but totally answered in the explanatory notes to the bill. Concern was expressed relating to the population of lungfish contained in the Burnett River, which I understand is one of the largest strongholds of Queensland lungfish. Concerns were expressed that there is a requirement to maintain the habitat, and people are opposed to the fact that the Paradise Dam and weirs perhaps would flood this habitat. However, the amendments to section 11(2) allow for some loss of habitat to be mitigated by the implementation of a range of measures, including flow management strategies, to maintain the lungfish population. I am quite confident that the concerns that have been expressed through my office in this regard are quite adequately taken care of.

A number of concerns also were expressed that by overriding the water plan 2000 the government might be ignoring some community involvement. However, the reason for this is quite straightforward. It is to avoid a duplication of assessment in the environmental impact study providing similar information to that required under the Water Act 2000. It is simply a waste of money to do the same thing twice and expect that there would be significantly different results. The plan is being amended according to the findings of the environmental impact study which was coordinated under the provisions of the State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 2001. It is for reasons such as this that I am very happy to support this bill.