



Speech by

**Mrs D. PRATT**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Hansard 1 April 2003

**RESOURCE OPERATIONS PLAN, BURNETT BASIN**

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (10.20 a.m.): The Burnett Basin resource operations plan has all the marks of a plan to limit the growth and productivity of the shires in the area, at a time when future growth and prosperity has never looked better. Under the draft ROP many irrigators found their allocations were less than half the amount they used in the past, and that is based on average figures. Irrigators who had used water harvesting licences for over 20 years checked historical records and found their new allocations totally inadequate.

It has long been recognised that the holders of water harvesting licences had included them in property assets and that most used their allocation, or had plans to. These allocations were a valuable asset and were viewed as such by the buyers of properties. To have them whittled away by Natural Resources is akin to robbery. In a submission addressing the draft resource operations plan, the Kingaroy Shire Council stated—

It is recognised that Kingaroy is not in the area covered by the initial ROP, but we are however very concerned that the Burnett Catchment will be fully allocated with proposed new infrastructure nominated in the initial ROP.

The submission from the Central Burnett Water Harvesting Committee included a statement that its members were unhappy with the water reform process to date and that DNRM officer Mr Greg Long had admitted that, if given a second chance, the draft ROP would be a fairer document. The committee begged DNRM to ensure that the last part of the process took Mr Long's admission into account to guarantee licence holders were to be no worse off than they had been historically.

As it would appear that no shire councils or water resource committees within the area covered by the ROP are happy with it—and nor are those, it would appear, surrounding the area who are losing water allocation—I ask the minister to seriously consider the concerns offered in their submissions and review the whole process.

It is a common phrase, but to act in haste is to repent at leisure. Hindsight is a wonderful thing, but an enormous negative impact on many towns and surrounding areas could be the effect of this government, were it to act in haste at this time.