



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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TRAVESTON DAM

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (6.21 pm): Small businesses and their employees are some of the first victims of the 8,000-hectare proposed Mary River Dam, but they will not get any help from the Beattie Labor government—and this was confirmed in parliament this week. When the state coalition pressed Labor minister Chris Cummins to answer whether there was any compensation for this devastated group of people—people who are already having to sack staff due to the dam-induced downturn—he laughed it off and failed to provide an answer. One Kandanga electrician who was, before the dam was announced, going to employ an additional apprentice is not going to employ that additional apprentice and has had to put off their existing apprentice. A single mum in Imbil has lost her receptionist job at a real estate agency.

However, this distressing picture is repeated across the Mary River Valley and beyond as jobs are bled away from this area and businesses are gutted by a government which seems to have a 'let them eat cake' attitude to these people who have been so badly affected. Mr Cummins refused to answer my question about compensation for small businesses, only stating that he was proud of his government for proposing to build this dam. Later Premier Peter Beattie tried to help his troubled minister by claiming that the \$50 million hardship compensation fund would be available to help small businesses, and then he added 'if their land was affected'. There are hundreds of businesses that are affected by this potential 8,000-hectare Mary River Dam, but they will not get any compensation because it is their community which has been blighted and not necessarily their office premises.

The Premier and his minister have shown absolute contempt for the people whose businesses and jobs are being affected by this Beattie Labor government created economic downturn in the area. These businesses and their employees will not get a drop of compensation for this Beattie government's cruel hoax of a dam. For the Premier to tell them to apply for land compensation shows how little he cares when someone's job is gone because of his lousy planning for infrastructure in Queensland. The Mary River Dam is a hoax which on environmental grounds, social grounds and economic grounds does not stack up and, if common sense prevails, will not happen.

But common sense has nothing to do with the reason the Beattie-Bligh government announced that this dam would go ahead a few weeks ago, even though their technical officers had not taken a recommendation to cabinet to sign off on this dam site as the answer to south-east Queensland's water problems. The Beattie government wanted to pick a fight to divert attention from its health woes and its failure to build water infrastructure for the last eight years. But it is the people of the Mary River Valley who are going to pay the price of this government's poor planning. When this dam as a hoax is exposed, there will be no compensation for that young electrical apprentice who has lost his job, for that single mum who has lost her job and for the hundreds of others across the area in which small businesses have been so adversely impacted. And the story goes on in many different communities because it is a huge area that is affected, and this government has done nothing to put anything on the table to help them.

This is not the Smart State; it is the desperate state of a desperate Labor Premier who wanted to look like he was fixing this mess of failing to build water infrastructure and the issue of recycling. Labor

cannot even tell us how much this Mary River Dam will cost. It says that it may be \$300 million to \$400 million. We have to wait for the studies. Yet in reality we know that it has to be \$1.5 billion upwards because of the high land values in this area and with the other dam. We have to ask: why has the government not been willing to stand up and say how much this dam will cost? Because it knows that it does not stack up on a cost-benefit basis and it wants the people of the Mary River to pay the price while it goes through this charade, because on environmental grounds alone it is not the answer to the water crisis.

I urge people to read the coalition's south-east Queensland water infrastructure policy statement, and this can be read on springborg.com. It is a tragedy that Queensland has had to suffer because of this government's lousy planning. They say that they are nation builders when in fact they are destroying this part of Queensland. This government does not care that there is no compensation for those who have lost their jobs already.