



Speech by

Hon. Henry Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Thursday, 16 February 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Resources

Hon. H PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water) (10.27 am): The Queensland government is committed to securing our future water supplies. The commissioning of the Paradise Dam late last year, the work on the Burdekin Falls Dam to Moranbah pipeline as well as the commitment to new water storages in south-east Queensland highlights this commitment. However, new dams and water storages alone cannot secure our water supplies. The South East Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy has been developed by the government and the region's 18 local councils, and that strategy is progressing well.

The Australian Water Association, in its report commissioned by the *Courier-Mail* last year, said—

Only through a continued focus on water efficiency, diversity of sources, recycling and community agreement on reliability standards will we be able to develop a sustainable water supply to guarantee the long-term future prosperity of south-east Queensland.

The association also concluded that—

The building of new dams cannot alone provide the complete solution to the challenge of meeting increasing demands. Major catchments providing the easy and cheap water yields have already been developed.

I seek to have the rest of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, the Wolffdene Dam, which has been rejected by successive governments including the last National-Liberal Government, has been referred to by some Members opposite recently.

Mr Speaker, how many times did members of the Borbidge Government mention Wolffdene Dam in this Parliament when it was in office?

Was it 100 times? Was it 50 times? Was it 10 times?

Mr Speaker, the fact is Wolffdene Dam was NOT mentioned once in this Parliament by members of the Borbidge Government, including its second Natural Resources Minister—the current Opposition Leader.

The National and Liberal parties buried the Wolffdene Dam.

Mr Speaker, the issues of water security and the work of this Government extend beyond the State's south-east.

The draft Central Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy is currently open for public comment and work is underway to develop a similar strategy for the State's far north.

The Government's water resource planning is focusing on more than 90% of major catchment areas.

This work is helping to achieve more sustainable and efficient use of our precious and finite water resources.

It is also underpinning more than 7500 tradeable water allocations with an estimated total value of more than \$1.5 billion.

The Government's water reforms have made it possible for water users to buy water to expand their operations or sell it.

Water allocations are assets separate from the land and have their own title.

Mr Speaker, the Queensland Government spends approximately \$70 million on water resource planning and management each year.

Under the National Water Initiative, the Government has introduced new water charges policies to partially recover these costs.

Mr Speaker, I agree with National Farmers' Federation president Peter Corish that the original National Water Initiative should be implemented as agreed in 2004.

The Queensland Farmers' Federation has stated that the National Party's latest position on water would require a renegotiation of the National Water Initiative.

Following consultation with Government Members, I can announce today the Department is establishing a working group with key stakeholders to progress the implementation of the National Water Initiative and access to Australian Government Water Fund programs.