



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 25 May 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Supply

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.40 am): I want to talk about water supply and yield in the south-east Queensland water plan. Where water supply is concerned, size really does matter. Our state is booming, our population is surging and we know we will need at least 560,000 megalitres of water in south-east Queensland each year by 2026. My government is implementing a plan that will not just meet that expected need; it will secure south-east Queensland's water supply to 2050 and beyond.

Later today I will table some details in relation to the water plan project by project and the amount of water our plan is expected to yield. The Western Corridor Recycling Scheme for industry, including power stations, which will be delivered by the end of 2008, will deliver 30,000 megalitres each year. Water efficiency schemes for housing and business are expected to yield up to 30,000 megalitres each year, and the first \$20 million program has already been announced. Cutting regional pressure and stopping leaks is expected to yield up to 25,000 megalitres each year. The program is already underway, with a \$32 million injection from my government to support local councils.

Based on the best information currently available, the Traveston Dam will produce between 120,000 and 150,000 megalitres a year, and the Tilley's Bridge option on the Logan River will produce more than 45,000 megalitres a year. I stress that we are still to determine whether Wyaralong or Tilley's Bridge will be built. The desalination plant proposed for Tugun—which is under investigation and subject to a \$14 million grant from the Queensland government—could yield up to 45,000 megalitres a year from 2008.

With these and other initiatives, all up the plan will provide at least another 300,000 megalitres of water each year from December 2011. The extra water will of course come online incrementally as each of the projects is completed. Our plan is thorough and long term and will meet the needs of south-east Queenslanders for the coming half a century and beyond. We are not taking the easy options now and leaving the tough decisions for future governments.

I understand that Greens leader Bob Brown is intending to travel to Queensland this weekend to begin his own campaign against the construction of dams in the south-east. I would urge him to acquaint himself with the facts and our region's needs before he makes a fool of himself. No amount of goodwill and Green credentials will give south-east Queenslanders water security. We are exploring every option—including recycling, demand management and water saving strategies—but it is a fact that two new major dams are needed to ensure that we have all the water we need for the future.

Bob Brown will not be telling Queenslanders anything they do not already know. Queenslanders know that building a dam is a tough decision; they know dams have an impact on the people who live locally, that they submerge land and that they have environmental impacts locally and downstream. The Queensland government is not ignoring the environmental impacts of the proposed dams on the Mary and Logan rivers. Just like we did for the Paradise Dam, we will make sure we know the facts and we will work hard to mitigate the environmental impacts.

With regard to the Traveston site, Bob Brown ought to know this. The Mary River Valley has been farmed for generations. The principal form of farming over those decades has been dairy farming and, as a result, only small pockets of remnant vegetation remain—less than 10 per cent of the total dam area. This is no Franklin.

Of the 920 properties identified within the proposed area of the dam, 672 properties are residential/rural, 36 are used for business and 182 are engaged in primary production. At present the end of system flows in the Mary River—that is, water flowing into the ocean—are 92 per cent of the predevelopment mean annual flow. When the Traveston Dam becomes operational, it is estimated that flow will be 85 per cent of the predevelopment mean annual flow. That is the highest of all catchments in south-east Queensland. That is good news for the estuarine and receiving waters downstream, including those associated with the Ramsar wetland and the Great Sandy Strait.

Finally, the dam may impact on aquatic life on the Mary River, including the Mary River cod, turtle and lungfish. However, just as we have done with the Burnett River Dam, mitigation strategies will be the subject of detailed environmental impact studies. We will take appropriate measures like we did with the Paradise Dam. If Bob Brown wants to make a contribution to securing sustainable water supplies for Queenslanders, he ought to be staying in Canberra and sending a clear message to the Commonwealth that they should be getting behind significant recycled water trials like that proposed for Toowoomba.