



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 7 June 2006

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Water Infrastructure

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.46 am): The challenge we now face, coupled with climate change and unprecedented population growth, is an historic one. The South East Queensland Regional Water Supply Strategy and the commitment that my government has made will secure our future water needs. Our commitment to new water infrastructure and initiatives in the south-east Queensland plan is \$1.3 billion. There was \$600 million in the budget for next financial year.

This is expected to increase when the investigations of dams on the Mary River and Logan River continue. This is a major challenge for all of Australia. I hope people understand that there is climate change and drought and we need to tackle them. I seek leave to have more detail incorporated in *Hansard*.

#### Leave granted.

The Government is exploring extra storage capacity for rural and regional Queensland, with \$990 million in water projects currently under consideration—potentially adding an additional water storage capacity of 1.2 million ML for rural and regional Queensland—as outlined in the accompanying Rural Economic Development and Infrastructure Plan.

Appropriate management of the Great Artesian Basin is important for the future of its primary agricultural users. It also provides vital water supplies to rural towns, and is important to the mining industry. Initiatives undertaken to secure the Great Artesian Basin, include:

- the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments each committing \$22.5 million over five years to encourage bore rehabilitation and bore drain replacement works; and
- establishing a \$10 million low interest loan facility through the Queensland Rural Adjustment Authority to enable landholders with sub-artesian bores to finance new water efficient infrastructure to replace open bore drains.

The Queensland Government will fund the extra cost of access works for nine high priority bores which need to be capped, to reduce environmental degradation and excessive water loss with work costing up to \$3.4 million. Landholder contributions to the initial access works of these high-priority bores will be limited to \$20,000 per bore.

Since 1999-2000, Queensland has invested approximately \$420 million in water infrastructure that has added more than 190,000 ML per annum capacity to the rural and regional Queensland's water supply capacity and improved the reliability for existing users.

Queensland has also been acknowledged as leading the States in addressing the challenges posed by the National Water Initiative. In the most recent assessment by the Commonwealth of how the states and territories are implementing agreed national water reform, Queensland was the only mainland state not to be penalised for failing to meet its obligations.

An additional \$4 million over three years from 2006-07 for stage 3 of the successful Rural Water Use Efficiency Program will enable industry bodies to effectively implement activities with their members in regional areas.