



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Friday, 9 June 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Supply

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier) (9.35 am): Our government is doing more than any other government in Australia to help ensure water supplies for future generations. We are investing hundreds of millions of dollars in new dams, new weirs, new pipelines, recycling, desalination and a raft of education and conservation measures, and I will be announcing some more of those on Sunday at our party conference.

One of our key initiatives is a new dam proposed for the Mary River at Traveston. This dam is essential for the south-east corner of our state, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, and it is especially vital for the Cooloola region as well as the Sunshine Coast—for the local area as well. Wherever we decide to locate a dam, it will cause angst and anger in the community directly affected and that is totally understandable. Nobody wants to lose their property to a dam. I understand that, but we need to ensure that we provide for the future needs of Queensland. I understand that and I want to be very clear that I am sympathetic to their concerns, which is why we will treat everyone properly and fairly. However, this dam is too important for the future of the south east. We are going to build two dams in the south-east corner of Queensland. Those two dams are going to be built.

I want to reassure the affected community that we will work with them to make sure we do what we can to address their needs and concerns. Yesterday I announced a number of key measures related to addressing the environmental concerns of local residents following a meeting with the member for Noosa, attended by the Deputy Premier and the minister for water, Henry Palaszczuk. These measures include the establishment of a committee of local members of parliament to facilitate consultation on processes and actions to minimise the social and environmental impacts of the proposed dam. The minister for water, Henry Palaszczuk, will chair this committee. I have invited the members for Noosa, Gympie, Nicklin, Glass House, Maryborough and Hervey Bay to join. I understand that the minister rang them yesterday and I understand that they have all agreed. In addition, I have also agreed to the appointment of an independent community guardian to represent the views of the community. This will be a well-known and respected Queenslander and we expect to be in a position to make the announcement of that appointment by the end of June this month.

These two initiatives are in addition to a number of stringent measures we will put in place to minimise any environmental impacts of the dam. As I said, no matter where we decide to locate a new dam, it will be a tough decision. However, tough decisions are what Queenslanders demand of good government. We will build this new dam on the Mary River. It is absolutely vital for securing future water supplies not just for the local community but for the south-east corner.

I know that the member for Noosa has been struggling with this decision over the last few days, and I understand her circumstances and I respect them, but I want to make it very clear: the government is not struggling with this decision. We are going to build a dam on the Mary River because it is needed for the future growth of this state. While I will be sympathetic and understanding and we will listen to her view in relation to these matters, we need to clearly understand that this dam is going to be built. This dam is going

to be built, and I want everyone to clearly understand it. We will work with the local community, we will bend over backwards to ensure that there is appropriate compensation, we will work in the most consultative way possible and we will listen to the local community, but this dam needs to be built for the future of this state.