



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Tuesday, 9 May 2006

RAINWATER TANKS

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (10.03 pm): At long last the state government has acknowledged that the supply of water is an essential service that the state government must be directly involved in, just like the supply of electricity, and that this requires a coordinated and regional approach to ensure the supply of regular and reliable water to consumers. On 25 March 1999 in this very parliament I moved a motion that the state government investigate and, if possible, make provision in that year's budget for a rainwater tank rebate program to encourage water conservation in Queensland. That motion received unanimous support from all members of parliament. The minister at the time said—

One of the things that the proposition put up by the member for Nicklin would impact on is reticulated water, because that is the highest cost water in the State. In terms of how strategic we need to be, it is my view that we need to start where the water is most expensive, because that is where the greatest gains of this kind of investment would be captured. One would start in those areas where the cost of delivering water is the highest. One would provide incentives for people to use the untreated water that is caught in rain tanks. Lots of people in rural areas use it for everything already, including drinking, and do so in an entirely healthy way.

In the lead-up to this year's state budget I take this opportunity to again call on the state government to seriously consider a provision in this year's state government budget to provide an incentive for Queenslanders to be more directly involved in water conservation by the provision of a rainwater tank with all new dwellings and an incentive for existing home owners to install rainwater tanks.

At the moment, a number of local councils in Queensland provide incentives or requirements for residents in their respective shires to install rainwater tanks as a tool to assist in rainwater conservation. I do not believe that the state government should continue to simply leave it up to local councils to provide these incentives for residents in Queensland to install rainwater tanks.

For the benefit of all members, I table a summary of incentives that currently operate in the Australian Capital Territory, where its government provides for the installation of appropriate rainwater tanks. The Western Australia government's Waterwise rebate schedule is available for the purchase and installation of new tanks. The Victorian government has a Watersmart gardens and home rebate scheme. If other state governments in Australia can provide rebates in this form as incentives for people in their states to install rainwater tanks, I believe that it is high time that the Queensland government did likewise, especially after 2004 when our own government investigated issues such as the large-scale introduction of rainwater tanks in Queensland.

I also note that on 18 December last year, *Sunday Mail* journalist Daryl Passmore reported on rainwater tanks. He quoted Councillor Abrahams as saying—

By using a rainwater tank for flushing the toilet, washing clothes, watering the garden and hot water systems, the average household could reduce their annual use of mains water by 30 to 40 per cent with a 3000-litre tank.

Again, I urge the government to seriously consider this suggestion.

Time expired.