



Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 9 August 2006

WATER SUPPLY

Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (5.16 pm): I rise to participate in the debate on the Premier's motion and the opposition's amendment. I note that the opposition's amendment refers to the government's inability to build any new water infrastructure in south-east Queensland over the past eight years, and then it refers to how the government has copied a number of the coalition's policies. That may be case, but it is also important to see that an amendment has been moved to the Water Act, which we are debating this evening. I believe there is merit to both the amendment and the Premier's motion. I intend to support the opposition's amendment, but I am—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Member for Noosa, please, this is the parliament of Queensland; it is not a demonstration. Please take the sign down.

Ms Molloy: No, I am not going to take the sign down.

Mr SPEAKER: I have to ask you to leave the chamber. Please, take the sign down.

Ms Molloy: I'd like to stay with my sign up.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Noosa, please take the sign down.

Ms Molloy: No.

Mr SPEAKER: Under standing order 253, please leave the chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Noosa withdrew from the chamber.

Mr WELLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I hope I will have sufficient time to finish my speech. I intend to support the opposition's amendment. I also intend to support the intent of the government's motion because it is actually taking decisive action and putting forward a proposal to solve the crisis that we have in south-east Queensland. But I also put on the record that I do not support the one component that proposes the construction of the Traveston Dam. I believe there are other options.

The proposal to use recycled water and the incentives for people to install rainwater tanks is well and truly appreciated. When I first came into this House that was one of the first things we spoke about—calling on the government, the opposition and everyone to support incentives for people to install rainwater tanks to reduce water consumption and the reliance on our water network.

Although the member for Noosa has just left the chamber, she asked me to say that she intended to abstain from voting because she did not support the dam. However, she did support most of the other initiatives contained in the Premier's resolution.

During the debate not many speakers have gone through the contents of the Premier's proposed amendments to the regulations. There are 25 pages of proposed amendments. I would like to take a few moments to take members through those lengthy proposed amendments.

First, it talks about acknowledging that there is a drought in south-east Queensland. I think that is taken for granted. Everyone in Queensland would support that proposition. The strategy talks about trying to reduce the amount of water currently being lost through the old pipe systems that many local councils have. That makes a lot of sense and I think it is good news. It talks about recycled water for industry and

rural use. That makes sense and it is certainly a great initiative. It talks about installing rainwater tanks and pool covers and providing incentives to residents in south-east Queensland. I think that is well and good, and I really appreciate the Premier taking that on board.

That leads me to a comment that the member for Nanango asked me to put on the record on her behalf. She believes that residents in her electorate who currently rely on water from the Wivenhoe Dam should also be eligible to receive the state government incentives to install rainwater tanks. I echo her sentiments that, if it is good enough for people in south-east Queensland to receive these incentives, it is certainly good enough for the people in her community to receive the incentives.

I think everyone supports desalination facilities, and I certainly will be. On the issue of accessing water from other dams in south-east Queensland, I note that the Premier has acknowledged in his amendments that it is recognised some local governments have planned more effectively than others to meet the needs of their communities. He has indicated that one of the operating principles to be established by the grid will ensure, however, that the overall water resources are managed in a way that does not lead to the imposition of restrictions on residents in areas where local governments have responsibly planned supplies to meet local demand. I am very pleased that the Premier has included that in the motion, because I know many constituents on the Sunshine Coast were concerned that another situation may have occurred. So I thank him for that.

The Premier also indicates in the motion that only water that is in excess of the requirements of those local government areas will be eligible for transfer to elsewhere in south-east Queensland. That is very much appreciated, and I believe all residents on the Sunshine Coast appreciate the Premier's acknowledgement of that issue.