



Speech by

Ray Hopper

MEMBER FOR DARLING DOWNS

Hansard Wednesday, 11 October 2006

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (5.51 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. I would ask the Treasurer and Premier to read the speech of the member for Chatsworth, Chris Bombolas. I thought it was brilliant the way he outlined what the government has to do in this term of government with all the money that has been promised, or something along those lines—they were not his exact words.

That is exactly what we are debating tonight. Some 1,500 people a week are moving to Queensland. We have heard the Premier talk about this on a number of occasions. That puts a lot of pressure on infrastructure. That is exactly what this motion is about tonight. I challenge the new members in this House to catch the lift up to level 23 and get an attendant to take them on to the roof of the Annexe and ask themselves, 'What has this Labor government built? What can I see that this government has put in place for Queensland?' They will see the footbridge. If they go to the other corner they will see the football stadium. That is about it.

What did we do when we were in government? We built every dam. We heard the Premier talk about Paradise Dam. We announced Paradise Dam, and those opposite had to build it when they came to government. That is what happened in terms of Paradise Dam. We built every other dam. We built the Bowen Basin. We built the Burdekin Dam. We built the electric train system. We built every highway. We built the Gold Coast freeway and the Gateway Bridge, just to name a few. We were a government with a vision for the future.

Government members interjected.

Mr HOPPER: They might laugh. Do those opposite know what people are calling them? They are calling them the 'gonna-do government'. That is what it is. It has again been elected on promises. This morning when the Treasurer was asked two questions about how things are going we saw her hide and say, 'It's not up to me; it is up to the Water Commissioner.'

If I buy a farm I have to pay the bank manager. When the bank manager rings me I do not pass the buck on to the manager. That is exactly what we are seeing from the Treasurer of Queensland. That is the problem. The people of Queensland want to see some fruits of the promises that the government made during the election campaign. Government members should read Chris Bombolas's speech. That speech will come back to haunt the member for Chatsworth because he is now part of a 'gonna-do government'.

Let me outline a few things that we have done. For the Wyaralong Dam we purchased 2,326 hectares of land, for the Glendower Dam we purchased 2,534 hectares, for the Amamoor Dam we purchased 1,516 hectares and for the Borumba Dam we purchased 5,507 hectares.

Look at the hiccups in Toowoomba lately due to its water problems. We have some policies that could have fixed that. I see the Premier laughing. Has he seriously looked at the policy we put in place for the Norwin irrigators? Some \$40 million would see a pipeline to Toowoomba which takes water out of that aquifer and the farmers leasing the water to Toowoomba. When we get rain, which we will get—and I see the minister for natural resources in the chamber; he is aware of this and I hope he seriously looks at this in the future—then if that pipeline is put in place that water would go straight into the Mount Kynoch plant.

We would only need to add chlorine to it. It is potable water. It is not going to hurt the aquifer. It means no more water coming out of the aquifer. When the dams fill up the farmers can go back to using that water. They are happy to sell it to Toowoomba at \$1,000 a megalitre, which is quite cheap for a council of today.

That is a solution that is the result of the opposition's hard work. That is an answer for Toowoomba right now. We also announced that we would build Emu Creek Dam. The Emu Creek Dam would hold exactly what the three dams in Toowoomba can hold at the moment. That would double the size of Toowoomba's water-holding capacity. Those opposite say that we cannot build it because it is on the catchment of Wivenhoe. Wivenhoe was put in place as a flood buffer for Brisbane. That means that when there is a flood and Wivenhoe fills a lot of water goes past Wivenhoe. All that would do is catch the water that would have gone past Wivenhoe. I think it is a brilliant move.

We have to look at common-sense policies that can be put in place. This motion tonight is simply about accountability. That is exactly what we have not seen from this government. Sooner or later the people are going to wake up to the fact that they cannot live on promises. I do not believe the dam at Gympie will even be built. I heard the statement from our leader that he will walk around and shake the Premier's hand when it is. I do not believe it ever will be built. The Premier knows it will not be built.