



Speech by

Hon. ANNA BLIGH

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Hansard Thursday, 23 August 2007

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Western Corridor Recycled Water Project

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure) (9.51 am): Today I have good news. This is south-east Queensland's first recycled water.

Opposition members: Drink it! Drink it! Drink it! Down, down, down!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Deputy Premier.

Ms BLIGH: This is purified water treated to an industrial standard at the Bundamba waste water treatment plant. It has been produced using the world's best cutting edge membrane technology. Ten months ago the nay-sayers said that the advanced water treatment plant could not be built at the pace that we planned. Remember when they said there was a worldwide shortage of membranes and we would never have the membranes to do this?

Government members: Yes.

Ms BLIGH: This water has been produced using the best membrane technology in the world. Remember when they said that the pipes were cracked and we would never lay them in time? This is the water that will flow through the pipes that have already been laid between Bundamba and Swanbank Power Station. Stage 1A of the recycling water project is on time and will be opened on time. This water has been treated to an industrial standard because it is being used for an industrial purpose. Of course, the water that will be used for potable purposes has to go into the Wivenhoe Dam system and through another system of treatment. But this is the first step of a project that, frankly, we should all be very proud of. This project will put Brisbane and the south-east corner of Queensland in the position of being the most efficient water users and reusers in Australia—and our region. We have international delegations from around the world coming to look at this project, and we ought to be singing it from the rooftops. Even today when we have evidence of how fast this is progressing and how well this project is doing, we still have the knockers and the nay-sayers on the other side.

Today I congratulate every single worker on the western corridor pipeline. I congratulate every worker working on the supplies for this pipeline and I say to them, 'You are magnificent, and you have our support even if you do not have the support of those opposite.'

Mr Stevens: WorkChoices delivers.

Ms BLIGH: I take the interjection from the member for Robina, and I look forward to ensuring that the workers on the pipeline know what he and his team would have in store for them if they were ever on this side of the parliament.

The Bundamba plant has been built in record time—from the ground being broken 10 months ago to today's production of industrial strength quality recycled water. By the next time we come together in parliament, water will be running through the first stage of the water grid, with Bundamba supplying Swanbank. The plant will initially supply approximately 15 megalitres a day. That means the same amount

of drinking water will not be drawn from Wivenhoe Dam. This equates to meeting the daily water needs of a community the size of either Ipswich or Logan.

Workers right across the south-east Queensland water grid continue to proceed with frenetic pace. In addition to this Swanbank-Bundamba pipeline, which as I have outlined is already complete, I am pleased to advise the House that the connection between Goodna and Bundamba is also complete. More than 36 kilometres of pipe are in the ground between Caboonbah and Bundamba. These crews, until this week's welcome rain delays, have been laying around one kilometre of pipe per day. They have peaked their production at 1.5 kilometres per day. What does the production schedule have them doing at this point—330 metres a day. So that is how far ahead of the schedule they are. This section of the pipeline, as I said, is well ahead of schedule.

Construction of the other advanced water treatment plants is also occurring at pace and I remain confident that the commissioning will occur as advised. As of last week, more than 115 kilometres of pipe have been laid out of a total of 450 kilometres of the SEQ grid. This represents just over 25 per cent. It is a marvellous achievement.

On other water issues, readers of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* will have seen remarkable photos in the last day or so of large seas off the coast, particularly photos of the barge sitting off the Tugun coast. I am happy to advise the House that the barge for the Gold Coast desalination plant has so far held its own against some remarkable challenges from the elements. From reports, the highest waves offshore at Tugun yesterday were in the vicinity of 5.5 to six metres. Fortunately the barge was raised to 8.5 metres last week in preparation for the current storm conditions. Seas are still high and the barge will be out of action until the weather improves.

The desalination project is now more than 32 per cent complete. The excavation by the tunnel boring machines is progressing very well, with the inlet tunnel at 350 metres and the outlet tunnel at 140 metres. I say again, well done to all of our workers and all of those who are providing the supplies. It really is a very important part of the south-east Queensland water grid.