



Speech by

Dr Bruce Flegg

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND, DESALINATION PLANTS

Dr FLEGG (Moggill—Lib) (11.53 am): It is hard to imagine that something that could add more than 400 million litres of drinking water each day to south-east Queensland's dwindling water supplies would be a state secret. To put that in perspective, this would supply more than half of south-east Queensland's daily drinking water. But that is precisely what the Queensland Labor government is trying to do.

People living anywhere from Southport to Noosa could have a massive new neighbour, but they are unlikely to officially know more about it until after the federal election. A second desalination plant is referred to in Kellogg Brown and Root. A massive plant is in the pipeline, but it is an official state secret. By way of contrast, the Gold Coast City Council was open, up-front and honest with nearby residents about its pioneering desalination plans at Tugun. In addition, after new Premier Bligh promised a more transparent approach, it is amazing that the EPA's Moreton Bay Marine Park Study recommends up to 35 exclusion zones including many popular local fishing areas, which is another state secret.

Labor has form on secret and political strategies to get re-elected. A Premier went to a state election promising to stay a full three years. Only 12 months ago we went to a state election with no talk about council amalgamations, no details about water restrictions and no hint that ratepayer water assets would be seized. In April 2007 the *Courier-Mail* had to use freedom of information laws to uncover secret Queensland government reports. Despite confirming seven months ago that the Queensland government was assessing what could be the world's biggest desalination plant, Premier Bligh has remained tight-lipped.

In March 2006 south-east Queensland drought contingency modelling showed that a decision on a second desalination plant or other major source of water was due by June of last year and that that plant would start supplying drinking water to south-east Queensland from early 2009. This one is way behind schedule and the people who are likely to be affected by it have been kept absolutely in the dark because of an impending federal election.

In September the Deputy Premier acknowledged that there was indeed a plan for a second desalination plant, but since then we have not heard a whisper. I wonder if that might have something to do with 24 November 2007. It is no coincidence that one leading site proposed for a desalination plant is, in fact, Bribie Island in the federal seat of Longman. This seat is being targeted by the Labor Party. Voters on Bribie have a right to have this government come clean and this government has a duty to inform residents of Bribie Island about what is being considered for their community.

It fell to whistleblowers to confirm Bribie Island, Stradbroke Island and the mouth of the Brisbane River, as well as Maroola and Peregian Beach as the sites being—

Mrs SULLIVAN: I rise to a point of order.

Dr FLEGG: Again—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr English): Order! The Leader of the Liberal Party will resume his seat. We have a point of order.

Mrs SULLIVAN: In this House the Premier has made it very clear that there is to be no desalination plant for Bribie. She has ruled it out.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The member will resume her seat.

Dr FLEGG: Again, it will be silence until after the federal election. A load of public documents should have been released in late August and I call on this government to release those documents. I refer to the EPA's reports and maps into the proposed exclusion zones for the Moreton Bay Marine Park. Those exclusion zones target the thousands of amateur and recreational fishers of south-east Queensland. The government has failed its own October deadline for the public release of those documents and south-east Queensland fishermen and residents should beware. People living in south-east Queensland deserve to find out where these sites are and not have them covered up in a cynical political game. Perhaps this government is using Peter Garrett's advice—that is, after the election they will just change it all.

Time expired.