



Speech by

**Hon. Paul Lucas**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

Hansard Wednesday, 14 November 2007

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Water Grid**

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.47 am): Pipe by pipe, section by section, south-east Queensland's \$9 billion water grid is taking shape to deliver sustainable water security. Not only will the grid help to protect the region from the worst drought on record; a key component is now slated for completion a year ahead of schedule and substantially under budget.

Last week the Coordinator-General released the Wyaralong Dam environmental impact statement for public feedback. Not only does the EIS say the science stacks up; rigorous economic analysis reveals a dam on Teviot Brook, north-east of Beaudesert, will save taxpayers' money.

What is the Wyaralong price tag? It is \$333 million for the complete package—that is, the construction of the dam, relocation of 11.9 kilometres of Beaudesert-Boonah Road, rerouting of power and telecommunication wires, the pipes to connect Wyaralong to the water grid and the purchase of land. It also includes value-adding—the upgrade of the Boonah sewage treatment plant, recreation facilities such as horse riding and mountain bike trails, zoning for water sports and nature corridors, including two dam islands to protect sensitive wildlife habitats from feral animals. The EIS also demonstrates that the dam will rehabilitate Teviot Brook, which has been affected by exotic plant species. Just 19 properties are required for the 1,230-hectare dam. More than half of these have already been voluntarily acquired.

Pending timely approvals from the Coordinator-General and the federal government, it may be possible to construct the dam by 2010. That would mean that Wyaralong could be hooked up to the grid a year earlier than planned and deliver enough water for more than 150,000 people a year. The EIS states that, when up and running with Cedar Grove Weir, Wyaralong could supply up to 21,000 megalitres of precious liquid gold annually. But it is more than a water supply; the EIS states that construction of the dam would increase national welfare by \$745 million and employ a workforce of 300. Not to go ahead with Wyaralong would have serious consequences for the region's water supply and the economy.

Analysis in the EIS suggests that more than 6½ thousand jobs and \$1.2 billion could go down the drain. That is the potential economic cost to the south-east if Wyaralong does not proceed. The EIS is out for public feedback until 12 December before final assessment by the Coordinator-General and heading to Canberra for federal government approval. While we get on with the job of delivering water security for all of the south-east, the coalition continues to squabble amongst itself. It cannot agree on water, it does not have a plan, and it has no idea.