



Speech by

# Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2007

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### South-East Queensland, Rainfall; One-To-One Water Savings Program

**Hon. PD BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.36 am): Households all over the south-east woke to an unusual sound this morning—rain on the roof—and in many cases the sound of water tanks filling up for the first time in many months.

**Ms Bligh:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BEATTIE:** I know the Treasurer has taken credit. Yesterday I said 'Bligh the builder'; I guess we should say 'Bligh the rainmaker' today. Over the last 24 hours the rainfall—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Even that lot opposite have to be happy about rain. There has to be one thing that even the members of the opposition are happy about. There has to be one thing that the government and the opposition agree on, and that is rain. Surely the members opposite love rain. I know they hate everything else, but even they have to love rain. You have to love rain and you have to love Santa Claus.

Over the past 24 hours the rainfall in the catchments at Wivenhoe and Somerset has been registered as 30 millimetres at the wall at Wivenhoe, 30 millimetres to 50 millimetres in Upper Wivenhoe, and 50 millimetres at Somerset. That is fantastic. I am also happy to report that the catchment area for the future Traveston Dam recorded falls of up to 70 millimetres. What an ideal place to build a dam!

A note of caution for all of us, though: while the rain is very welcome we cannot afford to start wasting water. We must continue to try to use just 140 litres per day each. I am told that, while the Wivenhoe and Somerset catchment areas are now wet, so far the inflows to the dam are limited. We need follow-up rain to get some reasonable inflow. Any farmer will tell you that.

Today, the first of 80,000 letters from the Queensland Water Commission will begin arriving in the mailboxes of people living in homes registering water use of more than 800 litres or more water per day. The Queensland Water Commission is aware that many of the homeowners receiving the letter are running large households and will be able to demonstrate a legitimate reason for their high volume of use. I want to make it clear: large families will not be disadvantaged by these water restrictions. However, each of us must do all we can to save water at this critical time. Households identified as using more than 800 litres are using twice the average for the region.

The Queensland Water Commission has discovered that more than 3,000 households in our drought stricken region are using more than 2,000 litres per day—an extraordinary amount of water in anyone's terms.

In total, heavy domestic water users represent just 10 percent of the south-east Queensland population, yet they are using 25 percent of all residential water. By and large, Queenslanders have been fantastic at saving water, but a tiny per cent need to do more and they need to do better.

It is estimated that the targeted One-to-One Water Savings Program, which the Queensland Water Commission is beginning with today's letters, will save up to 20 million litres of water a day. This process is about helping people identify the reasons for their excessive water use and to make savings now.

Phase 1 involves an education emphasis. The One-to-One Water Savings Program is not about punishing people; it is about giving them the knowledge and help they need to do the right thing. Phase 2 of the program may well have to involve penalties for people who refuse to change their habits and make the same sacrifices that the rest of us make because of the drought.

I take this opportunity to warn the people who are pretending that the drought is everyone else's problem, especially those people who are using more than 2,000 litres a day: clearly through council records we know who you are and you must change your ways now. This is a drought and we all have to pull together to save water. Everybody has to play their part.

At the same time I reassure big families that we do know that many large households are being water wise. People will not be penalised just because they have a large household. We can respond to and deal with any issues depending on the answers to the water use assessment form. This form is being sent with the letters.

With 80,000 letters going out, some people may be wrongly targeted by the campaign. While the process does have checks and balances, anyone who feels that they have been unfairly asked to provide a reason for excessive water use should call 1300 781 477 to discuss their problem. If there is some slight administrative muck-up and someone has it wrong, we can clear it up. However, people need to understand that we have to do this to save water.

Households that receive a heavy water use assessment form must complete it and return it by 29 June. Penalties for failing to return the form include the immediate ban on all outdoor watering. The water use assessment form will only be sent to high-volume users within the 12 south-east Queensland council regions affected by level 5 water restrictions. The councils included in the program are Beaudesert, Brisbane, Caboolture, Esk, Gatton, Gold Coast, Ipswich, Kilcoy, Laidley, Logan, Pine Rivers and Redcliffe. Residents who need further information can visit the web site at [www.mywaterplan.com](http://www.mywaterplan.com), or they can call the One-to-One Water Savings Program on 1300 781 477.

For the information of the House I table a news release from the Water Commission which will be issued today, the draft letter to citizens and the water use assessment form. I urge all members to get a hold of these forms and letters so that they can properly inform their constituents who fall into the category of excessive water users about what they need to do to comply. I table that for the House.

*Tabled paper:* Media release, dated 6 June 2007, by Queensland Water Commission relating to letters for high volume water users.

*Tabled paper:* Template letter to high volume water users

*Tabled paper:* Document titled 'Water Use Assessment Form'.