



Speech by

# Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Wednesday, 6 June 2007

---

## WATER ASSETS

**Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (6.17 pm): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to rise to speak to the motion and the amendment. I note that the motion states—

1. that, under any State takeover of Council water assets, such assets are to remain in public ownership; and
2. that under no circumstances are such assets to be sold.

The amendment moved by the government states in part—

3. Notes the commitment in relation to water reform given by the Deputy Premier to the Parliament on 24 May 2007 as follows: "All assets will continue to be owned by the government. The Queensland Water Commission report does not recommend, nor is the government considering, any privatisation of any part of the water asset system.

The motion and the amendment seem identical. I have listened to the Deputy Premier, the minister and other speakers from the government state that there is no intention of selling the assets off, and the previous speaker from the opposition said that the opposition will hold the government to account. I will be supporting the opposition, because I see this as a chance to hold both the government and the opposition to account.

It is a very serious offence to intentionally mislead parliament. Tonight, a very clear and simple motion has been moved by the opposition, stating—

That this parliament ensures:

1. that, under any State takeover of Council water assets, such assets are to remain in public ownership; and
2. that under no circumstances are such assets to be sold.

In effect, we are seeing an alternative government position being put to Queenslanders. The alternative government position is that there will be no sale. Tonight, we are hearing a very important statement. We have also heard a very important statement from the government through the Premier, the Deputy Premier and minister after minister, who have all said that this Labor government has no intention of selling the water assets.

I will be supporting the opposition. It has been a privilege to speak in this debate on behalf of the Independents and One Nation. When I was a member of council, for a time I had the privilege of serving on the Caloundra-Maroochy Water Board, so I have an idea of some of the issues involved in a very localised area. I note that the previous speaker, the member for Kawana, was also a member of the Caloundra-Maroochy Water Board. Therefore, from the perspective of the Maroochy Shire Council, we do understand some of the issues that the government has been grappling with.

History has demonstrated time and time again that when governments sell off essential services to the private sector the end result is huge job losses, maximum reduction in services and poor maintenance because profit is the God of the private sector. Only this morning the Premier in answer to a question spoke about the sale of Telstra. We have debated that issue time and time again in this House. The sale of Telstra is a very clear example of what happens when essential services are sold off.