



Speech by

Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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LIBERAL AND NATIONAL PARTIES

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (12.45 pm): Mr Deputy Speaker, welcome to 2007—a new parliamentary year and a year, I note, which started with a condolence motion for a sadly departed honourable member who in 1983 controversially switched sides from the Liberal Party to the National Party. That was 24 years ago, but the more things change in Queensland politics the more they stay the same.

This year the Liberals and the Nationals have continued their tumultuous relationship with the laughable commitment given a couple of weeks ago that even if the Liberals should win more seats than the Nationals at a state election the Nationals leader, our friend Mr Seeney, would be our Premier. When asked how confident he could be of this deal, Mr Seeney said that he had 'Bruce's word'. So on Bruce's word, 24 years after three members switched sides at the 1983 election, the Liberals and the Nationals are now telling us that the days of division between them are over—all tucked away under the carpet. I thought it timely to have a look at just how these two sides line up on the issues of the day.

We know that they do not agree about tree clearing. We know that they do not agree about daylight saving. We know that they have never agreed about country racing. The issue today of course is water. So just where do they stand on that? Let us start with the controversial issue of recycled water and the water grid. We would have to start by assuming that the answer to the question of whether the Liberals and Nationals support the water grid is no. After all, the Libs and the Nats voted together against the water grid in parliament last year after then opposition leader, Lawrence Springborg, shared his flat earth concern that recycled water would cause fish to change sex. A united opposition then? No, no—when it comes to the Libs and Nats it is not as simple as that.

Despite voting against the grid, Dr Flegg is in fact a big supporter of recycled water. Indeed, he called last year for the government to push ahead and not to have a referendum on the matter. Be careful what you wish for, Dr Flegg! When such a decision was announced, what did his leader say? It was a bit hard to tell, to be honest. His leader told the TV cameras that it had to be understood that some people would react to this matter emotionally—that is, not rationally—and that their views as well had to be considered. He gave us certainly not support for recycled water; indeed, he gave us concerted equivocation. So recycled water is a matter on which they disagree.

What about dams? Traveston we know is out in a bit of a turn-up for the books for the Nats. Indeed, the Libs and Nats went together to the last election with a nine-year-old water plan for two small dams, one of which was not to be delivered until 2065. We are producing more water through our plan in 12 months than they would have produced in 60 years. Dams do not give us enough water. So what about desalination? I am advised that the member for Currumbin is opposed to the desalination plant in her electorate, so we know that desalination is out. There is some real trouble there between the Libs and Nats on providing water in south-east Queensland.

How about rivers that run free? Just where are these two sides when it comes to wild rivers in far-north Queensland? Of course, the Libs have been consistently supportive of wild rivers legislation and indeed convinced their partner, the Nats, to vote for it in this House, but they have sniped about it at every step of the way. What about the current matter of the Murray-Darling Basin, water meters and compulsory acquisition of water rights? Already there is a split in the federal Liberal and National parties. The *Australian* has described the National's position as specious and a whinge, with people like Peter McGauran, John Anderson and our own Barnaby Joyce opposing both compulsory acquisition of rights and metering. Where do the Libs stand on that? Perhaps this will be the point—with Dr Flegg being a shareholder in Cubbie Station—where we might begin to get a consistent view.

Time expired.