



Speech by

**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

Hansard Thursday, 4 June 2009

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## **WATER AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (8.53 pm): This evening we are debating the Water and Another Act Amendment Bill 2009, which is principally about the role of the Queensland Water Commission. As the minister mentioned in his second reading speech, one of the roles of the Water Commission is to have responsibility for the South-East Queensland water grid. Whilst the Queensland Water Commission was not responsible for the government's grab for the assets of local government, one would have hoped that it had learnt from what occurred in that instance in relation to the lack of consultation and the poor compensation to the local governments involved.

Unfortunately, one of the first roles of the Queensland Water Commission was in implementing the Northern Pipeline Interconnector Stage 1 which can only be described as an ugly leaking scar throughout the length of my electorate. The government's poor planning led to the crisis in the first place and required this pipeline to be built with such haste. Even so, it was not necessary for this to occur with such rough riding over the constituents in my electorate. There was appalling consultation, poor compensation and poor project management that, as we have heard this evening, led to huge cash blow-outs. Given that the water grid was ideally designed to be able to pump water in both directions, there are still no return pumps on that pipeline to ensure that the water can come back up to the Sunshine Coast. There is an expectation from Sunshine Coast residents that water would come north if it was required at any stage, so why not put the pumps in when it was first built and save money?

This bill is about reducing the number of commissioners from a chair and two commissioners to the one. I understand that that one commissioner will now be responsible for not only the Traveston Crossing Dam, which my colleague the member for Gympie has so eloquently outlined, but also the Northern Pipeline Interconnector Stage 2. If the Water Commission does continue to persist with these developments, my constituents and I and those of neighbouring electorates can only hope that in this instance, now that we have had a bit of rain and there is water in the tanks and the dams, there might be an opportunity for better planning. My constituents and I hope that there will be better consultation as this pipeline is laid out, that there will be better compensation for those affected, that there will be consideration as to how the impact of this pipeline may be reduced on the landowners and primary producers in the area and, ultimately, that there will be better project management that ensures the costs are kept to a minimum. I do have to wonder though, given we are reducing the leadership of the Water Commission from three to one, whether this will happen at all.

Perhaps as the Weller-Webbe report recommended, the government should give up on the Queensland Water Commission completely and return the powers to the Department of Environment and Resource Management whose officers are, after all, some of the experts who advised the government not to proceed with the Traveston Crossing Dam in the first place.