



Speech by

Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Hansard Thursday, 4 June 2009

WATER AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr RYAN (Morayfield—ALP) (8.50 pm): I rise in support of the Water and Another Act Amendment Bill 2009. In speaking to the bill I would like to firstly reflect on the valuable work which has been carried out by the Water Commission to date. The commission was established under the Water Act 2000 to ensure the delivery of sustainable and secure water supplies for the South-East Queensland region and other designated regions. It has achieved this by providing advice to this government, developing long-term water supply strategies, establishing a regional water grid, implementing water restrictions and managing water demand. All of these functions are the commission's responsibility under the Water Act.

The changes to the composition of the commission as set out in the amendment bill form part of the government's response to the Weller-Webbe report, but those changes in no way hinder the vital operation of the Queensland Water Commission as an independent statutory body. These amendments demonstrate the government's commitment to act quickly and decisively on the recommendations of the Weller-Webbe report while ensuring the commission can still get on with the job of managing the water supplies of South-East Queensland for the next generation of Queenslanders.

To avoid any doubt, these changes are not a reflection on how well the functions of the commission have been carried out to date. The commission has led and continues to lead the development and implementation of world-class water supply planning and water restriction frameworks. A reality of our variable climate and growing population is the need to plan for future generations. The Queensland Water Commission and the amendments set out in this bill are key components of that plan. The commission has been instrumental in developing the draft South-East Queensland Water Strategy which is a long-term strategy to guide the region's water initiatives in conjunction with state and local governments. This strategy, and the work of the commission, is designed to meet the region's water supply needs for the next 50 years and will deliver a new standard of water security in Australia's fastest-growing region.

The previous Target 140 campaign has been instrumental in reducing water consumption in South-East Queensland. I commend the people of Queensland and the people of the Morayfield state electorate on their superb commitment to water conservation. Recent rain and storm events have contributed to our water storage supplies and combined dam levels have now exceeded 70 per cent. This means that water restrictions can be eased under the commission's drought exit strategy. This strategy is yet another piece of work by the commission which ensures that our water supplies can continue to meet the demands placed on them while rewarding those hardworking water savers within the community.

The commission has also established the South-East Queensland water grid, including the Water Grid Manager. By connecting the region's major water sources, water treatment plants and bulk water transport networks, the water grid enables the coordination of delivery of urban and industrial waste supplies across South-East Queensland. To facilitate the operation of the water grid the commission also developed contracts governing commercial transactions between grid participants. These contracts relate to the water market rules. The water market rules are administered by the commission and govern the operational and commercial aspects of wholesale water sales to grid customers and the supply of services to the grid manager. The water security planning and restrictions functions of the commission, as well as its

role in setting up and administering aspects of the water grid and the water market, are just some of the functions that remain critical for ensuring water supply security in South-East Queensland.

The changes to the composition of the commission which are set out in this bill do not change the core functions of the commission or the important work that the commission continues to undertake. To be clear, the amendments to the Water Act introduced by this bill do not hinder the vital operation of the Queensland Water Commission as an independent statutory body delivering valuable reform in the South-East Queensland water sector. What these amendments are all about is further securing water for Queensland's future and underpinning the modernisation of the regulation of the water sector. Modern times require modern, relevant and contemporary consideration of current and future water security for Queenslanders. The amendments contained in this bill are good amendments and I commend the bill to the House.