



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 17 September 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cloncurry Pipeline Project

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.22 am): I want to update the House on a key development in the progress of the Cloncurry pipeline project. In response to the dire situation of Cloncurry's water supply, the Premier announced in December 2008 that SunWater would build the 38-kilometre Cloncurry pipeline at a cost of \$42.5 million. This followed several years of low rainfall that left the local Chinaman Creek Dam almost empty and bores depleted. With temperatures and desperation on the rise, the pipeline was the only way to secure a safe water supply for deeply concerned Cloncurry residents, and I want to acknowledge the advocacy by the member for Mount Isa on their behalf.

The Cloncurry pipeline will connect Lake Julius north of Mount Isa to Cloncurry via the north-west Queensland water pipeline. The Cloncurry pipeline project enjoys considerable support from the local community and has been designed to cater for future population and industrial growth in the Cloncurry region. The pipe will have a capacity of up to 1,500 megalitres per year. Of this, 900 megalitres is required to meet existing demand and the remaining 600 megalitres will be made available to cater for industrial and population growth. Construction of the pipeline commenced in July 2009 and is expected to be completed on time and on budget in December 2009. Commissioning of the pipeline is expected by March next year.

Construction of the pipeline is providing a significant financial injection into the local economy, with some 13 local companies supplying sand, concrete, fencing materials, plant and machinery, fuel and hardware goods. The construction crew of approximately 60 includes local tradespersons and labourers, and approximately 40 visiting contractors are being accommodated in Cloncurry as well. The delivery of this project is a credit to the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade and the project team, and I acknowledge him in his absence.

Given the challenge of this project and to ensure that construction of the pipeline is not delayed, the Coordinator-General has issued a works regulation to ensure that SunWater's contractors can gain unfettered access to state, council and private land, roads and watercourses to carry out pipeline related work. If the works regulation is ultimately required for the purposes of gaining access, SunWater will have to adhere to strict conditions. These conditions include giving landholders seven days notice prior to entry on to land, SunWater not unduly interfering with landholder rights and as soon as practicable making good any unavoidable disturbance to land. This is not only good policy but sound forward thinking to ensure that Cloncurry residents receive a steady supply of one of the state's most valuable commodities—water.