



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Wednesday, 15 September 2010

MOTION: SOUTH-EAST QUEENSLAND WATER SUPPLY

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (6.21 pm): I rise to support the Treasurer's amendment. In this debate there has been a lot of talk about truth. It strikes me that some members opposite find it difficult to tell the difference between the truth and fiction. Just now we have heard a lot of talk about the film *A Few Good Men*. Members opposite need to understand that that was fiction. The truth is that water is a precious resource that has to be shared.

From 2005 to 2009, South-East Queensland suffered the worst drought in 100 years. That is the truth. In 2007, the state government embarked upon building the South-East Queensland water grid, a critical safety net that links our dams and reservoirs so that water can be shared in times of drought. That is the truth. The state government's northern pipeline interconnector, stages 1 and 2, links the South-East Queensland water grid to the Sunshine Coast and vice versa. The truth is that the 95 kilometre reverse-flow underground pipe is a measure to ensure the security of essential water for all of South-East Queensland, depending on demand. The state government has ensured that this pipeline can run either way so that the Sunshine Coast is part of the South-East Queensland water safety net. That is the truth. Noosa has one isolated water source. Would the member for Noosa prefer his constituents to be cut off from water if there was a problem with that water source? Part of the solution for that community is to make available to it the opportunities presented by the water grid should there be a future drought. Would the member prefer that the Sunshine Coast be denied the same water security as the rest of South-East Queensland?

As the people of South-East Queensland know, drought can happen. The 48-kilometre northern pipeline interconnector stage 1 from Morayfield to Landers Shute water treatment plant and the 47-kilometre northern pipeline interconnector stage 2 currently under construction are part of the safety net. They are not a pipeline to nowhere. They connect the Sunshine Coast to the safety net. They will connect the currently segmented water zones of the Sunshine Coast and provide greater water security and flexibility within the Sunshine Coast. Upon expected completion in 2011, the pipeline is expected to pump up to 65 megalitres of water a day between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. The flow will be regulated by the South East Queensland Water Grid Manager. Stage 1 has been transporting up to 65 megalitres of water to Brisbane each day since April 2009. Ultimately the pipeline is expected to transport up to 65 megalitres a day from various water sources in either direction. That is the truth.

Another integral part of the South-East Queensland water grid is the Tugun desalination plant. Already this facility has generated a staggering 27.9 billion litres of water, which has been blended with treated dam water and distributed to South-East Queensland's water grid. It is already on tap and it will be on tap should drought occur again. I am pleased to say that the major phase of final works of the desalination plant has been completed and testing is under way. The state government is expecting to finalise and hand over the facility in coming weeks, but we will not do so until the strict guidelines and all the contractual agreements have been met. Gold Coasters should know that the Tugun desalination plant is a key part of the South-East Queensland water grid and the safety net. It is capable of producing the water supplies needed for some 665,000 people. The Tugun desalination plant plays a critical role in making sure that the region will never run dry again.

I remind the House that this government has been open and honest about the works and what they have involved. As I have said, today we have heard a lot of talk about the truth. However, the truth is something that cannot necessarily be associated with the member for Currumbin. In a media stunt that came unstuck, the member opposite issued a media statement blaming the desalination plant for noise generated by a runway upgrade at the nearby Gold Coast Airport. In her statement she said that night works at that desalination plant caused sleepless nights. She said, 'How much more damage can this government do to the good people of Currumbin?' On contacting the Gold Coast Airport to discuss the works, which involved cross-hatching the new runway with diamond tipped saws—

Mrs Stuckey interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Stop the clock. You will withdraw that statement. It is unparliamentary.

Mrs Stuckey: I withdraw.

Mr SPEAKER: Stand up and withdraw it.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: On contacting the Gold Coast Airport, my office was advised that the member for Currumbin had been briefed personally on the airport related activities. We cannot see that the truth is associated with her. She fails the truth test. She needs to look the people of Currumbin in the eye and tell them the truth.

(Time expired)