



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 7 October 2010

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Wyaralong Dam; Airport Link

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (10.12 am): I am pleased to advise the House that the construction of the \$348 million Wyaralong Dam project is more than 50 per cent complete and has generated 685 jobs. This figure is well in excess of the original jobs target of 420. In total, more than 600 businesses have been involved in the project—many of them local—and more than 50 per cent of the staff employed on this important water infrastructure project are locals. In addition, unemployed Queenslanders taking part in the Bligh government's \$57 million Green Army initiative have learnt practical trail building and environmental mitigation work skills on the job. The latest wave of Green Army recruits graduated last month after spending 22 weeks learning valuable skills on the dam project. Not only will Wyaralong Dam, in conjunction with the nearby Cedar Grove Weir, supply enough water for 300,000 people but also it is providing opportunities for locals to break the unemployment cycle and help the environment.

Green Army recruits have been engaged in a variety of work, including identifying and removing weeds, collecting seeds, building trails, protecting habitat and planting. They have developed a range of new practical skills such as basic construction, landscaping and plant identification, all backed up by on-site accredited training delivered by Bremer TAFE. Ninety-two per cent of participants involved on the project have graduated and found work in the building and environment industries and almost half of these graduates are Indigenous. The dam construction workforce peaked in August, with 425 workers on site, 232 of whom live locally. This project, built between Beaudesert and Boonah, is a prime example of how the Bligh government's \$17.1 billion infrastructure spend is supporting 106,000 jobs.

In addition, the combined \$4.8 billion Airport Link projects have now created more than 14,000 direct and indirect jobs. Right now, more than 3,400 people are directly employed in these congestion-busting initiatives, surpassing predicted peak employment by more than 800 jobs. The Bligh government is focused on Queensland's future through the creation of much needed infrastructure and jobs. We are creating a modern Queensland.