



Speech by
Ian Kaye

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND WATER (RESTRUCTURING) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr KAYE (Greenslopes—LNP) (4.00 pm): I rise in this place today to speak on the South East Queensland Water (Restructuring) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill through my involvement in the Finance and Administration Committee. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the minister for bringing this bill to the House, and I would also like to thank the chair of the committee for his stewardship. One of the platforms the Newman government was elected on was a commitment to get the state's finances back under control and to help Queenslanders with cost-of-living increases. Since our election in March this year, we have gone a long way to achieving our objectives. In my electorate of Greenslopes, we as a government are helping all of those people whom I spoke with during the campaign who were crying out for relief from ever-increasing prices.

I do not think anybody in here would forget the drought we were in prior to the flooding in Queensland. However, we are now in a very different situation. Unlike various discredited predictions, the rain did not come again and most of our dams are in a good position volume wise. The government of the day committed to a drought-proofing scheme that involved a series of pipelines and a desalination plant, and these big ticket items had the big ticket price tags to match. I quote from the explanatory notes of the bill—

With the completion of major infrastructure projects and a transition to post-drought operating conditions, there is a clear need to redirect the focus of the sector from construction to cost-containment, including targeting duplication of functions across the industry. The continuing requirement for a dedicated source of policy advice on regional water security has also receded with the shift to a full-supply operating environment and the increasing organisational maturity and regional focus of SEQ water industry participants.

This bill will merge the three existing South-East Queensland bulk water entities—the Queensland Bulk Water Supply Authority, LinkWater and the South East Queensland Water Grid Manager—into one single bulk water service provider, the South East Queensland Water Grid Manager. This entity will be the monopoly purchaser of bulk water to the councils of South-East Queensland and the distributor-retailer authorities. Aside from eliminating levels of duplication amongst the three entities, it will mean the following will occur, and again I will quote from the explanatory notes—

The Bill will impose specific obligations upon the new bulk entity to ensure that it demonstrates how it will achieve the DLOS objectives—

the desired level of service objectives—

where these have been prescribed by Regulation, recognising that it will now own, operate and control all bulk water supply and transport assets in SEQ and will need to take ownership of short and long-term planning to ensure it can meet growing demand for safe, secure and reliable water supply in SEQ and be appropriately responsive to emerging security issues.

By eliminating duplication amongst the existing entities via this merger, it will mean a more efficient operation of resources in South-East Queensland. By creating efficiencies, we can start to pay down the debt and contain prices for consumers, both residential and commercial. I am all for anything that helps drive down the cost of living for people in the Greenslopes electorate. The Newman government came to office with an enormous debt to pay off as well as the need to mitigate the ever-increasing demands on

family budgets. We are working hard to achieve these objectives without imposing more costs and tax increases on the people of Queensland.

This will be the last legislation that I will speak on as a member of the Finance and Administration Committee. I would like to take this opportunity to commend all members of the committee for the work they do and the way in which the committee conducts itself. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the chair, the member for Coomera, and his stewardship of the committee. I extend my thanks to the staff, Deborah, Maggie, Lynette and of course Marilyn Freeman, who will soon retire. Thank you, Marilyn, for your dedicated service. I also acknowledge the hard work by the technical scrutiny secretariat. I commend the bill to the House and ask everyone in this place to support it.