




Speech by  
**Jeff Seenev**

**MEMBER FOR CALLIDE**

Hansard Wednesday, 15 February 2012

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## **CALLIDE VALLEY, WATER ALLOCATIONS**

 **Mr SEENEV** (Callide—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (9.38 pm): Tonight I want to table in the parliament a letter and a petition on behalf of a group of constituents of mine who have been badly treated by this government and in particular by the Department of Environment and Resource Management. DERM is a legend in Queensland. Everyone has a DERM story. The mess that DERM has made of the water allocations in the Callide Valley I think is one of the worst examples of government mismanagement. It set out to address a problem which everyone agrees needed to be addressed. It has caused enormous angst amongst Callide Valley water users and it has created community tension and upset that has gone on now for quite a long period of time. Even with the latest so-called resolution of this issue, there are still a large number of landholders who are dissatisfied with the outcome.

The petition that I table tonight is from a group of landholders in the lower Callide groundwater entitlement area. There are some 52 allocations in the lower section and this petition is signed by 44 of those people. Of the 52 people affected, 44 are dissatisfied by the outcome. That is the sort of result that DERM has been able to engender.

There is no doubt that there needs to be an adjustment of the water allocations in the Callide Valley to meet the available water. I think most people accept that, but the principle of historic use that has been adopted has produced an outcome that disadvantages by far the greatest number of landholders. Landholders have accepted that there needs to be an adjustment. They have put forward to the department an across-the-board percentage reduction that would give DERM the outcome that it requires. But DERM, for its own reasons, rejected what the irrigators themselves worked out was fair and reasonable and came up with its own solution which pleased nobody.

This is an issue that has to be addressed some time in the future. It is an injustice that has to be addressed. Irrespective of who wins the upcoming election, this sort of issue has to be addressed. The problems associated with DERM have to be addressed so that the outcomes that come from that department meet the needs of the people who depend on that department to administer the essential things in their life like water. Nothing is more essential for an irrigator than their water allocations and they should be able to negotiate with the department to produce a win-win outcome. The irrigators have tried to do that. DERM has rejected it. I think it is a sad reflection on a department that has clearly failed. I table the petition.

*Tabled paper:* Non-conforming petition relating to Lower Callide groundwater entitlement holders [[6499](#)].