




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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WATER LEGISLATION (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the Water Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Amendment Bill 2014. I would like to start by thanking my committee colleagues for their hard work during the investigation process and for the recommendations that we made. I fully support the bill and the process we have followed to be here today. There are three main objectives to the bill. The first objective is to amend the Water Act 2000 to do the following: to streamline the process for declaring a water supply emergency; to improve the governance framework for category 1 water authorities; to omit redundant provisions referencing the Queensland Water Commission; and to include the Noosa Shire Council in the definition of the South-East Queensland region. The second objective is to amend the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to do the following: to enable service provider water restrictions in emergency situations to commence on the day they are announced; to enable declaration of a temporary full supply level for flood mitigation dams to have effect on notice being given to the dam owner; and to clarify procedures for authorisation of alternative operating procedures when flood events occurs. The third objective is to amend the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 to bring it into alignment with the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005.

As I mentioned, I fully support this bill in its entirety. One of the features of this bill is that it will streamline the procedure for changing the water supply conditions in an emergency situation. We have heard quite a bit here today about this—and we may hear some more yet—so I will limit my contribution to the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005, or the Queensland WELS Act.

This bill upholds the Queensland government's commitment to maintain legislation that forms part of a national scheme for water efficiency labelling and standards. The Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards scheme, or WELS scheme, is a national cooperative scheme that was established in 2005 by the Commonwealth Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards Act 2005 and complementary state and territory legislation. It is supported by an intergovernmental agreement between the Commonwealth and all states and territories which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the parties. The Commonwealth is the regulator and administers the scheme on behalf of the parties to the IGA. The states and territories have little or no operational role, but significant scheme changes cannot happen without the agreement of a majority of states and territories.

The WELS scheme, through its water efficiency labelling, encourages water savings by providing information to consumers on the water efficiency of certain products at the point of sale. WELS products—such as showers, taps, toilets, urinals, washing machines and dishwashers—are star rated according to their water efficiency, similar to the energy efficiency ratings for electrical products. The higher the number of stars, the more water efficient the appliance is. Consumers are accustomed to seeing the star ratings for both energy and water when purchasing products, and there is evidence that both registration and sales of four-star rated or better products have increased since the WELS scheme began. The 2004 regulation impact statement for the WELS scheme projected that a reduction in demand for water over the period 2006 to 2021 would total about 610,000 megalitres. That is 244,000 Olympic sized swimming pools, which is a lot of water.

Since then, a 2008 study by the Institute for Sustainable Futures estimated that WELS products would reduce Australia-wide water consumption by 800,000 megalitres, or 800 gigalitres, over the same period. By 2021 it is now estimated that using water-efficient products will help to reduce domestic water use by more than 100,000 megalitres each year, will save more than 800,000 megalitres, which is more water than in Sydney Harbour, and will reduce total greenhouse gas input by 400,000 tonnes each year, which is equivalent to taking 90,000 cars off the road. We can all see what these changes mean and what a great outcome this is for the state and the Commonwealth. With those few comments, I think the minister can see that I support the bill.