




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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ADJOURNMENT

Urannah Dam

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (11.03 pm): The development of a significant water resource is the key to unlocking the economic potential of the north. The impending release of the northern white paper and infrastructure funding commitments in last week's federal budget means that the time is now ripe to deliver the Urannah Dam project.

The proposed Urannah Dam, situated on the Broken River south-west of Collinsville, will store around 1.5 million megalitres of water. This capacity compares with the storage capacity of 1,860,000 megalitres in the Burdekin Falls Dam. The Urannah Dam project was first identified and investigated 40 years ago and has been revisited many times due to its location, narrow valley, small inundations area and relatively low capital cost per megalitre. Urannah Dam has been previously identified as a priority 1 Queensland dam project by the Queensland government and is widely recognised as the highest priority water project and environmentally feasible dam site in the entire Burdekin catchment.

The Urannah Dam project is the key to the future development of the region. It is the most viable solution to meeting the growing water supply demand resulting from proposed new mine developments, power generation proposals, industrial developments and the creation of an expanded irrigated horticulture/broadacre farming industry. Water from the dam could be utilised to develop the 30,000-hectare area to the south-west of Collinsville along the Bowen River as a major new irrigated agricultural area. An agro-economic assessment has identified this project as having the potential to generate \$323.2 million over 25 years from agriculture industry association, not taking into account industrial, mining and power generation benefits. As the proposed Urannah Dam sits at 240 metres elevation, it can gravity feed water to most areas in the Bowen and Galilee basins and the lower Burdekin catchment through either pipeline or riverine delivery mechanisms.

I am talking about extremely low levels of water diversion in the catchment for this dam. Urannah's catchment is developed to only four per cent of available water flows and after the construction of the dam this percentage will rise to only 18 per cent. It is a greenfield development in close proximity to existing industries. The proposed development is within 100 kilometres of the canefarming areas of the Burdekin and Proserpine and the horticultural industry at Bowen, which will result in a faster uptake of water by industry through expansion rather than having to commence new development from scratch.

The last dam to be built in North Queensland was the Burdekin Falls Dam, which was completed in 1987. In the 28 years since that date, Queensland's population has expanded from 2.7 million to 4.8 million people. Queensland needs this dam and it makes perfect sense to build it in northern Australia. We are about to become the food bowl of South-East Asia and the job opportunities and economic development that this project would bring to Queensland would be unprecedented. Let Urannah Dam be our legacy to the people of Queensland and let us make a commitment here today to move forward with this project.