




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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MOTION: TULLY-MILLSTREAM HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.00 pm): I move—

That this House support the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project.

This was a project that was approved in 1998 and would have provided up to 600 megawatts of power. It is disappointing that this scheme, which was approved and in the process of construction— from media reports there is a 1.5-kilometre tunnel under the mountain—and would have saved up to \$600 million in transmission costs from southern generators to North Queensland, will not go ahead. There has been a push for more baseload power or hydro power in North Queensland. Most of the water for the project will come from Millstream and Blunder creeks, which come from the Southern Tablelands. The project would generate enough power for 100,000 homes in the region. There is a 700-metre drop, which provides the energy to support the operation of the turbines.

Recently I raised with the Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme. Over the last six years I have raised this issue seven times, including to the previous minister for water and energy, Mark McArdle. In all that time I have been completely ignored. I do believe that this is a very good project. My father was employed at the Kareeya Hydro Power Station near Tully. I was born in Tully and grew up in an area called Cardstone, which housed the employees and the families that worked at the Kareeya Hydro Power Station. Sadly, although this project was approved and going ahead, it was knocked on the head because politicians never had the gumption to support it.

Over the last 35 years there have been no nation-building projects constructed in Queensland. There was the Burdekin Dam back in 1987. What we have now are nation sweeteners. The days of nation builders are over. It is time that we got back to what we traditionally used to do—that is, build power stations and dams and put infrastructure into place.

I have raised this issue seven times. I have worked with members of the Southern Tablelands Tully hydro-electric scheme lobby group and we have done a lot of media on this but it has been completely ignored. There is a project called the Southern Tablelands Development Scheme to which the federal government has provided \$750,000 through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. That is a scheme that irrigates up to 100,000 hectares of land but also, through a canal, sends the water back down through the Herbert River and provides about 200 megawatts of power.

I am very supportive of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project because it was approved. The foundation is there. There is a feasibility study already in place. It will generate 600 megawatts of power that will save this state up to \$600 million in transmitting power from the south up to the north. It has already started. I am asking the House to support this motion. I fully commend this motion to the House.