




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2017

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Tully-Millstream Hydro-Electric Project

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (12.20 pm): The Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project was approved in 1988. This would have provided 600 megawatts of power generation—clean, green energy. It would have saved hundreds of millions of dollars of transmission losses from the southern generators. Politicians did not have the gumption to continue with this project. A massive clean, green energy scheme was put on hold as politicians did not have the willpower to continue with this project.

I am very pleased that the House won the support for the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme. The last thing we want is five years of more studies. We do not need a long, drawn-out study like the previous feasibility study which took five years. We need construction. We now have majority support of the House for the construction of this scheme. The KAP is very keen to establish a construction authority—similar to the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority—for the construction of this hydro scheme.

The federal government also needs to commit to funding projects, not just studies into them. No federal money has been provided through the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. There has also been no funding provided by the federal government to any projects in the north. We are seeing a high number of feasibility studies into dams and water infrastructure projects right throughout the north but not one single project has been approved. They are talking about these projects, so there is a perception that they are doing something—that they are building these projects—but we are seeing no projects constructed. I will read the Electricity Commission's report back in 1988 with regard to the approval of the construction of the Tully-Millstream hydro scheme. The then minister for mines, energy and northern development, Martin Tenni, said—

In terms of environmental safeguards, the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme will be one of the most responsible power generation projects yet undertaken in Australia.

Six years will have been spent in planning the project by the time construction starts next year. Already, the plans have been revised in several important ways to respond to the findings of a comprehensive feasibility study.

In their formal form, the plans contain changes designed to minimise the environmental impact. Now, only about 135 hectares of the 660,000 hectares of rainforest in the Wet Tropics will be affected by construction.

The scheme will proceed because it is soundly-based and represents the most practical and cost-effective way of meeting the ever-growing power needs of Queenslanders, with the least impact on the environment.

The report states—

The State Government's November 1988 decision to approve the \$550 million project reflects the long lead time needed to build a scheme of this magnitude.

Construction is planned to start next year (1990), with the power station coming online by 1996. The actual timing of various segments of the programme will be under constant review so it can respond to electricity demand growth.

The report states—

The Queensland Government's decision to proceed with the Tully-Millstream project was aided by detailed engineering and environmental reports prepared as part of a \$5 million, two-year feasibility study into the scheme.

The study included:

- surveying;
- geological exploration;
- materials testing;
- hydrological analysis;
- engineering studies;
- environmental investigations of—
- flora, fauna and streams;

A two-year feasibility study has already been done for this project. Six years of work has gone into this project. What is being pushed? A feasibility study. We support the construction of this project. It needs to start now.

(Time expired)