




Speech By  
**Dale Last**

**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

**MOTION: ROOKWOOD WEIR**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.47 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amended motion moved by the member for Glass House. There is absolutely no question that this Palaszczuk Labor government has no interest in building dams in this state. There is no better example than Rookwood Weir. This government will do and say anything to avoid committing to build a dam in this state. I find it extraordinary that the Premier finds millions of dollars to bring Dora the Explorer to the state but cannot find the money to build a dam, a dam that will create jobs, economic prosperity for Central Queensland, water for Rockhampton, Gladstone and Livingstone—

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! One moment, member for Burdekin. The member for Stafford does not need to debate across the chamber with the member for Gregory. Member for Gregory, I have told you several times and you are now warned under standing orders.

**Mr LAST:** It is a dam that will provide water to the Gladstone Area Water Board for customers and a dam that will provide water for agricultural development. It would have provided water for agricultural development, but for the vegetation management legislation introduced during the last sittings of parliament that put paid to that. A dam without land clearing is akin to putting a lolly jar in front of a child and saying that they cannot touch it.

The fact of the matter is that the federal LNP government committed \$130 million to this project in 2016 at a time when the total cost of the project was \$260 million. They actually contributed their 50 per cent share of the cost. Because of the delays by this dithering government, that cost has ballooned by \$92 million. Now members opposite have the audacity to come into this place to call on the federal government to stump up an extra \$46 million.

Let us fast-track to 2018, and thank goodness we have some committed federal members in the federal member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry, and the Rockhampton based senator Matt Canavan, because they have committed to building this dam. Unlike those opposite, the LNP at both the state and federal levels is resolute in its determination to see this project go ahead.

The Queensland business case is now with Infrastructure Australia being vetted, as is required by Commonwealth law for any investment over \$100 million, and that business case clearly demonstrates that we must invest in water infrastructure or risk running out of water in Central Queensland. It is a bit rich for this Labor government to come in here tonight and continue to play games with Rookwood Weir instead of acting like grown-ups and cooperating with the Commonwealth to get the job done.

Queensland Labor is dragging its heels on this project—a project, I might add, that the LNP committed to building during the recent election. We understand how important that dam is and we would have had it started if we had been elected at the last election. Last month the Minister for Resources and Northern Australia, Matt Canavan, said—

We have already taken steps to have Infrastructure Australia review the Queensland state business case for Rookwood, which is a requirement for all projects worth over \$100 million ...

We expect this process to only take a couple of months.

We only received the Queensland business case recently, but I know that Michelle Landry, Ken O'Dowd and myself are as keen as mustard to get this project off the ground.

There are no hold-ups from that end. It is interesting that last month—that is right, three weeks ago—this government finally provided the information to Infrastructure Australia for the Rookwood Weir business case which in turn—surprise, surprise—requested further information because the Queensland government did not meet its assessment framework requirements. For the minister to come into this House tonight and accuse the federal government of delays and not holding up its end of the bargain is nothing short of hypocritical.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): One moment, member for Burdekin. All members in the chamber, there are far too many audible conversations happening. I am finding it difficult to hear the member for Burdekin. A number of members have already been warned. We do not want to add to the list.

**Mr LAST:** To demonstrate how hopeless this crowd are at putting together a properly researched and cogent argument for funding, Infrastructure Australia said there was insufficient detail on how the benefit cost ratio was calculated. Instead of coming into this place and trying to score cheap political points, how about the minister get his own house in order and provide the economic data that is needed to properly assess the business case? Central Queensland needs this project to go ahead. It needs the jobs and the economic prosperity that will come with it, and the federal government has shown by its actions that it is more than willing to work with the state to get this project moving. Minister, the Commonwealth government is committed to this project. Are you?