



Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**Emu Swamp Dam Project**



**Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (9.07 pm): I rise to speak about the Emu Swamp Dam—

**Mr Crisafulli:** Hear, hear!

**Mr LISTER:** I thank the member for Broadwater very much for his interjection. The electorate of Southern Downs depends on agriculture. It is the basis of my electorate's prosperity and jobs. Agriculture demands water. We can rely on the rain but, much more importantly, we need supplemental water, which is water from storages such as dams. That supplemental water for irrigated agriculture makes the difference between normal farming and high-value farming, which creates jobs, prosperity and drought resistance. That is why the Emu Swamp Dam project is so important to my electorate of Southern Downs, particularly in the Granite Belt region.

For more than 20 years it has been an aspiration of the people of the Granite Belt to put a dam on the Severn River at Emu Swamp in order to provide water security. I thank the federal government for providing \$3.5 million to the Stanthorpe and Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce to act as the proponent for this visionary dam. That money will result in the production of a report that, unlike previous reports, will provide a cost, an operating model and a design for the dam. I would like to thank the state government as well for its part in selecting the Stanthorpe and Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce to be the proponent for this important project. The detailed business case study is well on its way to completion, with submissions to be made to the state government by November this year.

Fifty-one local landholders have expressed strong interest. These are overwhelmingly family farms producing leafy green vegetables and fruit and vegetable products, very high-value crops with very large labour demands that are particularly important to our area. They have agreed to purchase water at the nominal cost of \$6,000 per megalitre, which works out to be \$23.4 million in capital outlay as an investment.

It has the support of the Queensland Farmers' Federation, Queensland apple and pear growers, the Stanthorpe Community Reference Panel and the National Irrigators Council. The environmental impact statement has been around for some time. Because of delays in organising a detailed business case, that will expire on 2 October. I believe the government is looking at renewing that. I urge them to do so and to assist the Stanthorpe and Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce in obtaining a transfer of that document in order that they can continue. The Minister for Local Government will be visiting Stanthorpe on the 26th of this month. I urge him to meet with the proponents of the dam to learn on behalf of the government what we are up to. I look forward to the support of the government from this point on.