




Speech By  
**James Lister**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 October 2018

**MINERAL, WATER AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to speak on the Mineral, Water and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2018. I too would like to add my thanks to those of the speakers who came before me to the committee for the work that they have done. I thought that the member for Mount Ommaney spoke well when she highlighted the good work that the committee does and I would like to say the same thing about my own committee staff in the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee.

The LNP supports this bill. I would like to thank the minister for his speech today which alleviated a number of concerns that we had regarding the adherence of the legislation to the recommendations of the committee. This bill looks to implement changes to the statutory negotiation process for the negotiation of conduct and compensation agreements and make-good agreements between resource companies and landholders. We understand that the future success of both the agricultural and mining sectors depends on their ability to harmoniously coexist. We also understand that mining and agriculture are the mainstay of our Queensland economy. No matter where you live in this state, to some extent your livelihood depends on those industries. While from time to time we have seen some prominent disagreements between agricultural and mining interests, by and large—in fact overwhelmingly—they do coexist to the great benefit of the state.

One of the main factors behind the LNP's support for this bill has been the government's acceptance of the sensible recommendations put forward by the LNP members of the committee on behalf of stakeholders. The Queensland Farmers' Federation noted that there should be potential for landholders to be compensated for their own valuable time used in negotiating and preparing their CCA. I think that is a very good point. A farmer's time is not free. They are busy. They are doing all of the things that a farmer has to do these days, not just the actual farming; they have to be their own marketing manager, they have to be a fencing contractor, a mechanic, a father, a grandfather and a husband, amongst others. There ought to be some recognition of the value of their time.

What element interests me most in this bill, and I acknowledge that those who have spoken before me have done so with a level of granularity on the detail of this bill which has been commendable, is the release of unallocated water. Again I would like to thank the minister, because I know he does have a well deserved reputation for wanting to see unallocated water released. For a constituency like mine in Southern Downs that is a very good thing.

I would like to talk about a particular case of releasing unallocated water for industrial use, which would be a terrific way to grow production and jobs and prosperity in my electorate of Southern Downs and that is the Emu Swamp Dam or, as it is known now, the Granite Belt Irrigation Project. This is a transformative project to dam the Severn River at Emu Swamp and provide a reticulation system to the fruit and vegetable growers throughout the Granite Belt so that they can increase production. Water is very valuable on the Granite Belt. They are prepared to pay a great deal for it, much more than someone elsewhere because the Granite Belt is a very productive horticultural area. Releasing unallocated water is important for us. It disappoints me that the proponent for this particular transformative project, for the detailed business case, is the Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce. They were awarded

funds through the state government under the Federal National Water Infrastructure Development Fund. They are using those funds to progress a detailed business case, design and a costing for Emu Swamp dam and operating model to demonstrate the viability of the project.

There is just one thing missing: the environmental impact statement, which has been renewed, thankfully, by the Coordinator-General. We are grateful for that. It has been renewed for only six months. Unfortunately the proponent for that document, the Southern Downs Regional Council, has dillydallied for a great deal of time in the task of transferring that to the proponent for the detailed business case, the Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce.

I judge people and organisations not by what they say but by what they do. Any measure of the actions of the Southern Downs Regional Council finds them wanting. They have had months and months and months to get started on the process of transferring this environmental impact statement but nothing has happened. The mayor herself publicly assured everyone at a meeting in about April this year that work would start tomorrow. It certainly did not. For the benefit of the House I would like to table some correspondence concerning that failure to work on that transfer.

*Tabled paper:* Letter, dated 16 October 2018, from Stanthorpe & Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce to the Mayor, Southern Downs Regional Council, Cr Tracy Dobie [\[1685\]](#).

I would like to take this opportunity when talking about the release of unallocated water for industry to urge the CEO of the council and the mayor and the councillors to get out of neutral, start acting the words that they have uttered about their support for that water supply and get the transfer going. So far, by evidence of their actions, there seems to be an orchestrated obstruction of that process which will lead to a loss of jobs and productivity on the Granite Belt. I am very sorry to have to rise in the House to mention that, but I feel I must because it is a matter of great importance for a great number of people in my electorate. Apart from that, I would like to say that, with some minor reservations, the LNP and I do support the bill and I commend it to the House. Thank you.