




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

**MOTION: ROOKWOOD WEIR**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.36 pm): I am delighted to second the amendment moved by the member for Glass House. Finally the Labor Party has taken an interest in a project outside of South-East Queensland: the Rookwood Weir. It could be a game changer for Queensland's agricultural industry but it is not, because the Labor Party has been dragging its feet on this project for more than 10 years. The last time the Labor Party tried to build a dam in Queensland it cost Queensland taxpayers hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, and what did we get? We did not get a dam; we did not get anything.

On 27 April 2007, former Labor premier Peter Beattie promised that the Labour Party—the dam-building party—would be the ones to build Rookwood Weir and that it would be built by 2011, but it was not. We can all go out there and still kick our heels in the dust because the Labor Party has done absolutely nothing. The LNP made a \$130 million commitment to this project during the 2017 election to match the Commonwealth's \$130 million, which was made on 26 May 2016. Where was the member for Rockhampton? Did he run out and say, 'This is great'? Where was the member for Gladstone? Did he say, 'Yes, this is great'?

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The House will come to order. I call the member for Gregory.

**Mr MILLAR:** What did the Palaszczuk Labor government commit to during the 2017 election when it came to this dam? Absolutely nothing. Those opposite have come in here and tried to spin this and they gave us nothing during the election campaign. We all agree that this project would provide a major economic boost to the Queensland economy, but you have to build it. Every dollar invested in this project would generate 3.1 dollars in economic benefits. It would create an extra \$1 billion per year in agricultural production, 2,100 new jobs and support the resources industry with water for industrial purposes. And that is just stage 1!

This project is a no-brainer. The federal government has money on the table. It has had money on the table for a very long time, so why is the state Labor government sitting on its hands doing absolutely nothing about it? You only have to look at the track record of the Labor Party when it comes to agriculture to know that this government has no interest in supporting Queensland's agricultural sector.

The Rookwood Weir project has significant agricultural applications for Central Queensland, some of which apply directly to the Central Highlands and the seat of Gregory where agricultural production has an annual gross value of more than \$740 million, including \$550 million in beef production, \$40 million in sorghum, \$17 million in wheat and other broadacre grains, almost \$30 million in chickpeas, approximately \$22 million in mung beans, \$60 million in cotton, \$40 million in citrus and \$22 million in table grapes. The only way we can harness our agricultural potential is by building critical water infrastructure, something the Labor Party has never understood. As I said, the last time the Labor Party decided to build a dam it cost hundreds and hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars and we got nothing.

**Mr Bleijie:** \$700 million!

**Mr MILLAR:** I take the interjection from the member for Kawana: \$700 million, and we got absolutely nothing. People do not believe the Labor Party can build dams. They do not believe the Labor Party has any interest in agriculture.

**Ms Jones** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection from the minister. You were around the cabinet table when Traveston Dam was on the table—\$700 million.

**Ms Jones:** No, I wasn't; I was a backbencher.

**Mr MILLAR:** You were in the government, Minister.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Gregory, I counsel you to direct your comments through the chair.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. Why are members opposite standing in the way? Labor needs to stop playing games with this and get on with the job and build Rookwood Weir. Regional Queensland deserves it. I only need to look to the member for Callide and his maiden speech. This is true about Central Queensland.

When I grew up on my parents' brigalow block, I remember the big tractors pulling the scrub, a government requirement of the day. The wheel has turned and now we have anti-agricultural laws and anti-agricultural potential that will inhibit agricultural development in Queensland. It is time for people to understand that our graziers and farmers are the true practical environmentalists and custodians of the land who look after it, nurture it and are productive. Australia was born on the back of agriculture and it remains at the forefront of the economy. I call on the Labor Party to stop playing games and to get on with building Rookwood Weir.