




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 16 May 2018

MOTION

Water Prices

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.55 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. It is a bit rich to be lectured by those opposite about the cost of living when we saw electricity prices go up 43 per cent under their watch. They said cost of living would drop. They promised that. What did we see? We saw a 43 per cent increase in only three years. They have no credibility when it comes to the cost of living whatsoever. That is their record. Compare that to the Labor record on electricity—not 43 per cent but 1.9 per cent. We have actually seen a fall this year. We have seen increased competition. We have seen Alinta go out there and snaffle a large part of the market with a 25 per cent reduction in prices. Compare that cost-of-living record on this side to those opposite. It is Labor that delivers and the LNP never does.

The topic of tonight's motion is water prices. What about water consumers in Redlands? It was an interesting seat in the last election. It was an LNP seat that fell—like quite a few others—to the government. Now we have a very effective and passionate member of Redlands who is delivering for her patch.

Dr Robinson interjected.

Mr BAILEY: What did we see under the previous LNP when it came to water? We saw an increase in bulk water charges of 63 per cent under the previous LNP government—not 43 per cent but a 63 per cent increase in bulk water prices.

Mr Hart interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh, you have just made a contribution. You have had an opportunity to speak. It is now the member for Miller's turn to speak. The same goes for you, member for Oodgeroo. The minister is not taking interjections.

Mr BAILEY: What is Labor's record? A key legacy of former Labor governments in South-East Queensland is the water grid—one of the most secure water grids in the country in terms of water security. It is a significant achievement when we consider that Wivenhoe was down to 15 per cent in the depths of the drought back in 2007.

The Australian-first South-East Queensland water grid connects water sources across South-East Queensland. In fact, they move water to where it is needed. We have very different seasonal impacts in terms of rainfall within the South-East Queensland catchment.

Mr Minnikin: Weatherman Mark!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Chatsworth, this is the third time today I have had to remind you about using members' appropriate titles. You are warned under standing orders.

Mr BAILEY: The Australian-first South-East Queensland water grid deals with the different rainfall right across South-East Queensland. The Sunshine Coast, which includes the electorate of the member for Maroochydore, has been a beneficiary in recent times. We have been able to move water into the Sunshine Coast. We have gone through quite a dry spell around Baroon Pocket Dam and some of the other dams up there. We have actually been sending water north to give them assistance. That is the joy of the water grid: we can move water around to where we need it. Some parts of South-East Queensland grid get very good rainfall and others less so. That is what the water grid is designed for.

It has more than 600 kilometres of bulk water supply pipelines, enabling treated water to be moved right around. An important part of that is the Gold Coast Desalination Plant and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. Mr Speaker, you would think that the members on the Gold Coast would actually stand up for the Gold Coast—but, no, we certainly do not get that from the member for Burleigh. Because of the population growth there, the desalination plant is a critical part of water security on the Gold Coast into the future.

We have used that in recent years. Without the desal plant we would not have been able to supply water post Cyclone Debbie. We had four water treatment plants out so the desal plant kicked in and kept water supply going during an extreme weather event—something those opposite would never acknowledge but it was due to the foresight of the Labor government. Let me talk about the irresponsibility of this motion. The motion states—

That this House calls on the Palaszczuk Labor government to rule out the Queensland Competition Authority's recommendation to charge more for water.

Just 'more'—how lazy is that! There is no issue of CPI or inflation. It is a base political stunt. On the rare occasions that those opposite win government, the cost of living goes through the roof. Bulk water prices went up by 63 per cent and electricity by 43 per cent. The LNP cannot be trusted when it comes to the cost of living. Their record was appalling. That is why they are in opposition after one term. They did not even make three years. They have learnt absolutely nothing from two election losses. This motion is another example of it. It does not deserve support and I urge the House to vote it down.