




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Tinaroo Dam

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.12 pm): Over the last 12 months the management of the Tinaroo Dam by government department SunWater has created significant division in the community, particularly in relation to tree clearing and the threat that limited recreational use of this valuable asset is currently having on the economy. Closures and restrictions have already had a significant impact on the tourist industry, with accommodation outlets recording lower than usual numbers as uncertainty forces regular lake users to consider other options for holidays and weekends away.

The tourist industry is one of the top five employers in the Tablelands, and the flow-on effects from the Tinaroo Dam currently being unavailable to recreational users is a huge blow to the region's economy. SunWater, Maritime Safety, DNRM and lake users form the current Tinaroo stakeholders group which advises SunWater on how to manage the lake. However, recent decisions regarding tree clearing and recreational use have left some users concerned that SunWater's priority for income derived from water storage does not place equal value on the income generated for the region through recreation and tourism. The decision-making progress has become bogged down, which has resulted in missed opportunities to provide more recognised safety areas for water sports while ensuring that fish habitats and cultural values are preserved.

Last year I was able to secure \$150,000 for the removal of trees from the lake, and I thank the minister for that funding. These funds have been used on an underwater survey of the whole lake. While I recognise the need for SunWater to have accurate data to inform decision-making, this has now further delayed the opening of the lake at a time when the level is increasing to permit skiing and other recreational use. User groups are concerned that the decisions being made are not in the interests of the local economy or local user groups, but towards SunWater's main goal: to generate income from the water storage asset. Unfortunately, this issue does not just affect user groups but the entire Tablelands, as the income generated by recreational activity has a flow-on effect for small businesses, restaurants, accommodation outlets, retailers and employment in the region.

Over the past decade the use of the dam has been successfully managed and businesses around the area have thrived. The intervention of a government department has created division and uncertainty not only on the Tablelands but also for many thousands of users across the far north. I want to make it very clear that local people and local groups must determine the recreational use of the lake and that an advisory committee which represents the local community be recognised and supported by the minister.