




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Water Infrastructure

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.13 pm): SunWater has just announced \$24 million to upgrade the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation uplift, and I understand that this is partially federal government funding. However, it is not enough to just maintain infrastructure to deliver water. We need to build infrastructure to manage the flow of water in a region with the highest rainfall in the nation.

The Mareeba-Dimbulah Water Supply Scheme provides over 1,000 irrigation, industrial and urban customers with a total of 204,000 megalitres in water entitlements. This places incredible pressure on Tinaroo Dam to supply those customers as well as those who have entitlements from the Barron River catchment area, its subsidiaries and Tinaroo itself. To help support Lake Tinaroo with extra water, the North Johnstone transfer scheme is a relatively small-scale project that would flood harvest the North Johnstone River to divert floodwaters into Lake Tinaroo. This achieves two outcomes: it minimises flood damage on the coast and replenishes Tinaroo by maximising intake during flood events.

A second project that has been approved is the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme, which would serve a dual purpose of generating clean energy for the region as well as increasing Far North Queensland's water storage capacity and mitigating coastal flooding. The environmental argument against this project is unsubstantiated. Most of the project is on the western side of the range and a good portion has already been cleared for cattle grazing. It will also save up to \$600 million of transport losses and help resolve the issues of high electricity prices in the north. Construction of the Tully hydro would have the environmental benefit of taking millions of tonnes of harmful emissions out of the atmosphere through the production of clean energy. These projects and other similar projects like the Burdekin, Lakeland and Hell's Gate dams are critical to the economic growth and prosperity of North Queensland. Not only that, controlled flows and hydro-electric capabilities means that these projects can mitigate run-off and create clean energy solutions.

The 2031 Far North Queensland Regional Plan is due for review. I propose that these projects be seriously considered in the new FNQ Regional Plan and that some of them, like the Tully-Millstream, which has already had the groundwork completed, simply get built and completed. I call on this government to have the courage to produce a lasting legacy of economic prosperity for Far North Queensland and construct these projects which will help reduce electricity prices and provide water and infrastructure.