




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2019

MOTION

Paradise Dam, Parliamentary Inquiry

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (5.30 pm): I rise to support the motion put forward by my colleague, the opposition leader, Deb Frecklington, the member for Nanango, to have a parliamentary inquiry that directs the State Development, Natural Resources and Agricultural Industry Development Committee to investigate the Paradise Dam's construction, operation and the Palaszczuk government's decision to lower the dam wall by five metres.

From my investigations so far, it is my belief that the Paradise Dam in the electorate of Callide will become the biggest construction failure in Queensland's history. There are many questions that need to be asked and it is most important that the facts in relation to this issue be laid bare. If members remember what I said in my maiden speech, we need to operate with all the story and all the facts. The taxpayers of Queensland deserve and demand to know the truth.

The Paradise Dam is the newest dam in Queensland, a storage of some 300,000 megalitres of water, and it is only 13 years old. Why has it failed? Why is this government reducing the storage capacity to 42 per cent? What of the insurance policies on this dam? Are there any avenues for recourse and if not who will pay? Will it be the irrigators? At the recent QCA water price meetings we were told that water pricing is at full cost recovery. Given this, the cost of safety audits, insurance, operations and maintenance will be borne by the user, the irrigator, so will this apply to the Paradise Dam fiasco?

There are apparently photographs held by SunWater that show the core drillings of the dam wall reveal many faults in the concrete that was laid at Paradise Dam. These photos show cold joins in the concrete, aggregate with little or no cement powder and evidence of poor quality and construction methods used to build the dam wall. If they exist, why are they not released for public scrutiny? Why is it that the safety report has not been made public? What is the government trying to hide? It appears to me this is another crisis cover-up.

I have much experience in the construction industry and I know firsthand what can and does happen. I want to know where the slump tests are on the concrete. A slump test is a simple and quick test that is used to determine the quality and mix of the concrete that has been used on a particular job. I am told that all these records relating to the dam wall and its construction have mysteriously vanished. How convenient! Mr Graeme Newton was the man whose job it was to oversee the construction of Paradise Dam. I would like to have this man before a committee to answer questions. It appears to me that he may have been derelict in his duty in signing off on the dam's construction. Why has he been made CEO of the Cross River Rail project? Can we expect similar things to happen? If this man has no case to answer then put him before the committee and exonerate him. I expect the dam safety report is damning and that is why it has not been released. Is Mr Newton implicated? I need to know the answers. I want to know the truth. Let us have the inquiry and establish the facts.

When someone leaves a tap on at your house, what do you say? 'Turn the tap off! You're wasting water.' The Labor government has left the tap on at the Paradise Dam and it is a big tap. They are wasting thousands of megalitres of water as I speak. This is a disgrace. Australia is the driest habitable continent and water is a precious resource. Why on earth are we wasting it? To argue that it is free is absurdity. Nothing is for free. For the very few who are in a position to use this water, it will cost them dearly in pumping costs. Most of the water will go out to sea. This highlights the incompetence of the Labor government and shows how out of touch and ignorant they are as to the practicalities of running and managing an irrigation farm.

I want to know what will happen to the 105,000 megalitres of water that is still in the system. Will the government commit to building the Cooranga Weir on the Boyne River at Mundubbera? What about the weir on Barambah Creek so the people of Coalstoun Lakes can benefit from the loss of water in the Paradise Dam? I want to know what the Dam Plan is. Let us have this inquiry and find out. I support the motion.