



Speech By  
**Dale Last**


**MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 October 2019

**MOTION**

**Paradise Dam, Parliamentary Inquiry**

 **Mr LAST** (Burdekin—LNP) (5.59 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition. Queenslanders are sick of dam inaction and the aversion that this government has to all things water in this state. Water is the lifeblood of Queensland. Whether it is the regions or South-East Queensland, whether it is for agriculture and industry or for household use, if you have water you have opportunities. This government has shown time and time again that it will do everything possible to delay, to block or in this case to reduce the size of our dams.

Queenslanders are sick of excuses. They are sick of the blame game. They just want an assurance that, when they go to the tap for a drink of water or when they go to turn the valve on to water their crops, water will actually come out of it. The Labor government's record on water infrastructure is abysmal. In fact, it is an unfolding nightmare right across Queensland.

Let me give an example. They have already spent \$56 million on Rookwood Weir and they have not put a shovel in the ground yet. Let me correct the member for Gladstone and the members opposite about the contribution by the federal government—\$178 million is a fair amount of money in my book. That is 50 per cent of the cost of the dam. They will have you believe that the federal government has not contributed a brass razoo to this project. The budget has blown out by \$200 million and the project has now been delayed by two years. Who do they blame? They go bleating, cap in hand, to the feds to try to bail themselves out of this mess when in fact it is their fault and their problem to solve. The people of Central Queensland should not have to put up with a dam with half the capacity because of their ineptitude. It does not stop there.

If you go north and look at Nullinga Dam, you will find another example where the government has punted a priority project into the never-never. This is a project that has the potential to make a massive difference to the Cairns district, to create agricultural opportunities and jobs that they so desperately need up there. It is a similar story if you come down to the Burdekin. Stage 2 of the Burdekin Falls Dam has been 31 years in the making. We heard from those opposite about the hydro-electricity concept at the Burdekin Falls Dam. What has happened with that? Absolutely nothing has happened—nothing except the threat to take that funding away from the north where it is desperately needed.

This motion is about accountability, it is about transparency but, more importantly, it is about liability because the LNP, unlike those opposite, are not afraid to ask the tough questions. Paradise Dam should be called 'Paradise Lost' because that is what this work will do—lost opportunities for the region, lost opportunities for investment, lost opportunities for agriculture and industry, and lost opportunities to provide water security into the future.

The Bundaberg community deserves answers because at the end of the day we need to get to the bottom of how we have reached this point. Someone needs to be held to account for this stuff-up because Queensland should never, ever be placed in this position again of having to halve the capacity

of one of our dams. We heard earlier today that 66 per cent of Queensland is drought declared—and what some of those communities would not do to have a reliable and secure water supply! I bet the member for Southern Downs would appreciate some of that 105,000 megalitres of water.

**Mr McDonald** interjected.

**Mr LAST:** And the member for Lockyer. He would not mind having enough water to have a bath at night; I can assure you of that.

The minister claims that lowering the spillway and releasing water is needed to prevent a disaster. Minister, in your role in this debacle, you are the disaster and you will forever—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member, you will put your comments through the chair or I will sit you down.

**Mr LAST:** This minister will go down in history as the minister responsible for pulling the plug on Paradise Dam and letting our valuable water wash out to sea—and that is a disgrace. The minister said the decision to reduce the size of Paradise Dam was about community safety, but he will not give the details of the threat to that community. The only threat to the Bundaberg community is this Labor government. If there is anything worse than letting down Queenslanders, it is not being honest and open with them. Unlike the Labor government, the LNP wants to know why Paradise Dam is a failure and we want to know who is responsible.

We owe it to Queenslanders and to taxpayers to get to the bottom of this matter. When Queenslanders elect an LNP government next year—a government that will actually build dams—we want to ensure that Queenslanders get what they pay for and that the opportunities that dams will create will flow throughout the state.

*(Time expired)*