




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Paradise Dam

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.05 am): The Palaszczuk government's highest priority is, and must always be, the safety and health of Queenslanders, as demonstrated by our health response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is our highest priority when it comes to the safety of a single region, as with our response to Paradise Dam. Recently, I visited the dam to see for myself the state of the dam wall and talk directly to the engineers working on a solution.

I am advised that Sunwater's essential works to lower and recap the spillway of Paradise Dam are almost complete—improving the safety of the tens of thousands of people living downstream from the dam. A 600-millimetre concrete crest has been constructed on the dam wall, finalising a 5.8-metre lowering, with passive steel anchors successfully installed through the dam's roller compacted concrete layers. These works, based on the advice of multiple experts who recommended immediately lowering the dam wall, have been a vital first step toward ensuring the safety of the Bundaberg community.

With the temporary crest now in place, the risk of dam failure has been reduced significantly. However, the works to date are only interim steps. More remediation will be needed to fix the dam long-term. This is important to address the full scope of risks to Paradise Dam, including the quality of the roller compacted concrete, the secondary spillway foundations and the risk of erosion and scour downstream of the dam but also to ensure that we are meeting the demand for water in the Bundaberg and Burnett regions.

Last month I met with Bundaberg Mayor Jack Dempsey and local member Tom Smith to talk about the community's water needs. I will continue to visit the region regularly and work with local leaders and industry representatives as the remediation of Paradise Dam progresses. Sunwater is briefing the community and industry on the progress of the essential works this week.

The most important lesson we have learnt from the problems with Paradise Dam and the inquiry into the causes of those problems is the need to ensure our dams in Queensland are built to the highest standards possible. That is why Building Queensland, Sunwater and my Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water are continuing to develop a detailed business case to identify the best way forward for fixing Paradise Dam. I anticipate we will be able to choose the best possible long-term solution by late this year. We will not cut corners on finding the best solution to the issues at Paradise Dam because the safety of Queenslanders and the safety of the Bundaberg region depends on getting this right.