




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 24 March 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (9.55 am): The last few days of heavy rain and localised flooding have been difficult for many Queenslanders. However, this deluge has had a significant upside for many communities in regional Queensland, not the least of which—as we heard from the Premier this morning—is Stanthorpe, which has relied on water carting from this government for well over year. As the Premier also said this morning, Stanthorpe’s Storm King Dam has now reached 100 per cent capacity.

Earlier this morning I spoke with the mayor of Southern Downs, Vic Pennisi. He is a very excited mayor at the moment. He told me that the dam started spilling at about 11.40 last night. I am sure he was not standing on the dam wall by himself; I am sure there were plenty of other people with him! This morning he thanked the Queensland government for working shoulder to shoulder with the community in that area over the past 12 months through a very tough period. I encourage anyone who is willing to get out there and look at this wonderful part of Queensland over the next few weeks.

While people in Stanthorpe now have water to drink, I am sure that many residents will be celebrating with other beverages going forward and over the weekend. As craft brewing minister in Queensland, I recommend Stanthorpe’s own Brass Monkey brewery.

Two other dams in the region have also received significant inflows. Connolly Dam has reached full capacity and Leslie Dam near Warwick is now sitting at over 25 per cent—it was getting closer to 30 per cent this morning—which my department advises me adds approximately a year’s supply of water to Warwick. That is great news for that community as well.

While the immediate water security concerns for the Southern Downs have abated, residents can be confident that the Palaszczuk government will continue to work with the Southern Downs Regional Council to ensure their long-term water needs are addressed. We have also seen major inflows into the South-East Queensland water grid over the past few days. I am advised that the grid is now sitting at 58.6 per cent capacity, an increase of 4.6 per cent over the past seven days.

North Pine Dam alone has seen a 12.7 per cent increase in storage over the last week. As at 8 am, 12 South-East Queensland dams were spilling. While the average catchment rainfall has exceeded 200 millimetres, heavy falls have been very localised. Rainfall has been much lower in the catchment of our largest dam, Wivenhoe, with an increase of just 0.8 per cent in the past seven days. While the heaviest rain has cleared, inflows will continue to our dams for the next few days. Our government will continue to monitor storage levels to ensure residents of South-East Queensland can have confidence in their water security.

In further news, I am also pleased to advise that Paradise Dam has received inflows and is now sitting at 32 per cent capacity. While these increased levels in our dams are positive, I still encourage everyone in Queensland to be waterwise and to minimise their consumption where they can.