




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Security

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (11.10 am): Water is the lifeblood of our regional communities, which is why this government has committed close to \$1.9 billion to water infrastructure since 2015, supporting over 2,300 jobs. Last week I was pleased to see firsthand one of those projects when I visited Sunwater's Mareeba-Dimbulah efficiency improvement project on the Atherton Tablelands. Eighteen Queenslanders are already benefiting from the jobs on that \$30.8 million project, which aims to improve operating and distribution efficiency and reduce water losses for Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigators. Sunwater is well on its way to completing construction by the end of this year, installing 14 kilometres of new pipeline and 130 automated channel gates across 17,000 hectares of Far North Queensland farmland.

I am advised that those works to modernise infrastructure and increase the reliability of the system are expected to deliver a savings of 8,000 megalitres of water per year. That water can be made available to local growers to drive economic growth and to create jobs. Growers will have the ability to better service a variety of crops, including sugar cane, bananas, mangoes, avocados, coffee, tea trees and vegetables. This is a clear commitment from Sunwater to deliver projects that benefit regional communities and their economies and that create jobs that are vital to our recovery from the global COVID-19 pandemic.

That is not all that North Queensland irrigators have to look forward to from this government. As you know, Mr Speaker, we are investing \$9 million for three regional water assessments right across the state. The Tablelands is one of those scheduled to commence early next year. The goal of those assessments is to identify the infrastructure and non-infrastructure solutions that will set our food bowl regions up for economic growth, prosperity and success because this government is focused on filling the gaps in our water system to deliver the right solutions in the right places at the right time and at the right price to give our regional communities a road map for the future. That is our commitment to regional Queenslanders. I look forward to continuing to update this House on our progress in delivering it.

Mrs Frecklington interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Nanango.

Mr BUTCHER: I take that interjection: how is the Bradfield scheme going for you?