




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) (10.10 am): I rise in this place today with good news for the irrigators in the Bundaberg region. Following last week's soaking rain, Paradise Dam is full, as are other storages in the Burnett sub-scheme. We know that what has happened at Paradise Dam has not been easy for the Bundaberg community—whether that is as someone living downstream or an irrigator operating in the region.

I have visited the Bundaberg region a number of times and, alongside the member for Bundaberg, I have met with a range of irrigators including the fruit and vegetable growers, the macadamia farmers and the strawberry growers. I have visited their properties and I have attended the Paradise Dam industry forum. I have listened to their concerns following a period of record low rainfall in that region. Today I am pleased to say that, following recent rainfall and inflows into Paradise Dam, all growers in the region will now have access 100 per cent of their allocations.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: You do not like it when it is full. You do not like it at all.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you will direct your comments through the chair.

Mr Millar interjected.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Gregory and member for Gympie, you are both warned under the standing orders. Minister, I remind you to please direct your comments through the chair.

Mr BUTCHER: Sunwater has today advised the allocation for medium priority customers has been raised from 22 per cent to 100 per cent. This is welcome news for local growers as it provides them with greater certainty for the months ahead. Significant rainfall this early in the wet season is even more positive as there is always the possibility of further falls throughout the summer.

It is also important to note allocations cannot decrease during the water year. High-priority irrigators in the scheme and all customers in the Kolan sub-scheme also have 100 per cent of their allocation. The \$100 million of safety works undertaken on Paradise Dam also mean that the water is now being captured safely. The dam is now able to withstand large-scale storms up to a one in 5,000-year event. The dam is safe—and this has always been the priority for both residents living downstream and the long-term water security needs of irrigators. The Palaszczuk government has committed to making a decision on the long-term future of Paradise Dam by the end of the year, and we remain on track to do just that.