




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Security

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.04 am): The Palaszczuk government is focused on delivering water security for Queenslanders wherever they live. Right around South-East Queensland, people have been seeing green parks and gardens in their suburbs and may not have realised that many parts of the region have been in drought. That is why it was only a few short weeks ago that we were talking to South-East Queenslanders about the possibility of water restrictions in the coming weeks.

There is great news for South-East Queensland this morning. As the Premier has already said, there will be no water restrictions for South-East Queensland for Christmas. In fact, we are unlikely to reach the trigger for water restrictions at all this summer. We have seen our water supply in South-East Queensland benefit from the wet conditions we have seen in the last few weeks right across the state. The South-East Queensland water grid is now at nearly 60 per cent capacity, an increase of about four per cent in the past week. The majority of rain has fallen along the coast. While Wivenhoe Dam has seen some mighty inflows, it is still hovering at around only 40 per cent.

We know the weather in Queensland can be unpredictable and we cannot always rely on rainfall when and where we need it in Queensland. That is why we are encouraging everyone to continue to make every count drop.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: Make every drop count. Don't count the drops; that might be a bit hard. We have a plan. That is the important thing: the Queensland state government has a plan to ensure ongoing water security for their region and we are implementing it right now. Production at our Gold Coast desalination plant has already ramped up and since September last year it has been pumping out 61 million megalitres per day. Around the state we have seen some fantastic inflows into dams like the Bjelke-Petersen Dam in the Nanango electorate, which increased to over 63 per cent, and we have seen increased capacity at Fairbairn Dam in the Emerald area. That has meant that yesterday Sunwater announced some medium priority allocations for irrigators could be returned, which is absolutely great news for those regional customers.

We are also thinking of those communities that we know are currently experiencing flooding and thanking all of our first responders and our volunteers who are helping to evacuate people in those communities safely.

While I am on my feet, I say that it was great to hear recently from the Longreach mayor, Mr Tony Rayner, about the Isisford Weir that is being constructed in time for the wet season. He said that, thanks to a \$1.2 million investment by the Palaszczuk government, the weir is now super strong and is of a very good design structurally. This is all part of our Palaszczuk government's \$2 billion investment that we are seeing right now in projects at work in our communities. I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone here a very merry Christmas.

Mr SPEAKER: Thank you, member for Gladstone.