



Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**


**MEMBER FOR HILL**

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**PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT**

**Water Security**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (2.50 pm): I was shocked when I read the *Long term analysis of the role of dams* report commissioned by 13 members of the Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils, known as FNQROC. I now table the report, which cost \$110,000 to produce and took 16 months to complete.

*Tabled paper:* Far North Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils report, dated March 2021, titled 'Long term analysis of the role of dams' [727](#).

These councils are extremely concerned about the lack of water storage infrastructure being constructed which is holding back economic growth and opportunities in regional Queensland. This study is believed to be the first of its kind in Australia, and the findings show that in Queensland current assessment models used for dam infrastructure projects are flawed. That is why only one dam has been built in Queensland in the last 35 years. Dam and water infrastructure business cases are doomed to fail because of a flawed government assessment model.

We build dams to provide water security to meet future population increases and stimulate economic growth. This is very important information that I am going to read out. Studies show that significant dam infrastructure sees population grow at two to three times the rate of other regions that do not have water security, while agricultural production grows at 60 to 80 per cent. However, the report demonstrates that this government is more concerned with insisting that water licence holders foot the bill for water infrastructure when instead we should be supplying more than enough water to meet demands at an affordable cost.

We are constantly hearing the term 'the market dictates the price'. That is absolute rubbish. Large national and international conglomerates are snapping up water licences, driving up prices and holding our farmers to ransom which is forcing many out of business and limiting the growth of agriculture in the regions.

Every single Queenslanders should be deeply concerned by this report. I have stood in this House and delivered numerous speeches and lobbied ministers from both sides of the House for 17 years, in desperation, on the urgency of building water infrastructure for regional communities. We are running out of water. Regional communities cannot be sustained or grow and agricultural opportunities are being wasted because no-one in government has the guts to build what is needed.

The government has recently announced \$3 million in funding to each of three regions in the state to develop an assessment plan—and this is good news. One of the regions is in my electorate. I urge the minister to acknowledge the importance of this report and review the government's assessment model immediately. Otherwise, I fear that I could be standing here in 10 years time delivering the same speech.