




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 31 March 2022

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Bundaberg and Burnett, Investment

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.03 am): I would like to bring to the attention of members the great work being undertaken by the Queensland Labor government to support future economic growth in the Bundaberg and Burnett region. The Palaszczuk government has invested a total of \$9 million in its Regional Water Assessment Program, focused on three of our most significant food bowl areas. Work has commenced on the Bundaberg and Burnett regional water assessment and work is also underway for the other two assessments—the ones in the Southern Downs and Darling Downs and the Tablelands regions.

The assessments will take on advice from the community, irrigators, industry groups, technical experts and councils to look at ways to maximise our water supply and drive economic growth in regional Queensland. It is important to listen to the experts. The Palaszczuk government knows that. Overnight we had confirmation that the federal LNP does not listen to experts. The National Water Grid Advisory Body, which was set up by the LNP 18 months ago to provide independent advice to the Australian government on water infrastructure, has been sacked. The media release from the Deputy Prime Minister at the time, which I table, states—

The Body's advice will help inform the Government's policy and investment decisions, assisting the delivery of the National Water Grid.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'National Water Grid Advisory Body appointed' [473](#).

Last week when the federal LNP made \$6 billion worth of dam announcements in North Queensland, do members know who had not been consulted? The advisory board set up by the federal government! Now they have sacked them. A chief CSIRO scientist has been sacked. A farmer, irrigator and businesswoman has been sacked. A former National Party deputy premier of Victoria has been sacked. Before he was sacked, Dr Stuart Khan, a civil and environmental engineering expert, said—

The Australian government should wait for the outcomes of this significant public investment in the development of the detailed business case before committing public funds to the construction of the dam.

Does that sound familiar? The Hells Gates business case is not yet complete. This means it has not even received the necessary federal approvals. Urannah Dam does not have a completed detailed business case or environmental impact statement. Labor will always support and consider good water projects with the capacity to deliver growth and jobs to the regions, but we will listen to the experts first—and not sack them—to make sure these water assets do not become a drain on Queensland taxpayers in the future.