




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2022

MOTION

Rockhampton Ring Road

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (5.11 pm): I am so delighted that the transport minister wanted to amend this motion because it gives me free range to talk about the funding that the Albanese government is not giving us in Queensland. Let us talk about Emu Swamp Dam. We need that project. What happened to the funding? It is gone! Cut! It is a cut from Labor and a cut to the people of my electorate. It is a cut to future prosperity, jobs and food security for the people I represent, for all of Australia and for our overseas customers who rely on the food that we grow.

I think about the poor people of Rockhampton and Keppel who are being denied their ring-road, and no doubt it will take a lot longer than the worst predictions even we can come up with, but we have been waiting for Emu Swamp Dam for years. Year after year we hear Labor promise that they will support us on Emu Swamp Dam. I have heard the minister say that it is all going to be good and I have heard the feds say that they will support it as well. However, when they get in and deliver their first budget they cut it. They cut Emu Swamp Dam. Emu Swamp Dam is going to bring 700 extra jobs and produce \$60 million worth of extra food at the farm gate for us and food security for our overseas customers. Emu Swamp Dam is going to give water security to the town of Stanthorpe. These guys opposite had to spend \$10 million carting water to Stanthorpe when they could have had Emu Swamp Dam built by now.

We talk about cuts. Why didn't they cut the quarantine facility? Why didn't they stop when they could see that they were going to be giving \$230 million to the Wagners for a facility that they still own? We have a Labor government that is not just cutting Emu Swamp Dam; what about Urannah Dam and Hells Gates Dam? What happened to the Labor Party of old? What happened to the Labor Party of generations ago that was proud to build water projects and proud to invest in the future, to provide jobs and security for people in country Australia? It has gone! It has disappeared like a you-know-what in the wind and the reason is that they are beholden to the Greens. They know they cannot build dams in Lister's electorate or in other places because a frog might get drowned. We know that they are beholden to Greens preferences in seats like the minister's and seats like McConnel. We know that they are terrified. That is what has happened. The Labor Party is a rump that has forgotten where it came from. I give credit to my honourable friend the member for Moggill who said that the Tree of Knowledge was not poisoned, it died of shame. He put that so well.

My community needs Emu Swamp Dam and this Labor government should be on the blower to their Labor mates in Canberra, asking for the funds. They should be asking what has happened because the previous coalition delivered \$126 million to the project, which will provide jobs and security for the people I represent. Where is Minister Butcher on this? Has he been on the phone? What about Minister Furner, the great powerbroker? He calls himself the farmers' friend. I say that he is a foolish, feckless foe of the farmer and the friend of the fire ant. We need that dam so where are those ministers? Are they at the cabinet table asking, 'What about the people of Southern Downs?' They have forgotten us. They have forgotten the bush. They have turned their back on the bush.

We are not going to cop it any longer. My electorate is up in arms over the cancellation of the funding for Emu Swamp Dam and Labor will pay a price for that at the ballot box. In the intervening years between now and the election, I will do everything I can to remind Labor of their shabby broken election promise given by Labor candidates in Maranoa and my electorate of Southern Downs who said that they supported Emu Swamp Dam. I have heard it from the minister and I have heard it from the government. The Labor Party are laughing at me and the people in my electorate. They are saying, 'They believed us for so long!' We were too gentlemanly and too polite. We kept taking their assurances, but all along the government planned to cut the project. Now we hear about the water pipeline that the Premier has announced unilaterally. She is desperate to impose it on the Southern Downs Regional Council—

Mrs Frecklington: 2020 it was supposed to be built.

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. Yes, it was supposed to be built in 2020. I will say this right now: water pumped from someone else's scarce supply is not the same thing as having new water on the Granite Belt for irrigators who need it to produce our food and for water security for the town of Stanthorpe, which had to have water carted to it from Warwick for 14 months. The cutting of the Emu Swamp Dam is symbolic of the rot that has set in in the Labor Party. They no longer believe in anything except for big business, big unions and big government.