




Speech By
Tony Perrett

MEMBER FOR GYMPIE

Record of Proceedings, 10 November 2022

MOTION

Revocation and Dedication of Protected Areas and State Forest Areas (Cognate Debate)

 **Mr PERRETT** (Gympie—LNP) (12.26 pm): I rise to make a very brief contribution to the debate before the parliament, particularly on the components that deal with the area in my electorate around Borumba Dam and the work that has been ongoing there for some time. I want to acknowledge the work that is going on. I want to acknowledge the process that has been put in place. When this was first announced by Minister de Brenni I had a brief chat with the minister and I said, 'Please keep me informed as the local member. Keep me briefed and make your departmental people and the people who are involved with this project available to keep me provided with a certain amount of knowledge with regard to this project.' I acknowledge that process.

It was important that that happened because a previous Labor government had a plan to build a dam in the Mary Valley. It was called the Traveston dam. That did not go particularly well. It impacted the residents of our region, particularly the residents of the Mary Valley. It was very poor when Peter Beattie arrived in the Mary Valley to announce that he was going to construct the Traveston dam and then set about acquiring properties. It created all sorts of issues. I know this Borumba pumped hydro project is different, but it was suggested back at that time as an alternative to the failed Traveston dam. There were a lot of reasons given by the Premier and others at the time as to why this project could not happen. I did indicate to the minister that there were a lot of reasons and obviously a lot of work that needed to be done to shore up this project if it were to proceed.

Last week I was briefed by proponents for the dam and the people who are involved with respect to this, and they alerted me to the fact that they need to get in and do the geotechnical work. I fully understand the reason why that needs to happen. It is a challenging area. I am sure the minister has been there. Certainly I know that Minister de Brenni has been there. It is a challenging area to get into. It is very inaccessible country and a lot of it is rangeland country. That does create challenges. They indicated to me last week that they needed to get in to do the geotechnical work to make certain that as they bring the business case forward—and hopefully that will be sooner rather than later—we can understand the geotechnical challenges there may be with this project.

There are other ongoing issues, and I am not sure whether the minister will have to consider these down the track. One issue is the transmission lines that will connect the generating component of this proposal to the various substations. One of them is right on the corner of my electorate, the Woolooga Substation. A lot of properties are going to be affected and a lot of work needs to be done to connect that transmission line and make certain it can deliver what the government needs while, more importantly, taking into account the concerns of the landholders.

Borumba is a beautiful place and this dam has been there for a long time. It was raised many decades ago and supplies water into that region. I am looking forward to the next briefing that has been promised around the hydrological component of this proposal and how that is going to work within the Mary Basin Water Plan. Obviously, there are some issues in and around that, and I have been assured that I will get this briefing, and no doubt I will, as I am quite keen to see that.

In closing, a lot more needs to be said about this down the track as the business case is presented to the parliament. In respect of the ongoing work, it makes sense for the minister to bring this motion before the parliament so the work can continue and we can get the answers we need in this parliament so the government can make an informed decision based on the recommendations that come forward.

Mr McDonald interjected.

Mr PERRETT: I take that interjection. It is a significant proposal. I think the lower reservoir will be raised 20 metres at a minimum. We know about the two gigawatt generating capacity of this proposal. It is going to inundate further land, including a lot of rainforest areas and the like, and there is ecological work that is going on in that region. A new upper reservoir needs to be built and that water feeds down, as we all know. We know the concept. Minister de Brenni somehow thinks we do not understand how these proposals work. They are pretty simple. We know how pumped hydro works and the power that is generated from solar panels. A lot of it is unused. We know that it will be utilised during the day when the sunlight hours are good and they can pump the water up when it is cheap and then feed it back down late in the afternoon and into the night when that peak capacity is needed. It has been done across the world and it continues to be done. It is something that has merit.

As I mentioned earlier, I have given my conditional approval to the process, based on the business case coming back, and I think that is sound and sensible. We have to see all of the information come before the government and this parliament. In this case, the motion that I am speaking to and dealing with makes sense. I hope the outcomes of that will be available sooner rather than later.