




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) (10.10 am): Mr Speaker, it is good to have you back. South-East Queensland's water supplies are secure, thanks to the foresight of Labor governments. It was the Labor government that delivered the South East Queensland Water Grid in response to the millennium drought. The South East Queensland Water Grid, which is currently sitting at 71 per cent, is comprised of traditional water storages like dams and climate resilient infrastructure like the Gold Coast Desalination Plant and the Western Corridor Recycled Water Scheme. Together, these vital assets have provided, and will continue to provide, water security to South-East Queensland. Importantly, Labor has kept these assets in public hands.

The design of the grid means that we can move water around. This is important, given the variable rainfall we experience here in South-East Queensland. As Queenslanders, we are always prepared for the extremes that nature throws at us. The South East Queensland Water Grid is an example of that, serving the south-east in times of drought and flooding rain.

During the 2022 flood event, when water treatment plants were impacted by debris, production was ramped up at the Gold Coast Desalination Plant to make sure that South-East Queensland's water supply was not impacted. The western corridor is currently being used to supply water to industry to reduce the demand on Wivenhoe Dam and remains a vital drought response measure. The most recent drought in South-East Queensland—broken with the 2022 floods—was only one year shorter than the millennium drought. Thanks to the South East Queensland Water Grid, our water supplies performed much better, with the grid only dropping to about 55 per cent during that time.

Let me be clear: our South-East Queensland water supplies are safe and secure. Queenslanders can be confident of that. Our plan for water now and into the future is outlined in the Water Security Program prepared by Seqwater. The current Water Security Program is online and you can read it now. Seqwater is also planning for the future, reviewing and updating its water security plan. This plan is not a one- or two-year outlook; it is a 30-year plan to deliver water security in South-East Queensland. The plan considers South-East Queensland water demand from the community and industries and takes into account population growth, projected rainfall and climate change. It then outlines the water infrastructure needed to meet that demand and when it will be needed.

People can always count on the Palaszczuk government to deliver water security—whenever or wherever they are in Queensland. With the planning we are doing, our communities can be confident that safe and secure water supply will continue to be delivered in South-East Queensland, now and into the future.