




Speech By
Jim Madden

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

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WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MADDEN** (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.50 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. The bill amends the South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009, the Water Act 2000 and the Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008 to improve the operational efficiency of these acts. Water security is the key to the prosperity of the Queensland economy. The Water Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 delivers a key milestone in this government's commitment to improve water management and ensures regulatory frameworks remain effective.

The bill amends the Water Act 2000 to implement Queensland's strengthened non-urban measurement policy. The primary aim of this bill is to establish a clear and transparent framework for implementing Queensland's strengthened non-urban water measurement policy. Communities right across Queensland have benefited from the Palaszczuk government's water reforms, particularly by the funding provided in the government's 2022-23 budget. That delivered more than \$510 million for water infrastructure and planning to drive jobs and better services in Queensland.

More than \$447 million was set aside for water security projects, which builds on the Palaszczuk government's record investment in water infrastructure since coming to government in 2015. More than \$300 million has been committed to deliver the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline project to provide drought contingency for Warwick and surrounding communities, including Stanthorpe, and a permanent water supply to Toowoomba's satellite communities.

In the state's Far North, \$107.5 million over two years was committed to shore up stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security Program to support the growing needs of the Far North. There was \$40.4 million over three years allocated for the construction of a drinking water pipeline from Gracemere to Mount Morgan, as well as necessary water infrastructure upgrades at Gracemere. The Lansdown Eco-Industrial Precinct includes a reservoir and 13 kilometres of pipeline connecting the precinct and pump station to the Haughton pipeline, connecting the Burdekin Dam to the Ross River Dam in Townsville. Further west, the Hughenden community benefited from funding of \$25.6 million for the development of the Flinders Shire Council's Hughenden Water Bank project. This is a 7,000 megalitre off-stream water storage and distribution system facility to support development and expansion of irrigated agriculture and industry development.

At Ilfracombe near Longreach, in 2018 the state and federal governments worked together with the Longreach Regional Council to provide water security for the Ilfracombe community. With state government funding, a new bore was constructed in 2018 to replace an older council bore which had corroded casing. As well, a reverse osmosis plant was installed by the council with funding from the federal government to address the groundwater quality issues of high fluoride and salinity. The water is then mixed with water drawn from Shannon Dam during the treatment process to make it drinkable for the residents of Ilfracombe.

The Palaszczuk government will continue to support regional communities because we know water is critical to jobs, growth and livability in these regions. The highly successful Building our Regions round 6, which had funding of \$39 million allocated in the 2022-23 budget, provided support for regional communities with urban water supply and water treatment infrastructure. Through Building our Regions, we are empowering Queensland councils to make their regions the best they can be. Improved water services are so important for the livability of our regions.

The Cloncurry community service obligation payments will continue, with almost \$28 million over four years to subsidise the delivery of water to the Cloncurry Shire Council via the North-West Queensland pipeline. Stage 2 of the Rural Water Futures program has also received \$9.3 million in funding over two years to ensure the state's precious water resources are managed sustainably into the future and to deliver tangible benefits to irrigators, the environment and the community more broadly.

The bill provides that measurement plans will be required for overland flow water licences in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin. Irrigators with overland flow water licences in the Murray-Darling Basin are supportive of this measurement approach because they know better than most how precious water resources are. Measurement plans will detail how water take is measured on farm and provide more accurate information about the amount of overland flow and the water taken in these catchments so its impact on river flows and water availability for other users can be better understood and managed more effectively.

In closing, I note that in its report tabled in December 2022, the committee I serve on—the State Development and Regional Industries Committee—recommended that the bill be passed. I thank my fellow members of the committee, the committee secretariat, Hansard and the submitters. I commend the bill to the House as well as the amendments proposed by the Minister for Water.