




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (4.30 pm): I am glad that the Minister for the Olympics is in the chamber, because at least the last three minutes of that speech was a serious pitch. If we were to create a new Olympic event for boring the crowd, this bloke would be a gold medallist! I do not know whether we want to create new Olympic events, but we could boost the medal tally with the member for Callide!

I wish to speak to the Water Legislation Amendment Bill because water is vitally important all over our state. We obviously live in the driest continent on earth, so the careful management of our water is vitally important. As many members know, my grandfather's cousins worked on irrigated land. They were really vital members of their local water boards and knew how important it was to get water management right. They especially valued equity in the distribution of water. So often we would be going along the irrigation canals and come across a farmer who had propped open their gates in order to get water that they were not genuinely measuring or paying for. That is why this is so important. We do not want to see that. We do not want see a farmer taking from other farmers. We want to see it done right. That is what this legislation is about.

Another deep concern for farmers is the loss of water through concealed leaks. The loss of water in either urban or farming areas is a loss to us all in our economy. It is really important that concealed leaks are capped and contained. The recent changes put in place, with the foresight of the minister, to deal with the cost of living have meant that people with concealed leaks on their properties can take rectification action and be paid back if they did not know about it and the proper process is followed. I mention a constituent of mine, Margaret. Margaret had been quite sick, so she had been away from her house. There was a leak on her property that was draining straight into the creek. That meant she was losing quite a lot of water and incurring quite high costs. Through the new concealed leak policy we are able to make a difference for families like hers who are suddenly struck with a large, unexpected cost-of-living issue. This is the type of the thing that the Palaszczuk Labor government and the minister are focused on—reducing the cost of living for something unexpected and unable to be controlled.

I also want to speak about the vitally important Wyaralong Dam, built in 2011. At that point, many in the LNP said that it would never fill. They said with great certainty that this boondoggle would never be filled. Mark McArdle said it would never be filled. When the floods came in 2011—within three weeks of it being finished—it was completely filled to overflowing. As a resident downstream of the Teviot Brook, which feeds into the Logan River, I can say that the dam probably paid for itself in the first three weeks in terms of flood mitigation.

Of course, the Liberal National Party has never built a dam. Neither the Liberals nor the Nationals have probably built a dam since Fairbairn. They hate dams. They talk a lot about dams but do they actually build them? Further, when we were building Wyaralong they complained and fought against it. The first thing they said was that it would never fill. The second thing they said was that the water would never be useable for drinking.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance to the bill before the House which talks about non-urban overland flow of water in the Murray-Darling Basin catchment.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Member, I will listen carefully. I would like you to demonstrate that the point you are making is relevant to the long title of the bill.

Mrs Frecklington: Do you want me to hand you the green?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, but I want you to stop interjecting.

Mr POWER: I wanted to lead into that in terms of the principles in this bill about measuring water and about how important it is, wherever you are—in this case in this catchment but in all catchments—to have the right science about water metering and to understand where overland flow is and how much water is in our canals, channels and riparian areas. This is vital to understanding how our water system works.

I have an understanding of this because of the water that flows down the Teviot Brook and goes into the weir at Cedar Grove. Now we can do releases from Wyaralong into Cedar Grove Weir. We know that we have capacity, then, to put in a water treatment plant and for it to be part of our grid, because we have thought ahead. As I said, then minister McArdle fought against this at every single turn. He did not like the water meters that were put in place to measure the flow into those dams. He also said that it would never fill. He said that it would never be used. He said that it was impossible to be used because the water was too hard. We know now that there is a plan to have a water treatment plant to take water out of Cedar Grove Weir and use it in the South East Queensland Water Grid. It is ready for us because of the foresight we had in that period but also because we have a minister who is focused on our water needs.

As I said, water metering is a vitally important part of this bill—to understand our overland flow, the nature of those catchments and the use of irrigation. That reminds me of the floods we have endured. I want to recognise the people in my area, in both the Greater Logan catchment—that goes up to Boonah and Beaudesert—and the Albert River catchment, which goes into the Scenic Rim and Range national parks. Those floods create an enormous impact and we need the right science, just as we need it in the Channel Country and in other catchments, in order to understand how water works. That means that we are getting prepared. I urge all residents across the state, but especially in the Logan area, to get ready for floods and to google ‘get ready Queensland’. The department has prepared a checklist for households to be safe in the case of floods.

The metering we are putting in place through this legislation will give a whole group of residents a better understanding of overland flow, the impacts and the rain events and how that will affect their safety—just as the measuring on the Logan and Albert rivers and Teviot Brook makes an enormous difference for the residents of the Logan. That is one of the reasons I support this bill.

There is only one party that truly thinks ahead when it comes to Queensland’s water security, and that is the Australian Labor Party. We made a commitment to build Wyaralong Dam. Those opposite fought it at every turn. They fought to stop it because they said it would never fill. They fought to stop it because they said the water could never be used. They fought it at every turn. It is a vital part of our future water security. It is there ready to be tapped into. We invested in the Cedar Grove Weir. This is right next to Flagstone and Jimboomba. It is connected to the water grid to ensure water security. We had the foresight.

I personally think that the Nationals will never build another dam. They have not built one since the 1980s. They talk a lot about building dams, but they never build one. It is Labor that builds dams. Labor invests in both urban and rural water infrastructure. The Nationals will never build another dam because they have not built one this century.