




Speech By  
**Nikki Boyd**

**MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 September 2023

### **WATER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms BOYD** (Pine Rivers—ALP) (12.51 pm): Water is the driving force of all nature. To my mind, it is most starkly apparent in our state's west. We see the absence of the driving force of water with dire consequences. Recent years have seen almost 70 per cent of Queensland in the throes of drought that were extremely damaging. A changing climate means extreme weather events are more common. As we see changes to water availability, then water use and management of that water become even more important. The Murray-Darling Basin Authority capture the key points of the challenges when they state—

Changes in global and local climate patterns are likely to reduce the amount of water available for communities and the environment in many parts of the Murray-Darling Basin. While it is hard to predict the exact effects and when they will happen, it is likely there will be less rainfall, more frequent and severe droughts, as well as more frequent heavy rainfall events.

Many of us will still recall the stark images in 2018 and 2019 where it was estimated that a million fish may have died in a 40-kilometre stretch of the Darling River. These instances are a compelling reminder of the fragility of our ecosystem and how important it is to have plans in place that help to improve the health of our rivers well into the future.

Our water planning framework needs to be strong enough to accommodate the boom-bust cycle of water availability in river systems—balancing agriculture, cultures, industry, environment and our communities. That is why these reforms are so critical. They strengthen the policies and frameworks, and in doing so provide enormous benefits across the board. They include better resource management, protection and water security. I have seen firsthand how the implementation of real-time reporting had enormous benefits on farm. I have seen how this allows for instant intelligence and a responsiveness that would not have otherwise been available. This committee report provides a rare occurrence—where you have the agriculture, resource and environment stakeholders all in agreement when it comes to measuring water take.

The Murray-Darling Basin is such a valuable resource, whether you look at it from an economic, environmental or cultural perspective. More than 2.3 million people live in the basin. It is the source of around 40 per cent of Australia's agricultural produce, including 100 per cent of our rice, 74 per cent of our grapes and 30 per cent of our dairy. It is home to 40 different First Nation groups. There are 16 internationally significant wetlands, 35 endangered species and 120 different species of waterbirds that call it home. The basin attracts visitors from around the world, with tourism earning around \$11 billion each year. With a volatile climate, technological advancements and an ever-increasing consciousness of our natural resources, this bill delivers the reforms that will allow for protection, responsiveness and best practice to strike a good balance for our secure water future.

I turn to the committee report. Unlike the shadow minister, I have actually read the committee report, not just glossed over its details. I take a moment to commend the hardworking committee and the parliamentary team supporting them. I now always look with interest at the work of the committee and the images, pictures and infographics they include in their reports. They set a very high bar indeed. I look forward to seeing many more reports and much more of their fine work into the future.

I want to clarify some of the points that have been raised in this debate over the last couple of days. I understand that this bill has been subject to consultation with industry and stakeholders for years. These are not new concepts and they are not new proposals. These amendments in this bill have been subject to consultation with industry and stakeholders for years. The member for Nanango likes to gloss over that bit of detail in the committee report when she makes her contributions in this place. She has form for glossing over detail. We saw that when it came to Paradise Dam. She liked to gloss over the detail with Paradise Dam. She promised to fix Paradise Dam for \$25 million. Why have the engineering experts when you have got the member for Nanango? We did not need to hear from the engineering experts, according to the member for Nanango. She glossed over the detail of the fake Bradfield scheme, posed for photos with a dam marked 'not for construction'—

**Ms LEAHY:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This particular legislation is in relation to the Murray-Darling Basin. I ask you to request the member to come back to the long title of the bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Lister): Member for Pine Rivers, the dams and the water situations you are speaking of are not covered in this bill. Would you please come back to the long title of the bill?

**Ms BOYD:** Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. I think it is worthwhile concentrating on the record of those opposite when it comes to their contributions in this place. The member for Nanango made a dated contribution yesterday when she talked about the water situation in Yarrabah. I would have thought she would have cast an eye over her notes before she decided to make a very public and animated contribution around this particular thing that she is the shadow minister for. It just goes to show how much the member for Nanango is not across her brief—whether it is the topics previously mentioned or this bill that is before the House. When she was updating the House on where we are right now, the member for Nanango even said that we were in 2022. I think it is proven by the record that the member for Nanango is at least one year behind the rest of us in terms of where we are debating these particular reforms.

On this side of the House, we do the work and we listen to the experts. We make sure that we have consultation with industry and with stakeholders around this reform. That is why I commend this reform and this bill to the House. We know that these reforms will make a significant difference right across the board. I commend not only the committee but the Minister for Water for the work he and his team have done in bringing these reforms before the House.

I have been out to the Murray-Darling Basin. I have been on farms around the Murray-Darling Basin. I have had conversations with both pastoralists and people who are on suburban lots in those areas. One of the things that I have heard absolutely from those stakeholders is that water is the most precious resource to them. It is the most valuable commodity they have and it is something they are committed to protecting. I have never had those conversations or those grumbles around the price or the installer or any of those things that have been raised by members opposite. They have not been raised with me when I have been standing on the farms. When I am talking to people, they are not the conversations they are having with me. The conversation they are having with me is how much they hold in high regard the protection and these reforms in terms of resource management and water security because they know that their livelihood is very much dependent upon it.

When it comes to these reforms, they are good Palaszczuk government reforms. They are reforms that I know the sector has been waiting for for some time, and they are supported reforms as well. I am pleased to commend them to the House because I know they will make a big difference.