




Speech By
Hon. Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Water Prices

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (9.57 am): We know that the cost of living is front of mind for all Queenslanders. That is why we are firmly focused on delivering cost-of-living relief. Our state budget delivered \$8.2 billion in cost-of-living relief—the biggest cost-of-living package ever delivered by a government. On top of that, we are freezing car registration, public transport fees, outlawing rent bidding and making bonds portable. Whether you are a family, an individual or a business, this government has your back. Across our food bowl regions, we are continuing to put downward pressure on food prices thanks to the millions of dollars in irrigation price discounts and horticultural rebates in Queensland.

I was in Mareeba recently to hear firsthand from our irrigators about how our investment is delivering cost-of-living relief and more water security for our irrigators. Nearly \$1.3 billion in discounts and rebates has gone to 359 Tableland growers, driving down input costs in one of our state's most vital food bowl regions. Not only are we driving down input costs for irrigators, but we are also delivering more water for our irrigators. That's right—thanks to our investment in the Mareeba Dimbulah water efficiency project, growers will have access to an additional 11,500 megalitres of water to grow crops and to expand irrigation in Queensland. That is the equivalent of over 4,600 Olympic sized swimming pools for our Tableland growers to use. What's not to love about that! More water equals more produce and more jobs in Queensland.

This project was so successful that it delivered 40 per cent more water for our growers than was initially anticipated. We heard from Joe Moro, the Far North Queensland Growers' president, who said, 'So many Tableland jobs depend on water and I am pleased to see more water available for more produce and more jobs in my area.' The Tablelands agriculture industry loves the additional water, and they love the horticultural rebates that this government is giving them. 'It is fantastic to know that growers have received relief when it comes to the cost of doing business,' Joe Moro said. We are focused on driving down the cost of living for Queenslanders and lowering those input costs for our irrigators and growers. Let us not forget the Leader of the Opposition's budget black hole will lead to cuts to cost-of-living support when Queenslanders can least afford it. The LNP cannot be trusted in Queensland.