



Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Great Artesian Basin**

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (10.06 am): The Miles Labor government is listening and delivering for all Queenslanders. We have heard this week how this state budget delivers big time when it comes to cost-of-living support and delivering the infrastructure that our growing state needs in Queensland. I am proud to say it delivers big time for the Great Artesian Basin too—up to \$32 million for vital capping and piping projects to save more water and to support the health of the Great Artesian Basin. There is money in the federal budget too, and I expect most of that to flow to Queensland given that 65 per cent of the Great Artesian Basin sits within Queensland.

The funding in our budget builds on our strong nation-leading action to ban carbon capture and storage in the Great Artesian Basin. I want to thank everyone from the mayors and the councillors who have spoken to me to peak bodies like Jo from the QFF and Mayor 'Zoro' from Murweh Shire Council and of course farmers and other stakeholders who have written to me in support of banning carbon capture in the GAB. I know this is an important issue for all Queenslanders. Regional communities rely on the GAB as a water source—80 or so communities and thousands of Queenslanders, businesses and the environment. The GAB is one of the world's largest and deepest underground freshwater resources, holding around 65 million gigalitres of groundwater.

The \$32 million investment in funding means that we will continue the successful bore capping and piping programs that are already underway. Nearly 770 bores have already been rehabilitated and 450 drains have been piped. Around 15,000 kilometres of open drains have been decommissioned. All this work is extremely important in the Great Artesian Basin. This work that we have done as a government has saved more than 226,000 megalitres of water over the program. We are not just saving water. Groundwater pressure is increasing thanks to this capping and piping work. I have been out to the GAB and I know how important the capping and piping work is to those regions. It is also good for regional water users but it is also good for the environment.

More water pressure means natural springs and wetland ecosystems are re-emerging, providing important habitats for natural wildlife and flora. Unlike the LNP, it gives millions of dollars to mining companies to experiment with pumping waste into the GAB. The Miles Labor government in Queensland is listening and taking strong action to protect the Great Artesian Basin for our future generations.