



Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Energy Roadmap; Southern Downs, Water Security

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (2.47 pm): I can confidently assure the House that, in response to what the member for Nudgee said earlier, the good folk and true of Southern Downs are delighted with the government's Energy Roadmap—

Mr Smith: What about Emu Swamp Dam?

Mr LISTER: I take that interjection from the member for Bundaberg; I am going to get to that—but she should come to a real regional area and talk to the coalminers and the coal-fired power station workers who keep Millmerran alive and who are delighted with our Energy Roadmap, but I digress.

I will now speak about one of my favourite topics, which has been foreshadowed by the member for Bundaberg, and that is water security in my electorate of Southern Downs. I specifically speak about the regional water assessment for the Southern Downs and Darling Downs, which was initiated by the former Labor government, which has recommended that work be done on some priorities which I think will deliver less water at higher prices to my electorate. I am talking particularly about the comparisons that it contains between Emu Swamp Dam, or the Granite Belt Irrigation Project, and the Warwick to Stanthorpe pipeline. Members will be aware that Warwick supplied water to Stanthorpe by truck for almost 18 months when it ran out of water. That was an economic and social tragedy in my electorate which had far-reaching implications for the people I am elected to represent.

When I see that the Regional Water Assessment program has made a recommendation that that pipeline be further considered and I see the prices—you will have to forgive me, my glasses have gone out of focus, I must be getting older. They say \$600 million would be the cost of the Granite Belt irrigation project, with a cost benefit ratio of 0.2; yet they say that it would be \$90 million for a pipeline from Warwick uphill across granite country to Stanthorpe—not to mention the operational costs of such a feat—would only be \$90.6 million with a cost benefit ratio, even with that distorted figure, of 0.05. That is one quarter of the benefit ratio that applies to Emu Swamp Dam and the Granite Belt irrigation project. It is quite clear that with these grossly distorted figures you could multiply the cost of the pipeline by three, come up with \$270 million for that and divide by three the cost of the Granite Belt Irrigation Project and have that for about \$200 million.

We want new water—not water pumped from someone else's scarce supply—that is not just for the town that ran out of water but also for the farmers who ran out of water, those who grow our food, those who work very hard to employ people in my electorate and those who provide the social and economic fabric of our community. I will be taking this up with the minister. I note she is in the chamber. She has been very courteous and receptive to my discussions with her about water security in my electorate. I will certainly be advocating for Emu Swamp Dam and not for a pipeline from Warwick to Stanthorpe.