

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 282

asked on Tuesday, 7 March 2006

MR HOBBS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND WATER (MR PALASZCZUK)—

QUESTION:

With reference to his correspondence to me and the Paroo Shire Council in relation to the Government's \$15 per megalitre water charges for council—

Will he give the Paroo Shire Council and all other Queensland councils an assurance that there will be an independent review of the \$15 per megalitre charge which he intends to introduce on 1 July 2006 and that the monies collected will be quarantined to be spent on much needed water infrastructure rather than paid into consolidated revenue?

ANSWER:

Since the question was raised, the Premier and I have announced the suspension of new water charges for farmers, industry and local government, and charges for stock and domestic use.

The government has agreed to suspend new water charges until the updated independent analysis of the State's water planning and management costs is completed, and farmers and key stakeholders have been consulted regarding the analysis, and the Commonwealth clarifies aspects of the National Water Initiative. The analysis is likely to be completed by the end of June 2006.

The recently established Water Charges Working Group is chaired by the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water and comprises officers from:

- AgForce;
- Queensland Farmers' Federation;
- CANEGROWERS;
- Queensland Water Directorate;
- Local Government Association of Queensland;
- Queensland Treasury;
- Queensland Conservation Council;
- Department of Premier and Cabinet; and
- Department of Primary Industries.