

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 638

asked on Thursday, 19 April 2007

MR HOBBS ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Condamine Balonne and Border Rivers Resource Operation Plans and to him allowing these resource operation plans (ROPs) to be released for community comment—

- (1) What additional resources will his department allocate to ensure that the ROPs are finalised as soon as possible?
- (2) Will he give a commitment that the ROPs will be finalised before any referral of powers is made to the Commonwealth Government?

ANSWER:

- (1) The Condamine Balonne and Border Rivers Resource Operation Plans are priority plans for the Queensland Government and sufficient resources will be allocated to finalise these plans as soon as possible.
- (2) I am concerned that Queensland State National Party has not given the same support to Queensland irrigators that the Beattie Government has.

The Federal National Party has been active supporting Queensland irrigators with the Federal Government on the Condamine/Balonne ROP. However, their state colleagues appear to be missing in action or, rather, inaction.

The Member for Warrego should detail what National Party Members of State Parliament have done to assist irrigators in the Condamine Balonne.

The Commonwealth Government is after all a Liberal/National Party Government and the Honourable Member should be lobbying his Federal colleagues to protect Queensland irrigators, not trying to snipe at this government from the sidelines.

The Queensland Government is working with the other States and the Australian Government to find a practical, workable way forward in managing the water resources for the whole of the Murray-Darling

system. At this stage there is only an agreement in principle to the referral of some powers to the Australian Government.

The Queensland Government is determined that any agreement for a new water management approach in the Murray-Darling system will not erode the rights that Queensland's irrigators would enjoy under Queensland's water plans.

From day one, the Queensland Government has argued that the interests of Queensland's water users must be recognised before any new agreement can be finalised. Queensland's water users should enjoy the same secure water allocations as all other water users throughout the Murray-Darling basin.

The Queensland Government will continue to work closely with the Australian Government to protect our position so that any uncertainty to Queensland water users is minimised. The Prime Minister has indicated that he is satisfied that the Condamine and Balonne and the Border River Resource Operations Plans should proceed to finalisation as proposed by the Queensland Government.