

Question on Notice

No. 689

Asked on 22 May 2007

MR WELLINGTON asked the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure (MS BLIGH) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the significant drought currently in South East Queensland –

Will she consider changing the current focus on accommodating significant future population growth in South East Queensland to encouraging this significant future population growth to North Queensland where there is a more reliable water supply?

ANSWER:

The Queensland Government is responding to the drought in South East Queensland (SEQ) by encouraging more efficient water use and major new supply initiatives.

The 2007 SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program I released on 29 May outlines extra investment in water infrastructure projects. This includes the SEQ Water Grid which will connect supplies throughout the region.

These water infrastructure projects will ensure adequate supplies are maintained for SEQ if the drought continues. The Grid comprises a network of existing and new water supplies and key areas of demand, allowing water to be moved across the region to where it is most needed. The Grid will allow water supplies to be operated more efficiently, minimising costs and maximising security of supply.

The Queensland Government will support population growth and development across the State. Far North Queensland and SEQ regions are subject to significant growth pressures. While Far North Queensland currently has more water resources, growth management strategies will need to continue to respond appropriately to population movement.

The SEQ Infrastructure Plan and Program details the Government's priorities and timelines for regionally significant infrastructure over the next ten years, but within the 20-year planning horizon.

The Plan will confront the challenges of population growth head on – shaping the way SEQ grows over the next two decades, how it will look and work as a region, and how people will live in it.

While population growth brings with it many challenges, it also brings opportunities. Population growth benefits the region by providing employment, a strong economy and more sustainable business environment.