

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 51

asked on 24 February 2021

MR J MCDONALD ASKED THE MINISTER FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MANUFACTURING AND MINISTER FOR WATER (HON G BUTCHER)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the ongoing drought and no water being available through the Lockyer's underperforming irrigation schemes—
Will the Palaszczuk Labor Government waive the Part A water charges as SunWater did in 2004-05 or fund emergency relief to cover these costs?

ANSWER:

As detailed in the response to Question on Notice No. 1150 tabled on 4 January 2021, irrigation schemes require ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of infrastructure so that the infrastructure is safe and in good working order when water is available. Part A water charges go towards these fixed costs, noting that for the Lockyer areas, fixed charges only partly recover these costs, with the Queensland Government providing a subsidy to Seqwater for the remaining fixed costs.

As part of the 2020–21 State Budget, the government has committed a further \$81.6 million over the next three-year period in continued support for Queensland's irrigation sector.

Over the next three years from 1 July 2021, a 50 per cent reduction in prices will be provided for fruit and vegetable growers and 15 per cent for all other irrigators where the government sets prices for the supply of water by Sunwater and Seqwater. These discounts will apply to the total price, including to Part A. These price discounts are in addition to the subsidies presently provided to water supply schemes, including the Lockyer, where Part A prices have been historically set well below cost recovery.