



**SEATH HOLSWICH MP – STATE MEMBER FOR PINE RIVERS**

## **SPEECH IN PARLIAMENT**

**13th February 2013**

### **NORTH PINE DAM**

I rise tonight to express my thanks to the Minister for Energy and Water Supply, his office, his department and Seqwater for their management of North Pine Dam during the recent flood event.

If we cast our minds back to January 2011, in Pine Rivers we received around 400 millimetres of rain in the North Pine Dam catchment in a very short period when the dam was already above 90 per cent capacity. To be frank, all hell broke loose. North Pine Dam, unlike Wivenhoe, has no flood mitigation capacity. When it hits 100 per cent capacity, then it is at 100 per cent capacity.

At the height of the January 2011 rain event, water levels in the dam were rising by up to one metre an hour and water came all too close to spilling over the gates uncontrolled. Massive amounts of water were released in a very short space of time to ensure the dam did not overflow and the result was nothing short of catastrophic. Landholders downstream from the dam suffered massive erosion to their properties; Youngs Crossing was closed for days; houses flooded; and massive amounts of debris, including things as large as shipping containers, floated down the river. All that water and debris then hit the poorly maintained AJ Wyllie Bridge, effectively destroying it and causing two years of pain for local residents, commuters and businesses while the bridge was rebuilt.

Then we move forward two years to the days leading up to the Australia Day weekend this year, when significant rainfall was again forecast for the North Pine Dam catchment area. Once again, up to 400 millimetres of rain fell and the dam was again at over 90 per cent capacity, yet this time we escaped with very minimal damage and inconvenience.

Whilst the conditions were remarkably similar between the two events, there could not have been more of a contrast between the actions of the governments of the day.

Thanks to the common sense Water Legislation (Dam Safety and Water Supply Enhancement) legislation passed by the Newman LNP government in late 2012, the minister was able to declare a temporary full supply level for the North Pine Dam and water was released pre-emptively in anticipation of the rain that had been forecast for the Australia Day weekend. As a result, we had controlled releases and we did not see the widespread destruction and chaos that occurred in 2011.

At a time when we are talking about flood-proofing and building resilience, it is also important to note that when the AJ Wyllie Bridge was rebuilt after 2011, it was built higher and to better standards than the original bridge. As a result, the bridge survived and we are fortunate not to have the situation that so many other communities are facing of yet again being without critical road infrastructure.

As I started this contribution, I will also finish it by thanking the Minister for Energy and Water Supply for the legislation that was passed through this House last year as well as the declaration of a temporary full supply level in the lead-up to Australia Day in anticipation of the significant rainfall event.

The residents of Pine Rivers are better off today because of this gove  
Pine Dam.

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