



November 26th, 2019

MEDIA RELEASE

Two years too long to ensure dam safety

Despite findings that the Burdekin Falls Dam poses an “unacceptable” risk of potential failure, the Queensland government will wait another two years to act in what Member for Burdekin, Dale Last, has called “an illustration of contempt for the people of the Burdekin”.

In addition to the risk to community safety, Mr Last said concerns from an Engineer also include not utilising the dam to its full potential.

“We need to be realistic in saying that the chances of dam failure are low but, if there is even the slightest chance that the dam could fail then you have to question the need for a business case, especially when the current government uses business cases on dams to bury projects,” Mr Last said.

“On one hand we have a government that wants farmers to bear the bulk of the cost of dam safety upgrades and, on the other hand, the same government needs a business case to decide if they will address the risk of a dam failure.”

“In parliament today (Tuesday), the Premier said that an updated risk assessment showed the dam is compliant, but Sunwater’s Emergency Management Plan shows that in 2012 the risk was deemed unacceptable. People living downstream of the dam have every right to question what has changed and how two reports can come to completely different conclusions.”

Mr Last said the people of the Burdekin understood the potential of the dam “better than anyone” and that, like other North Queenslanders, they were sick of waiting for the potential to be realised.

“When the dam was completed everyone was looking forward to stage 2 but here we are, 25 years later, and stage 2 is still a dream,” he said.

“What we have seen from the current government is report after report into options for the Burdekin Falls Dam being delayed for one reason or another. Money was committed to the hydroelectricity project and then moved to a new government entity instead of actually getting on with the job.”

“You only have to look at Paradise Dam, Rookwood Weir and the Nullinga Dam to see that this government doesn’t want to build, improve or even maintain dams.”

“If the study into raising the wall of the Burdekin Falls Dam was genuine, it would take safety issues into account so you have to question why we need yet another report to decide if it’s viable to make the dam safer.”

“Instead of actually getting in and doing something, this government has turned the Burdekin Falls Dam into a bureaucratic circus; doing nothing but wanting farmers to pay for it.”

ENDS - Media Contact: David Cooper (07) 4767 0500 or 0427 834 844