



Adjournment Speech by
GLEN ELMES MP

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard, 15 April, 2008

Peregian Beach, Desalination Plant

Mr ELMES (Noosa--Lib) (9.19 pm): I rise tonight to speak on behalf of the residents of Peregian Beach who are deeply concerned that their community continues to be highlighted as a potential site for a desalination plant on the Sunshine Coast. That a government would even consider constructing a plant in a small coastal village, built on a narrow strip of land and sandwiched between the beach and a national park, would seem at complete odds with common sense, yet this is what the Deputy Premier is proposing for Peregian.

Consultants commissioned by the government ruled out Peregian at first because it did not comply with the land use criteria specific to desalination sites. But despite this, the Deputy Premier insisted it still be considered. GHD's report called SEQ Regional Desalination Plant Siting Study Investigation and Preliminary Ranking of Sites dated December 2007 ranked Peregian sixth on the list.

I fully accept that desalination is a cost-effective alternative water supply option. Indeed, I understand that the cost of water from a significant desalination plant would be in the vicinity of \$2.06 per kilolitre compared to the cost of water from the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam of \$4.65 per kilolitre. Nevertheless, before any of us accept this type of infrastructure anywhere in south-east Queensland, we should insist that it be powered by an alternative and sustainable energy source, such as wind or wave power, to offset the tremendous power consumption from the plant.

Using traditional energy would put a strain on the grid that would cost Queenslanders a fortune and completely defeat the very principle of sustainability by further massively increasing greenhouse gas emissions. We need to use precious resources wisely. I have raised in this place before that 35 billion litres of recycled water is being wasted every year on the Sunshine Coast. It is completely absurd that we have pipes dotted along the Sunshine Coast pumping perfectly good recycled water into the ocean which could be used for industry and farms and the government proposes to build a plant with more pipes to draw in salt water and treat it for human use.

Peregian residents remain concerned that although their community is identified as almost the worst possible site, the Deputy Premier--for reasons known only to himself--insists that it be included. This intransigence just wastes more time and money on further reports, speculation and delays and places enormous strain on residents. I want the Deputy Premier to accept the advice of the expert consultants he has engaged and, once and for all, rule out Peregian as a potential site for a desalination plant. The residents and I await his decision.
