



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 7 October 2009

TUGUN DESALINATION PLANT

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (11.45 am): The showpiece of this government's \$9 billion water grid at Tugun is being labelled an expensive dud by many locals in Currumbin. Reports in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* in May 2006 stated that if the plant goes ahead it would cost in excess of \$260 million. We were told that the Gold Coast City Council would decide in September 2006 whether it would go ahead. And, yes, the plant did go ahead and it did cost in excess of \$260 million. The Beattie government took the project from council, expanded its size from 55 megalitres to 125 megalitres and, without including it in that year's budget, committed in excess of \$1 billion, telling the operators to build it in a two-year time frame. The Premier tried to fool us that it would be ready in November last year, with her open day at Tugun and media opportunity in front of 7,000 people and a barrage of TV cameras. But all we got to do was to taste first water, as they call it. Real opening dates in January 2009 did not eventuate, and neither have any others since! Now almost three years since it started, we have a plant that the government will not commission because it has serious faults, has damaged properties in our suburbs, has caused a footy field to sink and has created all manner of turmoil for our residents.

Environmental concerns about brine output from the plant into the local marine habitat existed from day 1 of this project. Recent reports from local fishermen indicate close monitoring is required. Brad Smith of the Fix Currumbin Creek Committee believes an independent system to monitor marine life and salinity levels around the output pipe is needed. He disputes claims by WaterSecure that its underwater footage is sufficient. Locals are calling for rigorous monitoring and want to know just what is currently being done so before and after results can be compared. This government's incompetence knows no bounds. It has turned its back on the people of Tugun and Currumbin. The turmoil at the desal plant has caused widespread problems for our local community and there is no guarantee it will last the distance it was intended to, nor will the Tugun bypass for that matter. The track record of this government does not rate a blip on the radar. Even the ministers are flicking it between each other!

(Time expired)