

WATER SECURITY
24 Sept 2009

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:55): My question is to the Minister for the River Murray. Will the minister guarantee that any of the 890 gegalitres announced today under the proposed New South Wales/federal government agreement will reach the Lower Lakes?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (14:55): I thank the member for his question because it is a really good question. Guarantees? Is there a guarantee that any of these entitlements that have been purchased by the commonwealth will—

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I will start again.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order, the member for Bragg!

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: The issue of guaranteeing whether or not the entitlements that the federal government is purchasing actually have water allocated to them will depend upon rainfall in the catchments. If there is rainfall in the catchments that is available to be allocated to those entitlements, they will no longer be used for cotton or rice, they will be used for the environment. However, once again, they are dependent upon rain.

The member for Hammond well knows (and if he does not, he should) that, under the water act that was passed through parliament by Malcolm Turnbull and the previous government, there was the establishment of a Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder. The Commonwealth Environmental Water Holder is an independent body that has the responsibility to develop an environmental watering plan, taking into account the needs of the critical priority areas in the basin that require water under the environmental plan. The Lower Lakes and the Coorong, as a Ramsar site, is one of those priorities areas.

However, what this government is 100 per cent committed to is that the national government should have processes in place that involve independence in the development of these plans so that we can take the borders out of it. That is what we support. The science will show where the water is needed most.

This is in stark contrast to the opposition's position before the last election in 2006. The opposition's position on the River Murray was to support the retention of state control of the River Murray. I know it has changed its mind on that and I know it changed its mind some time in 2007. I think it was some time after the honourable member for Davenport lost the leadership.

I recall that, when Turnbull first talked about a national plan, it was opposed by the opposition. It did not want a takeover by the federal government of the River Murray. That is in the opposition's policy position in March 2006.

Ms Chapman: What about the National Party, Karlene?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: The National Party's position in South Australia, as the member for Bragg has asked, has been for the federal government to take a strong leadership role and take over the management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

In fact, when Malcolm Turnbull came out with his national plan, I supported it, but on the proviso that we had an independent authority that could do the work necessary to underpin the decisions with science and not politics. The National Party in South Australia did not support—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: National Party policy in South Australia. The National Party policy in South Australia is that the federal government must have taken a stronger role.

Ms Chapman: What was it in 1999, Karlene?

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: In 1999 my position on the select committee (that I was a part of) as National Party leader in South Australia—the National Party in South Australia—

Ms Chapman interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I need to give her a lesson on the National Party.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: The National Party in Australia consists of each state having an independent party of their own.

Dr McFETRIDGE: Point of order, Mr Speaker. I do have a question.

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: Don't interject!

The SPEAKER: Is there a point of order?

Members interjecting:

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: No, I have not finished yet. The interjection was that the National Party policy was important to this question, so therefore I am answering it. The National Party in South Australia is a separate party, as is the Victorian party, as is—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: It is deeply offensive to be described as National Socialists. You might think this is funny. Some of us had parents, like my father, who spent six years fighting National Socialists which is the formal term for Nazis.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I think this is incredibly offensive to the people of this state as well as to individuals.

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will take his seat.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: I ask that you retract the use of that word.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order. I did not hear the remark or the remarks and I am not exactly sure, if they were made, what was meant by them. If the remarks were meant to imply that another member was a Nazi, then I think that would be disorderly and, if the member did say it and that is what she meant, then that is something she should withdraw. The Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs REDMOND: Sir, I said it, but I did not imply any such thing by that comment.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order. The Leader of the Opposition will come to order. The Minister for the River Murray has the call.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I conclude my remarks by saying that, since my election to this parliament and my leadership of the National Party of South Australia, we have been supportive of the national government taking a stronger leadership role in the management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The house will come to order.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: This is what all South Australians want, and it took a long time for the Liberal Party members opposite to come around to that thinking. We are glad that they have and, from a bipartisan perspective—

Mr WILLIAMS: Point of order, Mr Speaker: the minister is now clearly debating the answer to the question.

The SPEAKER: I think the minister is wrapping up her answer.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD: I am wrapping up my answer and, in conclusion, I would like to say that I am very pleased now that everyone in this house does support that there needs to be a national role—and a very significant national role in the management of the Murray-Darling Basin.

Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (15:03): I ask a supplementary question. Can the minister advise the house, what percentage of every gigalitre of water purchased will arrive in South Australia?

The SPEAKER: That is not a supplementary question. The Minister for Water Security.

The Hon. K.A. MAYWALD (Chaffey—Minister for the River Murray, Minister for Water Security) (15:04): Same answer.