



Speech By  
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**MEMBER FOR TRAEGER**

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## ADJOURNMENT

### Hughenden Irrigation Project Corporation, Alstonvale Dam

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (7.18 pm): Population in decline is a demographic disease, one might say, in western areas that I represent. It is something we face in the future. The one thing that can offer prosperity in the future that everyone would agree on is water development and water storage. There are proposals for Cave Hill Dam at Cloncurry, another dam at Richmond and Green Hills Dam at Forsyth-Einasleigh. The one I want to talk about tonight is the HIPCo project and Alstonvale Dam at Hughenden, which has recently received \$180 million from the federal government to be built.

A lot of environmentalists will run for the hills saying that this water storage is a terrible thing, but I want to get to the facts. It will take three per cent of the Flinders River. People were allowed to take 50 per cent at some stage. I think they agreed on 35 per cent. The environmentalists will say that 30 per cent can be taken out without compromising the value of a river. The proposal is talking about taking out three per cent. There are hardly any farms on this system at all. Bear that in mind—hardly anything exists out there at all. The government has taken \$10 million from selling water out there. We are talking about taking three per cent out of the Flinders River. That is to build a 500,000 megalitre storage, plus another 200,000 megalitre pond, and it will have a hydro component added to it. It will deliver an 85,000 megalitres per annum yield with 90 per cent reliability. That would be the envy of any irrigation scheme. It is the happy marriage of the last bit of high topography that opens out on to the midwest plains. That is good news again for the so-called environmentalists—there is no tree clearing. It opens out on to the midwest plains.

Another good news story is that one of the best ways we can provide flood mitigation is by building water storages out there. A lot of the damage that was recently experienced at Hughenden would have been mitigated if we had had this water storage in place. This can deliver water to 100 farms, and that is 100 families. It is quite distinct from a lot of other irrigation schemes that are proposed these days that are for large foreign corporations to take advantage of. This will benefit 100 small sized farms, from 100 to 200 hectares. It will allow railway workers, contract workers and people in town to have a go and get into the rural industry and support the state economy in that way.

Again, there is \$180 million from the federal government to build this dam. We can get money from the Clean Energy Finance Corporation for the hydro component. There is not a cent to be spent here from the state government. We can provide water storage and give prosperity to people in these areas. We can give them some hope that there is a future and that we can do something out there. All we are asking is to take some of that water, to build this dam so that the people of the midwest can have some prosperity and to start capturing some of the water that flows out to the sea every year.