



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Calare Electorate: Needles Dam

SPEECH

Monday, 16 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Monday, 16 June 2014 Page 113 Questioner Speaker Cobb, John, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr JOHN COBB (Calare) (21:15): There are times in the life of a politician, like any other person, when you feel you just cannot go on. But there are other times when it is all worthwhile, and last Friday was one of those times. It was publicly announced by the Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Andrew Stoner, that a new dam will be built in the central west of New South Wales—a dam of 90,000 megalitres, primarily on the councils of Cowra and Blayney, just above Cabonne.

This is the biggest thing that has happened in the central west in almost two generations. It is the first time a politician has had the guts, the foresight and the vision to make a decision as huge as this one is in that region. As somebody who has been pushing for this for a long time, I do not think I have ever been as delighted about a single issue in all my years in politics—which are very similar to those of the minister at the table today; we have been here awhile now.

Mr Hartsuyker: We have.

Mr JOHN COBB: This is so huge, and not just for the central west, not just for Calare and Cowra and Grenfell and those who will use it. This is a pick-up, a morale boost for regional New South Wales and for regional Australia as well. Late last year, when I was joined by the mayors of Bathurst, Blayney, Orange and Cabonne and representatives from Central Tablelands Water, we went out there and said, 'This is needed; it is needed for the manufacturing, for the processing, for the urban development, for the mining, for the abattoirs and for the timber industry.' This dam is not about more irrigation, but it does give greater security to the irrigation that exists. It will combine with two other dams, Rowlands and Carcoar, to create a nexus for the central west that will be felt by local government areas way beyond its own borders.

For example, if a big business starts somewhere like Blayney, it is not just Blayney and Orange that will do well. People will come to work from the surrounding LGAs, be it Cowra, Bathurst or wherever else. It is a huge thing, and, as I said, nothing like this has happened in the central west for many years. And I must thank those mayors who backed me when I went out on this. I must thank Tony Perry, who recently retired as the CEO of Central Tablelands Water. The site is a fantastic site. yes, there will be issues, and—surprise, surprise—a few Greens have

come out and said, 'Woe is us'. Well, I have never seen them enthusiastic about anything that was progressive, productive or good for people. Let us not get too surprised when people are consistent. And the one thing you can say about Greens is that they are consistent.

The dam project is on the Belubula River, east of Canowindra. It is on the Blayney and Cowra shires above Cabonne. For Andrew Stoner, the Deputy Premier of New South Wales—and we have been talking to his office for the last three months; as we went into it they kept asking for information—it was not an off-the-cuff decision. He had the foresight and the vision and made the time to understand the need for this dam. I have been the member for Calare for almost half of my political life now, due to redistributions, and the first thing I realised was that west of Bathurst and west of Oberon they need more water for the future. Andrew Stoner has proved himself by having the guts, the vision and the go to make this statement, to get the money, to put around \$350 million out there to do it, including the money to do the study first. He has shown that he is the leader in regional Australia against which others will be measured. He has not talked about water, he has not talked about systems; he has gone out and done it, and I thank him.