

people who live there and from the people who want to see a future in that region for the next 80 to 100 years. It is important to understand when you talk about the Murray-Goulburn system that the water that is released each year is around 3000 gigalitres: 2000 gigalitres is delivered, and 900-plus gigalitres go missing. If you put that in perspective, 900 billion litres is lost through the system each year. That is one-quarter of Eildon. It is more money, and it is more water than exists in the whole of Sydney Harbour. That is how much water is lost every year.

**Mr Baillieu** interjected.

**Mr BRUMBY** — The Leader of the Opposition says, 'What if the flows are lower?'. They are the distribution losses that occur whether it is at full capacity or whether it is at half capacity. It is the water that is lost when you operate the system.

The proposal we announced today is strongly supported from within the region. It is strongly supported by all the local groups, including the food bowl group itself, which represents most of the big investors throughout the region, plus all the users. It is strongly supported by the catchment management authorities. It is strongly supported by the northern water irrigators. It is strongly supported by the Australian Industry Group. And do you know why? Because it is about pumping \$1 billion worth of investment into a region.

somewhat ironic that those political parties are supporting the Prime Minister's national water plan which would see water entitlements bought up and sent down the Murray River to Adelaide. That is what members opposite believe in.

**Dr Napthine** — On a point of order, Speaker, even allowing for interjections the minister has been speaking for a considerable length of time. He is now debating the issue, and I ask you to bring him back to answering the question and concluding his answer.

**The SPEAKER** — Order! The minister has been speaking for just on 5 minutes and I will continue to hear him.

**Mr BRUMBY** — As the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change has said today, if you look at this plan, you see it is a plan involving desalination, and desalination is climate-proof water. That is what it is: it is climate change-proof water. If you look at this aspect of the food bowl modernisation program, you find there are investments in savings and all new water coming out of the distribution losses. It is great for farmers, great for irrigators and great for the environment, and it meets part of Melbourne's needs as well. I referred before to other elements involving Hamilton and Geelong. This is a plan for the whole state. It is the right plan, and I urge the Liberal Party and The Nationals to get behind what is a great plan.