

WATER SERVICES BILL 2011
WATER SERVICES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT AND REPEAL BILL 2011

Second Reading — Cognate Debate

Resumed from 8 November.

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah) [12.49 pm]: I begin by highlighting that obviously we are dealing with two bills cognately, the Water Services Bill 2011 and the Water Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2011. I want to make some general comments about some of the debate that has already occurred with regard to the two bills that are before the house, and also make some general comments about the importance of water provision into the future for Western Australia. One of the sad things, when water has been debated in this place over recent years, is, of course, the polarisation that we have seen in some respects, with people saying, “We have got a better plan than you have”, or, “We have done better on water than you have.” I think it is important to acknowledge that the Western Australian community has, in my view, for a very long time recognised the importance of a secure water future for Western Australia. I think we only need to look back to 30 or 40 years ago and to the whole debate about how we could continue to provide good quality water for potable reasons, but also quality water for infrastructure, for mining, for industry, for agriculture and for horticulture. I can remember vividly as a kid the interesting debates that were taking place in the late 1970s when it was genuinely debated and highlighted that one option for providing for the water future of Western Australia was to tow icebergs to Western Australia. I can remember that as a kid in the early years of high school when those things were being debated. The first proposal to pipe water from the north of the state has generally been attributed to Ernie Bridge, and of course as the population of Perth and the south west has increased in the last two to three decades, the whole question of how we can provide for the growing population of Western Australia has seen some interesting schemes hatched and some interesting proposals proposed. We know that the now Premier had a plan for a canal. I think that the Premier’s plan, when he was opposition leader in the lead-up to the 2005 election, was almost an attempt to grab an issue that he thought had resonance—and it does have resonance in our communities, the concept of piping water from the north. I think the now Premier saw that as a possibility of swaying opinion behind the Liberal Party’s push to win government in 2005. Of course the canal plan was widely and roundly criticised, and I think reasonably so, for the cost, and ultimately for the logistics of having an open canal in which water would travel some 3 000 kilometres from the north to supply water to the growing population of Perth and the south west.

But I recognise—I certainly recognise it in my community, in Mandurah, and indeed in the Peel, and I think it is reflected widely among many communities throughout Western Australia—that there is an embracing of the idea of capturing the massive volumes of water that ultimately flow into the northern ocean and directing that water to the south. My personal view is that any project of that nature is in fact a nation-building project. I do not think the Western Australian government could itself ever afford, on current calculations, a project of that scale without a massive investment by the commonwealth government. I think that such a proposal would need to be seen as a nation-building proposal, and the real cost is something that would need to be considered by governments both state and federal. The whole concept of moving water some 3 000-plus kilometres is not without its logistical challenges. It is also not without its cost factors. I think the reality is that as our nation grows, we need to become far more innovative in how we treat waste water, and in looking at how we recycle and re-use a lot of that water, which is actually used once, if we like, and effectively wasted because it is not recycled. I think both sides of politics can be congratulated, and in many respects criticised, for water policy over the last 50 years. I think that both sides of politics and Ministers for Water over that 50-year period, as I say from both sides of politics, have stepped away when they should have stepped forward on water policy.

Mr M.J. Cowper: That is evidenced by the desal plants that we do have, member.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is true. But in terms of desalination plants, and I know this is of particular interest to the member for Murray–Wellington, one of the things that the Gallop government, and in particular Premier Gallop, can be roundly congratulated for was the recognition of the need to do something, and do something immediately, about the pressure on our water system when he came to government in 2001, and that was, of course, to fund and commission the first desalination plant in Kwinana. As soon as that desalination plant was commissioned, the water was already effectively being used in terms of the population demand, and we then had the interesting debate about the south west Yarragadee versus building another desalination plant. Certainly, when I came into the position of Minister for Environment in early 2007, a campaign to effectively save the south west Yarragadee from water mining, as it was called by many, was a topical issue. I think the Liberal opposition at the time was surprised by our government’s decision to not tap the south west Yarragadee. I think it was expecting that we would do that. I think it was certainly hoping that we would do that, because that would have been a very effective campaign leading up to the 2008 election. The reality is, though, that as the population of Western Australia, particularly in the south west, and particularly in the Perth metropolitan area,

continues to increase markedly, the demand for water to satisfy and indeed service that population will continue to increase.

Minister, one of the things I think we all need to acknowledge is that the Western Australian community has become very sophisticated in its understanding of the whole water situation. I think that can be demonstrated in a number of ways. A simple example was the rebate system that operated previously under which people had an incentive to include water-saving devices in the design of their homes or, indeed, in their household day-to-day lives. For many years sprinkler use over summer has been restricted to two days. Effectively, no-one complains about that. I do not think I have heard any complaints from people not being able to water their gardens more than two days a week. To be totally honest, when there have been total bans on sprinkler use, as there was during winter and even leading into the spring season—admittedly we have had unseasonal spring rain, as we know—I think, in general, the Western Australian population understands the reasons behind that. We need only see what happened in Melbourne just over three years ago when it suffered a severe drought. In Collingwood, where my brother lives, and in other places, people had to get used to bucketing water and things like that. I think our general population is sophisticated and understands intimately the pressures we face in providing water for drinking, for day-to-day use and for industry. People recognise that if belts have to be tightened in their use of water, they can, and do, respond. Of course, that is not to say that we can allow complacency. Even with the unseasonal rains this spring and just on average rainfall in winter, minister, I think it was —

Mr W.R. Marmion: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: — the perception that we had a wet winter, interestingly enough, but actually it was an average year's rainfall.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Just a tiny bit below—until the last two months.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is right. We need to be very mindful of not becoming complacent. Effectively, our dams are, what, 30 per cent full?

Mr W.R. Marmion: They're 34 to 35 per cent—the same as this time last year.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is woeful. The reality is that our dams are nowhere near capacity. However, it is interesting to compare Western Australia's experience with that of the eastern seaboard, particularly Queensland. I think two years ago south east Queensland householders were bucketing water for household use because of severe water restrictions. Of course, then the floods in Queensland occurred early this year and the Wivenhoe Dam was threatening to flood. They were very interesting scenarios.

I want to put on record my acknowledgement of previous ministers on both sides of the house for the good things they have done, but also highlight that there have been times when we needed to step up to the mark and did not. That is something I think everyone should be mindful of. I think the debate about piping water from the north will continue. I think that when it becomes economically viable, it will become a national project. I firmly believe that.

These bills propose a number of key changes, which my colleague the member for Cockburn highlighted in his contribution to this debate last evening. I was not able to be here for it because I was at the Coodanup Community College year 12 graduation. A number of issues relate to a proposal I understand the minister is aware of—I think the minister indicated his awareness—namely, the water re-use proposal for Peel.

Mr W.R. Marmion: Yes.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I want to put on record a couple of points on that. First of all, the Peel region has some significant peculiarities. It has a growing urban population. A lot of the land has traditionally been used for agricultural purposes and some of that has changed over the period. There is significant mining activity, which will continue for a number of decades, including, of course, goldmining in the Boddington area and the alumina mining by Alcoa on the scarp. As the minister is aware, throughout a significant part of this year, Alcoa had to cart water for its industrial use. That of course, in itself, created a range of problems not only for Alcoa, but, indeed, for the population, particularly with traffic management and traffic movements. It highlighted that if operations on the scale of Alcoa have to do those sorts of things, we have an issue with water.

[Member's time extended.]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: My view of the proposal that has been highlighted to the minister by the member for Cockburn is this: the Peel region is an area that holds opportunity for diversification. Traditionally, we have relied on what I think is a quite narrow economic base around mining, agriculture to some extent, a fledgling but difficult tourism industry, and, effectively, services that provide facilities to the population that lives there and visits there.

Mr M.J. Cowper: There's the equine industry.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It is still limited in the number of people it employs, although there is a flow-on with services to that industry. Effectively, Peel has a reasonably narrow economy. One of the problems with an economy that focuses very heavily on retail and services is that when there is an economic downturn, areas like ours are the first to feel it. I am sure that if the member for Murray–Wellington spoke to lots of businesses in the region, he would find that some of them are doing it quite tough in the current circumstances.

The proposal in the bill is quite significant for the Peel region. It focuses on, if we like, using waste water to create, I think, potential diversification of opportunity, whether it be fledgling and/or intensive horticultural pursuits, ancillary water for mining efforts in the region, and innovation that will, of course, allow water provision to some of the industrial land identified in the area that needs to be developed to again increase the amount of commercial land within the region for the creation of jobs. I strongly support the diversification of the economy of the Peel region. If we are going to create jobs for the growing population of that region, and if we are going to provide jobs for, particularly, young people and people who are retraining and who want to live and work in the Peel, we have to seriously consider the diversification of our economy. I think it is essential, and we need to be innovative.

One thing we have in the Peel is land, but one of the problems with a lot of that land is the environmental constraints on it, as the minister knows very well. Indeed, there are issues and impacts on that land relating to broadacre agriculture, and that is why diversification into highly intensive horticultural and aquacultural opportunities is being explored. That will take money and innovation, and it will need investment, and that is where I see programs like royalties for regions playing a key role. It is just sad that, until now—I have highlighted this in the house before—the Peel, which is the third highest royalty generating region of Western Australia, has received a pittance of royalties for regions money. I have highlighted that.

Mr A.J. Simpson: It has received \$9 million.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Yes, \$9 million out of —

Mr M.J. Cowper: It's a bit less, isn't it?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I think it has received \$8.6 million out of a pot of nearly \$900 million.

As I have said in this place before, I do not begrudge or have a problem with some of the other regions receiving royalties for regions money, particularly the Pilbara and the Kimberley, and even the Mid West. But I am starting to get a little more concerned when the big population centres like Peel and the South West, which is also a royalty generator, do not get anywhere near what would be their fair share if it was calculated on population. One of the great failings of the royalties for regions experience is that population has not been one of the criteria for dishing out the dollars. Given the population growth in the Peel and in the South West, the fastest-growing regions of the nine, they have received the least of the royalties for regions funding. That is a fact. I have raised it with the Minister for Regional Development on a number of occasions, including during the estimates hearings—I was asked, very politely, to leave estimates—because that is fact.

If we are going to diversify the Peel region economy, a lot more of that royalties for regions money has to go into innovation and genuine job creation opportunities; that is critical. It sticks in my craw that youth unemployment in the Peel continues to be one of the highest in the state and nationally; it should not be. We should be giving those young people the opportunity of good-quality training to get them into the workforce; and, if possible, that should be done locally, for locally created jobs; or, indeed, if they go off to other mining areas as trained tradesmen and women, good on them! Brilliant! I do not have a problem with that. Sometimes we have this sort of fixation that we want to keep all our young people in our town or region. The reality is that young people these days will be highly mobile, but let us make sure that they are the best-trained highly mobile young people in Australia. If they come from the Peel and have been trained in the Peel, let us be proud that we are recognised as a quality training community. That is what we should be aiming for.

The minister needs to look very closely at that proposal. I know the member for Cockburn has raised a number of concerns about it, as he should and as should be raised, because when we know that there are proposals for private partnerships and the establishment of corporations or corporate entities that are spending and distributing public money on behalf of, ultimately, in the case of this model, the ratepayers of five local government authorities —

Mr W.R. Marmion: By the way, I think the member was actually talking about governance. I do not think he was against the proposal; it was more, I think, the concept.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: That is right, yes. He was raising the issue of governance and making sure checks and balances are in place so that we do not have a situation of an entity being able to spend money willy-nilly on something that does not work, and then not being accountable for it. I think that was the concern. The member for Cockburn is in deep discussion with the member for Joondalup, but I think that was, effectively, his concern.

The other thing I wanted to highlight in regard to the Water Services Bill 2011 and the Water Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2011 is that a lot of people in Western Australia are unaware of the governance around water services legislation relating to country area water supply. A lot of people in Western Australia are perhaps not au fait with, or well aware of, the differences in the way water is done in Western Australia compared with other states. Indeed, apart from those country entities such as Busselton Water supply—is that what it is called?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Yes, and Bunbury, which is Aqwest.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The amount of autonomy and control those entities have is very significant. The reality is that the licensed draw of the Busselton Water Board from the south west Yarragadee aquifer, for example, is quite significant. I think lots of people would not be aware of the significance of that.

As these bills move through this Parliament and we go into consideration detail, significant questions will be asked on a range of clauses. We need to be mindful that, when in government, both sides have done things very well in water; there have also been some not-so-successful examples of water policy. But as this population of Western Australia grows, and as Western Australia continues to be seen as a place of opportunity and a place of optimism, water policy, and the legislation that underpins it, will become even more significant. It is important that all of us, no matter which side of the chamber we sit on, become intimately interested in how water is dealt with, serviced and provided into the future. The reality is that every single one of us represents a community, the very lifeblood of which depends on quality infrastructure being delivered. I urge the minister to respond to the questions which the member for Cockburn and others from this side have highlighted in their contributions to the debate last night or today or which will be highlighted. I would also be interested in hearing the comments of members opposite, because members opposite have probably been told not to stand and talk about the legislation because they will hold it up. But this is legislation about which they should say, “Wait a second; I want to have a couple of minutes on this”, because it is significant. They should not allow their party room or the minister—I do not think it is the minister; it is probably the Premier or the Leader of the House—to dictate to them whether they can speak on something that has the importance of a safe, secure, well-planned water future for Western Australia.

MR M.J. COWPER (Murray–Wellington — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.20 pm]: I feel compelled to speak on the Water Services Bill 2011 and the Water Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2011 after listening to the previous speaker, the member for Mandurah. I mentioned to the Minister for Environment a few minutes ago that I might say a few words, but the member for Mandurah has pushed me over the line. It will be concerning to members to know that I actually agree with just about everything the member for Mandurah said! That is not highly unusual, although sometimes when the member informs us of his views on certain things, he makes me want to walk out of the chamber. However, what he spoke about today was on the money. As he said, we are here to look after the people we represent. One of the greatest impediments to the state’s ability to do that is the management of water in Western Australia. Members are aware that the electorate of Murray–Wellington is a major mining region, but it is also arguably the primary food producing region of Western Australia. Look at the iconic brands such as Harvey Fresh and Harvey Beef and the vegetable growers around Myalup. The need for water in that region is paramount. The 600 irrigators that operate along the Darling Scarp between Waroona and Dardanup produce a large amount of the food that we eat. It is fantastic when the Premier and others talk in this place about the big projects, particularly the oil and gas projects and the expansion of our resources industry in the north, but as Napoleon found out, an army marches on its stomach. They need food to eat; they cannot eat rocks. The benefit of having all those great natural resources up north will not be realised unless we have the food with which to feed the army, and with food comes water. When it is boiled down, water is the number one issue for this state, irrespective of who will govern the state over the next 100 years.

The member for Mandurah spoke about the water re-use program. Members may be aware that this issue has been worked on for several years. There is a problem with getting rid of the excess water that goes through our waste water treatment plants. We are looking at trying to accommodate industry in the Peel region. I speak specifically of what was E.G. Green and Sons’ old abattoir on Lakes Road, which was bought by T&R Pastoral. T&R is owned by the Thomas Family. It is a South Australian family-owned business that operates abattoirs throughout each state of Australia except for Western Australia. The Western Australian abattoir is not operating because there are problems with getting rid of some water. There is an application on the books for royalties for regions money to the tune of \$22.8 million to put a pipeline from Mandurah along Lakes Road to the beautiful town of North Dandalup. The north–south line will be a truncated line that will run virtually from the Woodman Point waste water treatment plant and interconnect with Kwinana, down through the scarp at Pinjarra to the Alcoa Wagerup refinery and, ultimately, it will connect with the Harvey Water irrigation area. That will give us options about how to deal with the challenges that are associated with the changing climate. I understand also that there is a proposal to put a truncated line across to Boddington Gold Mine. That will free up a lot of

opportunities for us to manage water, which is what it is about. This state does not have a water crisis issue but a water management problem. How we manage that is the challenge for the future.

As I mentioned, water is a very critical issue in my electorate. Recently I went to South Australia, which is the driest state in the driest continent in the world. It is a great place to observe how business is done. A company called Tyco International Ltd operates a very similar water recycling system in the north east of Adelaide. That company has experience in this field. When this proposal for a pipeline gets legs and is in a position at which we will be looking at investing in infrastructure, I would like to call upon the support of all my colleagues to make sure that the project gets the green light. As the member for Mandurah said, when combined, the Peel and the South West regions—the bottom half of my electorate is in the South West—represent more than one-third of the population of regional Western Australia. The South West got \$28 million and the Peel region got \$8.6 million from royalties for regions, which is a total of about \$36 million. That was welcome money, particularly for key issues such as Harvey Hospital, the new College of Agriculture and the Pinjarra swimming pool. Some good money has been spent. However, in proportion we have been very patient in our neck of the woods. Investment in infrastructure such as this very good project will be fundamental for the region's future.

The challenges that face growers come from not only government, but also lower rainfall. Last year the irrigators north of Benger, Harvey, Yarloop and Waroona had their water allocations reduced to just 34 per cent of their usual allocation. I will not go into the nuances of how they pay for the water and the cost of production that that reduction in rainfall caused. The problem is that the farmers have to sell their product on an open market and are unable to request compensation because of the lack of water. Often they must sell their product at a loss just to keep the wheels turning.

Other issues that will impact on us, starting with the electorate of Murray–Wellington in the north, include the bottom end of the Serpentine Dam and the North Dandalup Dam, which is at 25 per cent capacity. The North Dandalup Dam is not very big. It is the newest dam and was built in about 1994 or 1995. Further south is the South Dandalup Dam, which is all but empty. Alcoa relies on the water from that dam for its Pinjarra plant. I understand that Alcoa contributed to the building of the dam many years ago. Last year's low rainfall has resulted in that dam being almost bone dry.

Mr W.R. Marmion: It is still pretty low.

Mr M.J. COWPER: Yes, it is. Further south are Waroona Dam; Samson Dam; Drakesbrook Dam; the famous Logue Brook Dam, which has only five gigalitres but which is still very important to the local community; Harvey Weir; Stirling Dam; and, of course, the largest dam in the South West, Wellington Dam. Wellington Dam can hold 187-odd gigalitres of water. Unfortunately, that has not always been utilised to its maximum potential because of its high salt content. There have been discussions about that for some time.

It is important to touch upon the importance of Wellington Dam. A number of Indian companies have submitted proposals. Lanco has bought out Griffin Coal and wishes to expand its operations in Collie, which will mean job opportunities for the people in that region, particularly in my electorate around Australind, Eaton, Brunswick and so on. Perdaman Industries wants to build a urea plant, which also requires water. Perdaman is looking to invest in some fit-for-purpose water from Wellington Dam so that it can get that project up and running. That project must overcome a few hurdles first. Other members and I will go to India this coming week to meet with Lanco and other companies to try to resolve the issues and show that we are very keen for important projects such as this to get off the ground.

Ms L.L. Baker: When you are in India with Lanco, make sure you congratulate them for sponsoring the hockey Super Series.

Mr M.J. COWPER: I noted that Lanco was involved in the hockey. Members know that Indians are very competitive at hockey. That will be noted. I thank the member.

Members may be aware that the two Indian companies I referred to are in the courts about some disagreements they have. We want to get on with business in the state and we are trying to see whether we cannot speak to those two companies and see a bit of sense between them. Of course, water is an issue for the development of that particular area in the member for Collie–Preston's electorate.

Another area of considerable concern to me as the local member is the waste water treatment plant at Kemerton. When I was in charge of the Australind Police Station, the small waste water treatment plant was relocated from Australind to Kemerton. The treatment plant was designed to have the capacity to accommodate the rather burgeoning population in that area. The problem is that that area has grown so quickly that the infill sewerage program in Australind, which is almost complete, cannot be expanded without first expanding the capacity of the waste water treatment plant at Kemerton. As we speak, that water is being pumped into the ground. It is water that is otherwise being wasted; it is water that could be used fit-for-purpose and could be utilised in a very similar fashion to what we will do with this waste water re-use program in the Peel region. Binningup Golf Club

has made approaches to me to see whether we could use that water for the golf course. Unfortunately, the Water Corporation has reluctantly said no, because it wants to charge the Binningup Golf Club for the use of that water. Currently, the water pumped onto the golf course at Binningup comes from groundwater out of the limestone. As members would appreciate, near Binningup is what is called the Myalla water mound, which is a superficial aquifer from which all the market gardeners in the area pump all their water onto all their carrots, onions, cauliflowers, potatoes and other vegetables. I visited those market gardens the day before yesterday and everything looks very good down there after the replenishing rains. There is competition for that groundwater and if we could best use the waste water from Kemerton and perhaps give the Binningup Golf Club the opportunity not to draw on the groundwater and allow it to be relinquished for the market gardeners, it would be a step forward. At the moment, minister, the Water Corporation's proposal is to build a pipeline and pump the waste water into the ocean and to me that makes no sense. It makes no sense to pump fit-for-purpose water into the ocean when it could be used on the golf course primarily, or for other uses in parks or gardens or what have you. There is an opportunity right there, minister, to better utilise that water.

The other problem we have with the pumping of that water into the ground is evidence, as I understand it, to suggest that there is a nutrient build-up in that water body below Kemerton that is slowly progressing westward towards the Leschenault Estuary. There are a number of significant problems with the Leschenault Estuary in Australind. Once upon a time, a person could go down to the mouth of the Collie River or along the foreshore in Australind and catch a heap of blue manna crabs. The days of catching a great big old bucket of blue manna crabs are almost a distant memory. There are a number of health issues pertaining to the Leschenault Estuary and one of them will be the nutrients running into the estuary impacting upon the fish and what have you.

Whilst I am on the topic, I will also say on the record that it is time that we got rid of Millennium Chemicals. Millennium Chemicals is based in the heart of Australind, right next to the Collie Bridge Tavern. That area will soon become part of the member for Bunbury's electorate, but we can rest assured that given that it bumps up against my electorate, I will keep a very close eye on it over the few years ahead. It is interesting to note that when the Millennium Chemicals plant was owned by the French company Roche, it had a terrible track record for, let us say, less than environmentally friendly procedures. There is suggestion that under the ground of that Millennium Chemicals plant—I think the company calls itself Cristal now—there is a plume of toxic material, including sulfuric acid. It has been told to me that that is the key reason for fish kills in the Collie River at the back of Australind. It is interesting to note that the land that that factory now sits on is owned by the state government and is leased back to the company. I think it is time for that company to consider relocating either to Kemerton or to some other place, because that area adjoining many beautiful homes overlooking the Leschenault Estuary has a dark cloud over it.

Mr W.R. Marmion: I think it's right between the Collie River and the estuary.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is right between the Collie River and the estuary; it is right next to the Bunbury golf course at Clifton Park and the people beyond Lisa Road and along the foreshore.

Mr W.R. Marmion: I think it was created under the 1962 Laporte industries act, so I think there might be some state agreements.

Mr M.J. COWPER: If the minister is in any way concerned about the environment and water, which I know are both his portfolios, that is one issue. I have written to the minister and I will write to him again about some of the anecdotal evidence that is coming from that area and the belief held by people who have been in the area for many years, including fishermen and long-time residents, who I do not regard as being over the top. I think these people are level headed and we need to be paying particular attention to them in their area. It is a beautiful part of the world and there are a lot of very good people down there. Being a Bunbury person himself, I am sure the minister is very familiar with that area.

Mr W.R. Marmion: There is a nice picnic spot by the blackbutt on the Collie River.

Mr M.J. COWPER: There certainly is.

Geosequestration is another challenge that I have been keeping a very close eye on in my neck of the woods. I have not spoken about it in this place until now, but I will touch upon it, because it has the potential to impact upon arguably the primary food growing area of Western Australia. Simply, the plan is to put a pipeline from Kwinana and from Collie, pick up the carbon dioxide from Alcoa, Pinjarra, Wagerup, Griffin Coal and all the other various industries in Collie, and pipe it down to the beautiful town of Harvey, not Kemerton as was mentioned by the federal Minister for Resources and Energy, Martin Ferguson, and Hon Norman Moore, the Minister for Mines and Petroleum. They mentioned that it would be piped to Kemerton North, and that is a little misleading; it is not Kemerton North at all, it is an area bordered by Forestry Road, Government Road, Riverdale Road and Old Coast Road, and right under that are some of the best farms in Western Australia. There some farms belonging to the Parravicinis, the Maughans, the Gianfrancescos and there are also some significant

market gardens belonging to the Galati boys and Sonia and Joe Castro of Castro Farms—Bright Eyes carrots come from Joe Castro's place. There are also the Mayolos, the Petanis and the Roses, who all farm along there. By capturing this carbon and pumping it 3 000 metres below the ground into a saline aquifer called the Lesueur aquifer, carbon dioxide will be pumped into salt water. My chemistry is only year 12 level, but if H₂O and CO₂ are combined, we get H₂CO₃, which is carbonic acid. The concern I have is that that is being pumped in under pressure, and my science is only relatively simple, but I can refer to the beer kegs we used to have after a football match into which we put CO₂ and the beer would bubble out into a nice old frothy glass—it was very enjoyable. Similarly, if we start pumping CO₂ into the ground under pressure, something will have to come up somewhere. What concerns me is that Myalla water mound. The state and federal governments are stumping up \$63 million to test whether the Lesueur aquifer would be satisfactory to pump CO₂ into.

A committee has been put together on which I have a representative, but I must say straight up that I have some grave reserves about the capacity of the science to prove the notion of geosequestration. The question that comes to my mind when I sit in my office and look at my big picture of Western Australia in front of my desk is that of all the places that CO₂ could be pumped into the ground, why would it be done under beautiful Harvey where we grow all our food? I am not sure whether the people of Western Australia will be comfortable in the knowledge that CO₂ and carbonic acid is in existence 3 000 metres below the ground underneath, arguably, the primary food growing area in Western Australia.

There are other geosequestration areas. Recently at my Rotary club at Pinjarra, an environmental scientist from the Chevron group spoke about the CO₂ geosequestration at Barrow Island. Again, it is going to force salt water up. I think some questions should be asked about the science behind that. The only two places where that has happened previously are Norway, where I understand there is leaking, and the north west of the United States, where it is pumped into an exhausted oil field. As I said, my science and physics are probably a bit simple, but when something is pumped into the ground, something has to give. If we are pumping something into a void, obviously it will fill up the void. However, in the case of the Lesueur aquifer, there is a body of salt water. If CO₂ is pumped into it under pressure, something has to give somewhere, some time, and that, in essence, is the key point that I am rather concerned about. I know we are getting off the track a bit here, but we are talking about water issues, and water is fundamentally important to the people of my area. Therefore, it will be important to the future growth of this great state.

The member for Mandurah mentioned opportunities for the use of water from the north. Again, when I was in South Australia, I went to Ceduna, which is some 800 kilometres from Adelaide and, indeed, from the Murray River. Ceduna's water is supplied by pipe from the Murray River. Eight pipes carry water from the Murray River over the Mount Lofty Ranges into Adelaide and its surrounds. It is interesting to note that when I was in South Australia, the Murray River had been replenished. I had words with the minister about the National Water Initiative. I went to a meeting in Renmark with some parliamentary colleagues from South Australia to discuss key water issues. I have to report to the minister that he does not know how fortunate we are to be Western Australians and not involved in that whole debacle about water licences on the east coast. Over there, 56 per cent of the water that is in the Murray–Murrumbidgee–Darling river system is sucked out of the system by the New South Welshmen, primarily for their rice and cotton growing—56 per cent of the water volume—34 per cent by the Victorians and only eight per cent by the South Australians, including the supply of water to Adelaide. I understand that the other two per cent goes to the Australian Capital Territory and Queensland. So the biggest users of the water in the Murray–Darling system are the New South Welshmen, primarily revolving around the cotton and rice industries.

When I was in South Australia, I was asked to make some comments on radio station 5CC in the beautiful town of Port Lincoln, along with my colleague over there Peter Treloar, a wonderful local representative for the electorate of Flinders. I was asked, "How has mining assisted agriculture in Western Australia?" I said, "Well, I'll give you a tangible example of how mining has helped agriculture", and I referred to the investment by this government of \$155 million in the expansion of the Ord River scheme. I said that the hope there is that we might be able to attract some of those heavy water users, in particular from New South Wales, who grow cotton and rice, so that we can perhaps take the pressure off that very important water system in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. If it had not been for the royalties for regions program, we would not have been able to do that. I think that is a pretty good example of how royalties for regions can assist in putting in place infrastructure projects revolving around water, in particular, to offset future needs.

We know—I do not have to reiterate it—that the population of this planet is getting greater and greater and that there is less access to water. I think the population has just hit seven billion, and I understand that it will go to 15 billion by 2050. I stand to be corrected on that figure, but it is a significant number. The amount of available water will not increase, and the amount of available, suitable land will not increase. I am sure that the minister is aware, as was the previous water minister, that I am the water minister's greatest nightmare, because nowhere else does water mean so much more to so many people than it does in this state.

I thank the Parliament for giving me the time to speak about the very important issue of water when it comes to the Murray–Wellington electorate.

MR J.M. FRANCIS (Jandakot) [1.45 pm]: I thank the Deputy Speaker for jumping in the chair to allow me to make a couple of quick remarks in the context of this debate on the Water Services Bill 2011 and the Water Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2011, and specifically on an issue that is at the heart of my electorate, and that is the Jandakot water mound. I want to take this opportunity to make a few brief comments, because I would love to know what the minister's thoughts are and what the plan is on this issue moving forward. I figure that if I make these remarks now, perhaps when the minister makes his speech in reply, he will be able to address some of these concerns.

The Jandakot water mound is obviously located underneath the suburbs of Jandakot itself, Cockburn Central, Banjup, Atwell, Aubin Grove and Harvest Lakes in the southern part of Atwell. History shows that it is used as a freshwater aquifer for the purpose of providing a percentage—not an awful lot—of drinking water for Western Australia. What has happened over the top of this water mound creates some confusion in forward planning for many residents, and also for commercial development. Obviously, Jandakot airport is controlled by the federal government, so responsibility for most of the development of that area lies squarely with the federal government. In the last couple of years—in fact, in the last 12 months—with the federal government's approval, an area of initially 167 hectares of pristine banksia has been cleared. This land had been pretty much untouched by human hands forever. I am sure that the traditional owners may have paid it some visits, but, generally, it was untouched pristine banksia bushland and home to the Carnaby's black cockatoo. That land has basically been cleared—I have had some concerns about the way in which that was done, but that is by the by—for the purpose of commercial development by Ascot Capital and Jandakot airport. That is all well and good. It has some commercial advantages. The fact that it is on federal government land means that it is not subject to the state Retail Trading Hours Act. The Galati brothers run the Spud Shed there—the biggest supermarket in Western Australia—and it trades 24/7. People can walk in there to shop at three o'clock in the morning. Obviously, if there was not a demand for that, they would not open their doors, but that is another issue; that is by the by.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Do they sell potatoes at three o'clock in the morning?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Because it is on federal government land, it is not even under the regulation of the Potato Marketing Corporation. They can do what they want there. It is not subject to any of the state trading hours laws.

Ms J.M. Freeman: Do they sell only potatoes?

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: No. They sell steak, salmon and fruit and vegetables—all groceries. It is quite a massive supermarket. It is very popular with the locals, and it is extremely good value for money. But I am not here to talk about that; I am just making the point that this land has certain commercial value because of the outdated trading hours regulations, but that is beside the point. That land has been cleared, and there are caveats on the way in which this land is to be used, because, obviously, it is on top of the Jandakot water mound. Similarly, previous governments of both persuasions have moved the lines in the sand, so to speak, about what sits on the top of this water mound. In fact, I live in Harvest Lakes, in the southern part of Atwell, and it used to be on top of the Jandakot water mound; I am sure that it still is. The biggest Bunnings in Australia now, I think, is at Cockburn Central, on top of the Jandakot water mound. The suburb of Aubin Grove went from having 350 voters at the 2008 state election to having 3 500 voters now. It is a massive booming suburb down there on the eastern side of Kwinana Freeway, at the southern tip of my electorate, and it is all on top of the Jandakot water mound. The reason I make this point is that obviously these developments have been allowed to progress with caveats, because it is important that we protect the quality of the water in the mound. For example, with these caveats, all the fresh rainwater has to hit the roof and run into freshwater soakwells that drain downwards. On commercial developments, there obviously have to be pollution filters before the water drains in.

Last week, a draft planning document was released about a proposed development in Banjup on the northern side of Armadale Road for the area between Cockburn Central—think of the Good Guys on Armadale Road—and the former brick factory to the north. Stockland will be able to put in 1 800 houses in the new suburb of what I guess will be called North Banjup, on the northern side of Armadale Road. That is all well and good, but the problem is that many in my electorate live on five-acre blocks—I mentioned these people yesterday—as do many in the suburb of Jandakot. These people are grossly restricted in what they can do with their land. They bought their houses 10 or 20 years ago, because they wanted a particular semirural lifestyle; however, because of the infill development around them, they have lost much of that lifestyle, especially in the suburb of Jandakot on the northern side of Armadale Road. In fact, on Jandakot Road, people cannot move for the peak-hour traffic. There are a number of different reasons for that, but —

Ms A.R. Mitchell interjected.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: That is on the southern side of Armadale Road, but, yes, those massive white houses near the chicken farms where people can buy their eggs are on top of the Jandakot water mound.

Those who live on the western side of Beenyup Road in the southern part of my electorate, which is a normal residential area, can fertilise their lawns and do whatever they want. But those who live on the eastern side of the road cannot have more than two hooved animals on their block and cannot use fertiliser on their lawns. It is not as though the rain knows which side of the road to fall on and the water knows which way to drain into the Jandakot water mound. I am saying that there is a growing groundswell of desire amongst the residents of not only Jandakot but also Banjup to be able to do what commercial developers do—that is, sell their land to a developer to be chopped up for infill—what the federal government allowed to happen at Jandakot airport, and also what the City of Cockburn allows to happen in the commercial developments of Cockburn Central and the new Stockland estate, which the council has signed off on. If the caveats are in place for these particular developments, why are they not in place for private owners of five-acre lots? Of course we have to protect the Jandakot water mound, but we really need to stop using it as an excuse to allow some kinds of development but not others. As I said before, there is a growing groundswell amongst the residents to be able to do this.

The lifestyle these residents bought into—the lifestyle they paid all this money for 10 or 20 years ago—is not the lifestyle they are experiencing now. Everyone knows that there is going to be development around that area and I make this point about those people who buy land, for example, under a known flight path. People who sign up to buy a house or a block of land under a known flight path probably surrender some of their right to complain about aircraft noise. But if that airport, and I am talking about Jandakot airport specifically now, were to change its curfew hours, were to start allowing jet access or built another runway—Jandakot is about to build a fourth north east–south west runway—the people living under the flight path would probably have some right to complain about the impact of those changes on their lifestyle. I make the same reference to those who buy into a quiet neighbourhood. Further down the southern corridor, into the member for Kwinana’s electorate, people have signed up for similar semirural, five-acre lot lifestyle blocks, and have invested an awful lot of money into building their dream houses. Although the urban sprawl has not gone quite as far down as the Kwinana area, it has certainly started to spread through Jandakot and into Banjup.

As infill development and the concentration of housing increases, people lose their lifestyle. Some even get stuck on their block; that is, they cannot get in and out of their own driveways because of the massive amounts of development around their properties. I make this point, minister, because people who have built their dream homes—their family castles—have every right to know the direction the WA Planning Commission and the Water Authority plan to take in the future because it is just not fair to do this to people.

When it comes to subscribing to a particular lifestyle in a certain area, I have only to look to the people on the eastern side of Leeming who may have built their house 20 years ago, only to find eight to 10 years ago that the Southern Metropolitan Regional Council waste recycling facility was to be built next to them. These people have been adversely impacted by the odour from that plant. Without going into the detail of what has been done over the past few years to address that issue—albeit I congratulate the minister for the work he and his office have done, and the member for Riverton for his work because it affects his constituents—I will say that these people, more than anyone, did not sign up for that impact when they bought their house. A similar argument can be made in support of the issues the member for Cockburn raised about the Cockburn Cement factory. Even those who bought land when the cement factory was already in place, but who are affected because the cement factory has expanded its operations such that it impacts on them in a way that they could not have reasonably foreseen, have a reasonable right to be upset. The same principle that applies to the people of Leeming and those living in the electorate of Riverton near the waste recycling plant, and that applies to the member for Cockburn and those who live near the Cockburn cement factory, applies to the people who live around Jandakot airport. When there is an unfettered expansion of commercial development, when there is an unfettered expansion of aircraft noise boundaries and when the lifestyle and family home that they have signed up for and invested their life savings in is changed dramatically, it is not fair to continue to punish them.

The only real option for the people of the suburb of Jandakot and, I suspect, for the people in the suburb of Banjup south of Armadale Road is to allow these people who want to continue living a semirural regional lifestyle on a bush block—of the kind I spoke about yesterday, member for Cockburn, and the five-acre blocks at Banjup—to have some say about what happens in the future. A key sticking point has been the Jandakot water mound. Essentially, I am saying that it is just not fair to say that it is okay for the federal government to forget about the Jandakot water mound when it comes to commercial development at Jandakot airport, that it is okay to forget about the Jandakot water mound when it comes to the City of Cockburn and the Western Australian Planning Commission allowing development over the top of the water mound in other areas, or that it is okay for previous governments of both political persuasions to move the lines in the sand through the suburbs of Atwell, Harvest Lakes and Aubin Grove to allow residential development, but that it is not okay for us to continue to use

the Jandakot water mound as a rubbish excuse to prevent the people of Jandakot and Banjup—adversely impacted by the increasing concentration of people living around them—from developing their own land.

I ask the minister to take my concerns on board. This is probably one of the biggest pressing issues in my electorate—especially as the WA Planning Commission has released a number of draft planning strategies in the past week that impact on the residents of Banjup, on both the northern and southern sides of Armadale Road—even though they are out of that particular planning zone, it will still have a massive impact on them—and, more than anywhere else, on the people in the suburb of Jandakot. The minister might want to take this on notice, because I suspect that the member for Kwinana may also want some feedback about the plans for further down the southern corridor where it sprawls into the suburbs south of Rowley Road on the eastern side of his electorate including the suburb of—what is it called, member?

Mr R.H. Cook: Wandí.

Mr J.M. FRANCIS: Wandí—another beautiful area! And even Casuarina. Those suburbs have lifestyle blocks of massive acreage and beautiful houses, and some of those people will be asking, “What does the future hold for us?” How much of that land lies on the top of the Jandakot water mound and how much of that land can be developed given particular caveats?

I thank the minister for taking my comments on board and look forward to his reply to the second reading debate as are, I am sure, the people in my electorate and surrounding electorates.

MS J.M. FREEMAN (Nollamara) [1.59 pm]: I also rise to contribute to the debate on the Water Services Bill 2011 and the Water Services Legislation Amendment and Repeal Bill 2011. I thank all the other members of Parliament for their considered contribution to this particular bill. I acknowledge the comments of the member for Mandurah; namely, that both sides of Parliament could do better when it comes to —

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 9217.]