

BEENYUP GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SCHEME — PROGRESS

**83. Mr J. NORBERGER to the Minister for Water:**

I understand that work has started on the first stage of the advanced groundwater replenishment scheme at Beenyup in my electorate. With this in mind, could the Minister for Water advise the house on the progress of this important initiative to secure Perth's water supply?

**Mr F.M. Logan:** How many times has it been announced?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:**

It is a very exciting project, member for Cockburn, and I thank the member for Joondalup for the question.

Before I begin to answer the question, I acknowledge Jan and David Horsley and John and Fran Rak from the Northam Rotary Club in the public gallery this afternoon. We had a lovely lunch.

I thank the member for the question because it is a very exciting project, and that is why the government is keen to continue to update the house on its progress. Groundwater replenishment is the next important step in our efforts to create a climate-independent water supply for Perth, and we are well underway already. WA is the first state in Australia to introduce this technology, which already has been adopted successfully overseas. The innovative process involves treating wastewater to drinking water standards by undergoing natural filtration underground for up to three decades before extraction. I remember the former Minister for Water visited the plant.

**Mr D.T. Redman:** He drank some.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** He did drink some! I have visited the plant, but I have not yet had the opportunity to drink any of the water, but I would be very happy to if the opportunity arises.

By the time the water is extracted, it will have been mixed in the same way as any other groundwater in the aquifer. Part of the groundwater replenishment trial began recharging recycled water into the Leederville aquifer in November 2010. Three years on we have recharged more than three billion litres of recycled water, which is a marvellous effort. More than 60 000 water quality tests have been undertaken and the water has met the most stringent health and environmental guidelines. Because we understand the community is very interested and cautious when we start to talk about recycled wastewater, the Water Corporation has worked very closely with the community to make sure that there is enough awareness about the process and the science and safety of using this water. We are confident that we have done good work with the community in this process so that everyone is confident we are on the right path.

On 1 August 2013, the Liberal-National government announced the go-ahead for the full-scale groundwater replenishment scheme. This government will invest \$116 million on the first stage, which will recharge seven billion litres of treated wastewater per year into the groundwater system. We have already started work on that process. The work is underway on installing the new bore, which will be 750 metres deep, and that is going to be used to reinject water into the Yarragadee aquifer. That is exceptionally deep. We have started that process; we know it is a big process. It is underway. We are on track to commence construction for the full-scale scheme in July this year. Stage 1 will be operational in the middle of 2016. Stage 2 will increase production to 14 billion litres and is planned to be online in 2018, and stage 3 will increase production to 28 billion litres in 2022.

It is a very large and complicated project. It has been an extensive trial and extensive work was done prior to the project being undertaken. The trial proved that the technology can be successfully applied in WA. As members would understand, our underground structures are different from other areas in the nation and internationally. Therefore, it was very important that we did this before we went to the full-scale scheme. While the project is under construction, we are continuing to recharge into the aquifer using the trial plant —

**Mrs M.H. Roberts:** Is this a major ministerial statement, is it?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is a very important project, member, considering the amount of concern there is about our water.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, through the Chair, please.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Midland!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker, I will direct my comments to you. It is just one part of the measures that this government and previous governments have undertaken to droughtproof Perth and droughtproof those

who are on an interactive water system. It is a very important project and I am very happy to update the house with that information.