

WORLD WATER DAY

Statement by Minister for Water

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [2.13 pm]: I rise to inform the house that today is World Water Day, an important day to recognise the impact that climate change is having on our precious water resources. Since the 1970s, average annual rainfall across southern Western Australia has fallen by 20 per cent. The combination of longer and hotter summers and drier winters has seen an 80 per cent reduction in streamflow into metropolitan dams. Although this decline in streamflow is significant, new data from the Water Corporation reveals that only 38 per cent of people in Perth know that rainfall is not the city's main drinking water source.

The McGowan government has responded to the impacts of climate change on Perth's water resources by investing in climate-independent water sources. Over 45 per cent of water supplied to Perth's integrated water supply scheme comes from desalinated seawater and through groundwater replenishment. The McGowan government also allocated an additional \$1.4 billion in the 2021–22 budget towards a new desalination plant to further secure Perth's long-term drinking water supply. Further, it is vital that we continue to act to protect our precious groundwater, which is critical in protecting our wetlands, lakes and bushland from the impacts of climate change. That is why the McGowan government released draft plans to rebalance Perth and Mandurah's precious groundwater resources, which will save 70 gigalitres of water a year. There was a time when groundwater was considered to be close to a limitless resource. With the impacts of climate change, this is no longer the case. On this World Water Day, I encourage the community to be water wise and, together, to help to ensure a sustainable future for WA's most precious resource.