

ON-FARM EMERGENCY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REBATE SCHEME

415. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Water:

I have a supplementary question. Given the demand for this funding, will the minister commit to reinstating the farm water rebate scheme to help farmers improve their water security in what is proving to be another dry winter?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

As the member for Roe knows, that scheme is a commonwealth scheme—the one that is oversubscribed. We would dearly like and would appreciate the commonwealth continuing to fund that scheme. David Littleproud, the National Party minister, talked big on these issues, but he has not delivered much to Western Australia.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: We would like the federal government to continue to fund that scheme. The fact that it is oversubscribed indicates that farmers in WA would also like the federal government to continue to fund that scheme. As I said, within the limits of our budget, rather than funding individual farmers, we have funded community water supplies. In my view, given the money that is available to us, we get a bigger bang for our buck if we fund community supplies because, often for a similar amount of money, we can bring online an old Water Corporation dam that, instead of being available to one farmer, is available to a whole community. We have prioritised community water supplies with 37 projects across the wheatbelt and the great southern and \$1.5 million in funding in our three years in office.

Mr P.J. Rundle interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Roe, you have had two goes.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is significantly more community water project funding expenditure than in eight years under the previous government.

Mr D.T. Redman: Rubbish!

Mr D.J. KELLY: There you go! The member for Warren–Blackwood —

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you order for the first time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: There is nothing more sensitive than a failed water minister from the National Party, and there are a number of them in this chamber!

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: What really surprises me about the National Party is that when we spend money on water infrastructure in their electorates, they complain about it. We are spending over \$20 million to secure the water supply for Denmark by putting in place a new pipeline from Albany. What does the member for Warren–Blackwood do? He complains about it. He thinks that he can score a cheap political point by raising all sorts of spurious issues in the electorate. I am not sure whether he was behind the rumour that we were going to pump water from Denmark to Albany rather than from Albany to Denmark, but it would not surprise me, because I even heard that. I am disappointed that members of the National Party in particular, having done so little in the water portfolio in the eight years that they had it, every time we do something constructive, even in a National Party electorate, complain about it.