

## **PILBARA WATER SUPPLY**

*Statement by Minister for Water*

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Water)** [2.02 pm]: I rise to update the house on some exciting water developments underway in the west Pilbara. The Liberal–National government has invested a significant amount into the development of the Pilbara, including more than \$1 billion through the royalties for regions–funded Pilbara Cities program. This vision, which includes growing the population of Karratha to 50 000 people, is not going to be possible without a secure water supply. At one stage it appeared that the only option would be for the state government to build an expensive desalination plant to address the growing water needs of the community. Rio Tinto was taking, as per its entitlements, up to 10 gigalitres of water a year from the Millstream aquifer, which supplies drinking water to communities in the west Pilbara. This water was used at Cape Lambert and Dampier, with the majority being used for dust suppression.

I am sure you will agree, Mr Speaker, that when there is a growing demand for public drinking water supplies, as well as a need to diversify the Pilbara’s economy and have water available for other industries, the use of this aquifer is clearly not sustainable. Working together, the Department of Water, the Water Corporation, the Department of State Development and Rio Tinto came up with an alternative solution from the Bungaroo Valley. I recently travelled with the Premier and the member for North West Central, Vince Catania, to Cape Lambert to open the Bungaroo Valley water project. This project has helped secure the water supply of the west Pilbara.

Rio Tinto built a bore field and 90 kilometres of pipeline to extract water from the Bungaroo Valley aquifer and pump it to its operations on the Pilbara coast at a cost of \$330 million. This means that 10 gigalitres of water has now been freed for use in the communities of Karratha, Roebourne, Wickham and Point Samson—water that can be used to support a growing population, provide public open space and develop new light industries. The government allocated \$78 million into upgrading the infrastructure to make sure the water can get to where it needs to go.

This is just one of a range of water infrastructure projects underway in the Pilbara. Access to water is key to the growth of this area and the government is investing \$315 million into securing water and wastewater infrastructure across the Pilbara. In February this year, a water main between Karratha and Dampier was upgraded, helping to secure supply to the port town. The Karratha wastewater plant is currently being upgraded while the Port Hedland plant is being relocated, and South Hedland is being upgraded to cater for this change.

Three new bores are being drilled at the Yule bore field, and more than 25 kilometres of pipe is being replaced between South Hedland and the Yule bore field to increase the amount of water that can be transferred into town. In Onslow, work is underway on four new bores and 14 kilometres of pipe, to transfer water from the Cane River bore field to the town. The Pilbara is a vital region for this state, and this state government is committed to providing the infrastructure necessary to allow a permanent population to live and work in the area. Congratulations to everyone who was involved in this project.