

WATER CORPORATION — STANDPIPE WATER SUPPLY — ROE ELECTORATE

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

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister reinstate the farm water rebate scheme to assist farmers to improve their water supplies and, therefore, relieve pressure on the main system?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

Again, as the member for Roe knows, that particular scheme was designed to assist individual farmers on their properties. Money is still available for community water programs—again, I hope the member is aware of that. The farm dam scheme has been in place for many years. It was put in place to get the message out that people needed to take action on their own properties to ensure their own water supplies. Normally, when significant subsidies are offered, they are not offered forever. It is done to get the message out to people. I would be very surprised if any rural community had not got the message in the last 20 years the scheme has been in place that they need to take action. Climate change is not new, although some people on the member's side still deny it exists. It has been out there for a long time. For that scheme, we still offer an incentive. In fact, I think I increased the amount from \$750 to \$1 000 so that farmers who want to do an audit on their properties can find out what they need to do to improve their water supply. I increased the subsidy because I wanted farmers to do the work on their properties and to find out what needed to be done. But should the taxpayer then pay for up to, I think, 50 per cent of the work that needs to be done? That scheme has been in place a long time. We have subsidised solar panels and fridges, but gradually those subsidies were phased out once the message was well and truly understood in the community. I think that the message is well and truly understood. Climate change is real. Farmers need to factor that into their business plans. They are the ones who have to take primary responsibility for ensuring that their businesses are well maintained as far as water security into the future is concerned.