

YARRAGADEE AQUIFER, NEW BORES

**887. Mr EDWARDS to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage:**

Has the Water and Rivers Commission given environmental approval for the licence for those bores?

**Dr EDWARDS replied:**

I have already answered that question. The Water and Rivers Commission has given conditional approval for the extraction from the three deep Yarragadee bores of an extra 15 gigalitres a year for the next three years. That will commence as soon as all the bores are sunk. The 15 gigalitres are guaranteed.

Mrs Edwards: Per annum?

Dr EDWARDS: Per annum. Conditions will be attached to that approval.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr Barnett interjected.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition!

Dr EDWARDS: As I explained, conditions will be attached to that approval - that further scientific work is done and that we keep our eye on the environment as we do it. I inform the House that at the moment 41 bores in superficial aquifers have been turned off because of the impact they are having on particular local environments. We are keeping a very close eye on the environment, but we are encouraged by recent evidence that, by going down to at least 800 metres into the Yarragadee and making sure the scientific assessments are done as that water is drawn, we will be more on top of this scenario. I am delighted with the work being done together by the Water Corporation and the Water and Rivers Commission. I am pleased at the response and the support I have received from the Environmental Protection Authority on this issue.