

WATERWISE COUNCIL PROGRAM — WATER CORPORATION GRANTS

**736. Mr M.H. TAYLOR to the Minister for Water:**

I understand that the Water Corporation has recently provided grants to a number of shires, including the City of Melville, to support Waterwise activities. Can the minister please provide an update on how this government is promoting water efficiencies in our local councils?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:**

I thank the member for his question and interest in water efficiency and innovation. I know that the member has a keen interest in this area and we have had several conversations in that space. The Waterwise Council program is one of a range of water efficiency programs run by the Water Corporation across the state. It is helping local governments across the state to improve water use and efficiency within their own operations and jurisdictions. In Western Australia, local governments use roughly 50 gigalitres of groundwater and around 900 megalitres of surface water every year. As members will understand, this water is mostly used to irrigate councils' public open spaces and ovals for sport and recreational purposes. We know that is incredibly important for community health and wellbeing. In a drying climate and with competition for scarce resources, we need to make sure that our communities not only have that amenity, but also manage it efficiently.

In 2009, the Department of Water and the Water Corporation, with support from International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, developed a Waterwise Council program to support local governments improve their water management. This program helps councils to become more efficient at using the water available to them through a number of initiatives, including an audit so that local governments can understand their water use before they start. They can then plan to improve their water management and also how they can encourage communities within local government boundaries to become more waterwise. Currently, Western Australia has 25 Waterwise councils, with 30 more, at last count, working towards that status. To maintain their Waterwise status, councils need to continue to implement water efficiencies that come out of the audit and the program. A Waterwise council is eligible to apply for funding of up to \$10 000 through the Water Corporation. This allows them to implement some of the efficiency measures they are working through.

The member asked about recent announcements. The Shires of Capel, Kalamunda, Peppermint Grove and Ashburton and the Cities of Joondalup, Kwinana will match the funding they received from the Water Corporation dollar for dollar. The Waterwise Council program has funded a range of different projects for varying amounts, including council-owned building and residential audits and retrofits, the installation of rainwater tanks, community education activities, and a Waterwise demonstration garden initiative in the Shire of Ashburton. The City of Melville received funding to upgrade hardware at LeisureFit, Booragoon, so that bathrooms are water efficient. Local councils estimate that they can potentially save up to six million litres of water a year, which is a great outcome.