

DESALINATION PLANT, MINISTERIAL SUPPORT

3002. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for the Environment

I refer the Minister to *The West Australian* newspaper, dated 10 June 2004 and the article titled 'Minister backs desalination plant,' and ask since the election of the Labor Government in February 2001, will the Minister outline each action she has undertaken and each resolved action she has achieved, to attain a resolution to the Gngangara groundwater issue?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

The Department of Environment (formerly the Water and Rivers Commission) is responsible for regulating the amount of water drawn from the Gngangara Mound. With regard to this role, the Department has undertaken the following actions since February 2001:

- Development of the Perth Regional Aquifer Model Study (PRAMS) to better understand the resources of the Gngangara Mound and provide a tool for management decision-making.
- Undertaken compliance surveys of water usage on the Mound to ensure licensees are complying with their licensed entitlements.
- Commenced a Section 46 Review of Ministerial Conditions to update ecological water requirements and environmental water provisions.
- Identified the linkages between land use and water management resulting in the recent East Wanneroo Land Use and Water Management Strategy.
- Established the Gngangara Co-ordinating Committee, an inter-agency committee developing whole-of-government solutions to management of the Gngangara Mound.
- The Department of Environment (DoE) has entered into a joint venture with the Water Corporation and the CSIRO Healthy Country program to focus on sustainable management of the Gngangara Mound. This joint venture is referred to as the Gngangara Alliance Project (GAP).
- Supported the Department of Agriculture in initiating a private use strategy designed to achieve a 20% reduction in abstractions through water use efficiency. This is based on the Waterwise on the Farm program.
- Provided \$6M over three years to meter private abstraction in the Wanneroo Groundwater Area to facilitate better management.
- Obtained a \$300K National Landcare Program grant to set up five study sites for real time monitoring. The study sites will include telemetry on bore flowmeters, soil moisture probes to manage irrigation timing, root zone solution probes to assist nutrient management, data loggers in monitoring bores to record water level changes and onsite weather stations.
- Augmented water levels in Lake Nowergup and assisted the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Water Corporation test and develop an augmentation system for the Yanchep Caves.
- Supported studies of acidification risks and management options for wetlands affected by low water levels.

Further details on each of these initiatives can be provided upon request.

In addition, the Government has released the State Water Strategy which details the Government's actions to achieve sustainable use of the water resources in the State. In particular, refer to Sections 4 (water conservation and efficiency), 5 (water reuse), 6 (new supplies and total water cycle management) and 8 (resource protection and management).