

ON-FARM EMERGENCY WATER INFRASTRUCTURE REBATE SCHEME

**891. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the additional \$50 million funding made available by the federal government for the on-farm emergency water infrastructure rebate scheme to support communities in drought.

- (1) When will the minister stop making excuses and match commonwealth funds that are available to support farmers in water-deficient areas, including the 411 applications that his department has already processed but not paid out?
- (2) Once the minister finally decides to match the funding, will he work with me to help change the guidelines to include much-needed catchment works?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

- (1)–(2) I am very happy that the member for Roe asked me that question—very happy indeed—and I will tell him why. The chamber might be interested in this. The federal government introduced a scheme called the on-farm emergency infrastructure rebate scheme, through which farmers can apply for up to 25 per cent of the cost of doing work on their property to improve water resilience. Farmers can get up to \$25 000 for each application. The member opposite has raised this issue a number of times. He raised it on 14 October this year, when he said —

When will the state government reopen the scheme for WA farmers and begin processing previously received applications to allow farmers to implement water-saving measures ahead of the summer?

He went on in a supplementary question to say —

I support getting that money straight out.

He then raised it in budget estimates, and in particular he raised the issue of the 401 applicants who have currently put in applications but no funding is available to them. He has raised it again today. What the member has not identified, and what I am now aware of, is that he is one of the applicants.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The advice I have received from the department is that the member is one of the outstanding applicants.

**Mr M. McGowan:** Did you declare that?

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Is that correct, member?

**The SPEAKER:** Through the Chair, please.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The member has just confirmed that he is in fact one of the applicants. Not only is he one of the outstanding applicants, he applied in the first round, which was previously funded, and he has received an amount of money. I have no problem with that. What I do have a problem with is a member coming into this place and arguing for the state government to facilitate that federal grant scheme by providing taxpayers' money —

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** He has come into this place —

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the National Party!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Was the Leader of the National Party aware that the member for Roe was coming into this place, arguing —

**The SPEAKER:** Minister, through the Chair; and quiet, please. You have asked a question. Hear the answer.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The member for Roe has come into this place, arguing for taxpayers' money to be expended on a grants program when he is one of the outstanding applicants. As a rural producer, he may be eligible for that grants program, but he should have indicated to the house —

**Mr D.T. Redman:** Did you take the \$600 electricity rebate? Did the Premier take the electricity rebate?

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Come on!

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warren–Blackwood, I called you to order for the first time, and you did not hear. I called you to order for the second time. Now I am calling you to order for the third time. I was on my feet and you were still talking across the chamber.

What is wrong with you, member for Cottesloe? Do you have an affliction there, or what? I call you to order for the third time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The member for Roe should have come into this place and acknowledged that he is one of a relatively small—in fact, about 400—outstanding applicants for this grant fund. Not everybody is going to get it, like the \$600 electricity credit, which people do not have to apply for. He has an outstanding application with the department, which is on hold, and which he has now raised not once, not twice, but three times in this place, without declaring that he has a financial interest.

**Ms M.J. Davies** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the National Party, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Not once, not twice, but three times he has come into this place and raised an issue, and argued that Western Australian taxpayers' funds should be expended, when he is a direct financial beneficiary of that scheme. That is not the standard that members should display in this house. Politicians are often accused by members of the public of coming into this place to feather their own nests. The member for Roe should have done the right thing and informed the house that he was a direct beneficiary of what he was arguing for and then there could have been no complaint. But he did not. The question for the National Party is: is this the standard that it will permit? Is this the standard that the National Party will walk by? Is it okay for the National Party to allow members to come into this house and pursue a personal financial interest?

Member for Roe, the issue of getting financial assistance to farmers who are struggling because of the lack of rain in certain parts of Western Australia is a very serious one. I met with the federal Minister for Agriculture, Drought and Emergency Management and the federal Minister for Resources and Water via Zoom this week to try to get some funds out of that federal program. On this side of the house, we are doing everything we can to assist those farmers. But the member for Roe coming in here and raising this issue without declaring his financial interests does not do those farmers any good and does the member harm.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** You're a grub.

*Withdrawal of Remark*

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The Leader of the Nationals WA used an inappropriate term, and I ask her to withdraw it.

**The SPEAKER:** I did not hear it.

Government members: I heard it.

**The SPEAKER:** No, I am just asking.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** It was consistent with other language that has been used in this Parliament many times, Mr Speaker.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** You have had a bad day. Just withdraw.

**The SPEAKER:** Excuse me! I did not hear what it was.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** I said the Minister for Water was a grub!

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not think that is —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not think it is unparliamentary, but I would not use it very often—put it that way.

**Ms M.J. Davies:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

*Questions without Notice Resumed*

**The SPEAKER:** Is anyone going to ask a question?

Several members interjected.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Mr Speaker.

Several members interjected.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Four hundred farmers are waiting for action.

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I was on my feet. I call you to order for the first time. Member for Roe.