

BETTER BINS PILOT PROGRAM

323. MR N.W. MORTON to the Minister for Environment:

Could the minister please update the house on the Better Bins pilot program that he launched in January and how will it assist in our recycling efforts?

Ms M.M. Quirk: What a rubbish question!

The SPEAKER: Member for Girrawheen, I now call you to order for the second time.

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

I thank the member for the question. I am already hearing some amusement and mirth in the chamber. Members may well remember that I answered a similar question on waste last year in and around mattresses. I was continually reminded of that question. Clearly, it stuck in members' minds; in fact, I was reminded of it for the rest of the year. I have since discovered, after doing a lot of work in the waste area, that this is certainly an issue in the community's mind as well because when I announced a \$7.5 million grants program towards Better Bins earlier this year, Channel Seven had to run a second story the next day because it had the single biggest number of hits on its Facebook page for any story it has run so far. This is certainly an issue of grave importance to the community.

Mr W.J. Johnston interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr A.P. JACOB: It is an issue that members perhaps should listen to closely because, clearly, people in their communities are taking a very active interest in this issue.

As I said, we announced a \$7.5 million grants program towards better kerbside recycling practices in local governments. This Liberal–National government has very ambitious recycling targets—50 per cent of our metropolitan kerbside waste being recycled by 2015.

A significant resource value in this state every year is landfill and opportunities to capture that through recycling is what our entire waste strategy is about and certainly what this program is about. This state significantly lags behind other mainland states in resource recovery rates. The latest national tables that I have seen have us at around mid-30 per cent, whereas many states are performing at well over 50 per cent or higher in the current recycling rates. A key to higher recycling rates in Western Australia is source separation—that is what this program is all about—and consistency in bin systems across the metropolitan area. What do I mean by “source separation”? Essentially, this is a three-bin system. Most metropolitan local governments have a co-mingled recycling bin and a residual waste bin. This program will put out a \$7.5 million grant program incentive for infrastructure and the implementation of a third bin that will be an organics or green waste bin. This will create cleaner and higher value recycling streams and encourage people to source separate. All their organics will go into one bin that will go directly to composting facilities thereby not becoming landfill. All their co-mingled recycled waste will go into the plastics, glass and cardboard bin. Ultimately, the value from that can be extracted and realised. The third bin will be a residual waste bin, which also has the potential to be realised through potential waste-to-energy projects that may get up in this state.

As I said, a \$7.5 million grant program was announced earlier this year and we have already received 23 expressions of interest from local government councils. This program will be a significant step towards a more consistent collection system across the metropolitan area and will also enable and assist us to achieve far higher recycling rates. We have set very ambitious goals for ourselves and we are well on the way to achieving them. The very day we announced this program there were 13 000 hits on the webpage, so this is clearly an issue of great community interest. I look forward to updating the house as we go on.