

STATE BUDGET 2014–15 — KENT STREET WEIR UPGRADE

355. Mr P. ABETZ to the Minister for Water:

I was delighted to read that Kent Street weir will be upgraded as part of the commitments made in the state budget. Would the minister please provide an update —

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Southern River, will you start again, please.

Mr P. ABETZ: I was delighted to read that Kent Street weir will be upgraded as part of the commitments made in the state budget. Would the minister please provide an update on this important piece of infrastructure?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for the question. He is exactly right. There was an announcement in this year's state budget from the Department of Water of \$4.8 million over two years to invest into Kent Street weir. For members who are not aware, Kent Street weir was built in 1926, and it was heritage listed in 2012.

Ms M.M. Quirk: You should be knocking it down, then!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is a very important piece of infrastructure, member, and I am about to tell members why it is an important piece of infrastructure. The weir assists us in managing the movement of fresh and brackish water in the Canning River. It is very important to the environment of the upstream part of the Canning River, both on land and in the water. In the 88 years that the weir has been in place, the vegetation and wildlife in the upstream have changed from saline to fresh water. So it is very important that we protect that environment, otherwise there could be catastrophic circumstances and a loss of amenity to everybody who uses and visits that part of the river. In addition, the City of Canning has built a footbridge over the top of the weir, and I know that many people use that footbridge to access both sides of the Canning River. That walkway extends for about six kilometres. I am told that it is quite a picturesque and beautiful place to visit. I have not visited it myself.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: It is very picturesque.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Excellent. So it is pretty important that we look after it. Also, we do not want to put people in danger if they are accessing the footbridge. Ensuring the safety of pedestrians and cyclists alike is very important, so we are investing \$4.8 million over two years to make sure we have refurbished and upgraded the weir. We will restore it to full working order and continue to protect that upstream environment.

I understand that following the completion of the works, the City of Canning will also reinstate pedestrian access so we can continue to enjoy that very picturesque part of the river. It is great news for the local community. I have had some very good feedback since the announcement was made in the state budget and we are very proud to support not only a significant piece of heritage, but also a very important part of our environment—the Canning River.