

WATER-EFFICIENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Water

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [9.11 am]: I rise to inform the house that on Tuesday, 8 November, I had the pleasure of attending Lesmurdie Senior High School to announce the McGowan government's extension of the water-efficient public schools program. Since this program began in October 2020, 65 public schools, 56 of which fall within regional Western Australia, have benefited from participating in water-saving practices. Together with the Department of Education and Water Corporation, the \$1.5 million program will help schools to improve their water efficiency and reduce operating costs over coming years. These school overhauls include plumbing retrofits, irrigation improvements, water audits and rainwater harvesting. Early evaluation of the program has shown that this initiative could reduce annual water use by up to 11 per cent, which is the amount of water required to fill 200 Olympic-size swimming pools. It is estimated that WA public schools use about 4.5 billion litres of scheme water annually.

Due to the program's success, the McGowan government is launching a new initiative to save even more water in Perth and Peel schools to protect our precious groundwater resources. The waterwise school grounds program will see water audits and irrigation checks at metropolitan schools that predominantly use groundwater to irrigate ovals and playing fields. The waterwise school grounds program is one of several initiatives supporting water efficiency under *Kep Katitjin—Gabi Kaadadjan: Waterwise Perth action plan 2* announced in October 2022. With climate change significantly impacting Perth's precious water sources, it has never been more important to implement water-saving principles across our state.