

FARM WATER REBATE SCHEME — LAKE GRACE

314. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Water:

I refer to concerns over a lack of water in the Lake Grace region.

- (1) Will the state government consider reinstating the farm water rebate scheme?
- (2) How regularly are farmers in the Lake Grace region being consulted by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to keep them updated about their local water supplies?
- (3) What is being done in the short and long term to assist Lake Grace farmers in their water shortage plight?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The Minister for Water has provided the following information.

- (1) The farm water rebate scheme was in place for 24 years. The scheme provided a rebate to support water infrastructure; it did not subsidise water. A significant number of farmers in the Shire of Lake Grace took advantage of the scheme, and a total of \$622 437 was invested in rebates as part of that scheme from January 2009. Despite this investment, farmers in the area are still experiencing significant shortages in water due to the severity of the season. Reinstating the scheme will do nothing to assist farmers deal with the immediate impacts of the dry season.
- (2) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is providing farmers with weekly updates through local shires.
- (3) The government, through the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, is working closely with the Shire of Lake Grace, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Water Corporation to understand farmers' water needs and to provide water supply information. Emergency water supplies and farmers' water carting requirements are being monitored weekly. Four new supplies for farmers in the Shire of Lake Grace have been brought online recently, and two additional supplies for the Shires of Jerramungup and Esperance will be available shortly. The Water Corporation is already bringing water to the area to bolster existing town supplies. The government is liaising with other commercial water users to direct sourcing of water from outside the current areas of high demand. The department has spoken with shires in dryland areas to ensure that each knows the requirements of the water deficiency declaration process. The McGowan government has sought commonwealth funding to improve emergency water supplies across the state.