

WATER INNOVATION ADVISORY GROUP — INNOVATION WORKSHOP

368. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Water:

My question is to the Minister for Water, the Deputy Leader of the National Party.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mrs M.H. ROBERTS: Is the National Party whip going to answer the question about where the Leader of the National Party is?

The SPEAKER: Sit down, please. The member has a question.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I understand that a push towards innovation in the water sector is being driven by a new advisory group. Can the minister please explain the purpose of this group to the house?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time and the member for Kwinana for the second time.

Mr M. McGowan interjected.

The SPEAKER: I call the Leader of the Opposition for the second time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for the question and to clear up the confusion, Mr Speaker —

Several members interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is their time, Mr Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Right, carry on.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: To clear up any confusion, wherever the Leader of the National Party is, I am sure he is working very hard on behalf of all Western Australians.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Mandurah, if you shout out again, I am going to ask you to leave the chamber. You are on your last warning. Member for Kwinana, this is descending into farce.

Mr R.H. Cook interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Kwinana, I call you to order for the third time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am sure that he will be more than happy to answer the opposition's question when he returns to the chamber.

I thank the member for the question about a very important policy about a new advisory group for water innovation. I have been working on this with the Department of Water and the Water Corporation for some time. A fortnight ago, the Department of Water held an innovation workshop as part of a water innovation program, which I announced in September 2015. We invited a range of stakeholders involved in the water services supply industry, which is impacted upon by the challenges faced in Western Australia with its rapidly drying climate. Those who answered our call included almost 80 professionals across the private sector, local government, state government, the CSIRO, universities, natural resource management groups, interest groups and other organisations with links to the water sector. The workshop was convened by the newly established Water Innovation Advisory Group, which was referred to by the member for North West Central, and chaired by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Innovation and member for Bateman, Matt Taylor, MLA. For those members who do not know, the member for Bateman has worked extensively in the water area including at the CSIRO and independently as a sustainable development consultant on a number of water-related projects. His expertise in chairing this group and bringing together a number of highly respected individuals to work on this challenging area is very much appreciated.

The advisory group includes some of the best brains we have in the water sector here in Western Australia: Dr Julian Bolleter, assistant professor at the Australian Urban Design Research Centre at the University of Western Australia; Josh Byrne, director of Josh Byrne and Associates—people would be aware of his expertise through the work that he does publicly on ABC television; Professor Bill Grace, sustainability researcher and consultant; Dr Paul Hardisty, director of CSIRO Land and Water Flagship; Professor Peter Klinken, Chief Scientist of Western Australia; Mrs Sue Middleton, executive director of Brennan Rural Group, who has

significant expertise in sustainable water management and regional development; Shelley Shepherd, partner and principal at Essential Environmental; and Mike Rowe, acting director general of the Department of Water.

The initial workshop will be complemented by events across regional Western Australia for specific water-use sectors as well as the public to allow them to join the conversation and provide feedback. The group is considering five focus areas: scheme water sources and uses, particularly in Perth, Mandurah and the goldfields–agricultural area; non-drinking water for urban and community uses, peri-urban agriculture and industry; the relationships between water cycle energy and emissions; public green space for amenity; and bushland, waterway and wetland health and its linkage to community wellbeing. We want to align these outcomes to the outlook report titled, “Water for Growth—Urban”, which was also launched two weeks ago. This report predicts that our urban water-use demand will grow by 40 per cent to 80 per cent by 2050, which means that we need to continue to work on reducing, recycling, reusing and optimising the water resources that we have.

Later this year, the Water Innovation Advisory Group will present its findings and report to me, shaping the next tranche of innovative water thinking. It just goes to show that this state government is very engaged in making sure that we continue to provide the water supplies that will allow this state to continue to grow and enjoy the amenity that we have become used to in preceding years.