

KEN KELSALL — TRIBUTE

Statement by Minister for Water

MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Water) [12.08 pm]: I rise today to honour the passing of an outstanding Western Australian engineer who was a true pioneer in the development of the water industry in this state. Ken Kelsall was involved in some of our most significant water projects, including the construction of Stirling Dam and the Cape Peron pipeline, the raising of Mundaring Weir, and the Ord River irrigation scheme. Ken joined the former Public Works Department as a cadet engineer in 1939 and retired in 1985 as chief engineer of the Metropolitan Water Authority. He continued his association as chairman of the Western Australian Water Resources Council and was a member of the Water Authority Board until 1990.

During World War II, Ken helped in the war effort by building seaboard storage of petroleum products and coastal defences, including gun emplacements and antisubmarine booms, at the entrance to Fremantle and Albany harbours. In a career spanning 51 years, Ken was involved in the building of 26 dams in Western Australia, including drilling the foundations of the Ord Dam site. He was the engineer in charge of its construction. In 1986, Ken was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for his service to the engineering profession, particularly in the development of WA's water resources. Ken is remembered as much for his distinguished career as his personal qualities. He was an inspiring leader who had a real interest and compassion for others. He mentored and inspired many young engineers under his charge and is remembered fondly for this.

Today, the Water Corporation delivers more than 371 billion litres of high-quality drinking water a year to more than two million Western Australians. Without the dedication, skill and foresight of engineers such as Ken Kelsall, I doubt we would have the highly integrated and sustainable water supply that we enjoy today. Our state's growth and our quality of life has thrived because of it. Ken died on 28 February, aged 93. I wish to pass on my condolences to the Kelsall family on the passing of a truly great Western Australian.