

WATER CORPORATION — ALKIMOS DESALINATION PLANT

430. Ms S.E. WINTON to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment in responding to the impacts of climate change on Western Australia's traditional water resources.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the new desalination plant in Alkimos, announced today, will help secure Perth and Peel's long-term drinking water supply?
- (2) Can the minister also outline to the house how that will help Western Australia meet its emissions target for government?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you very much, member, for this question. Yes, we made a very important announcement today. As members will be aware, because of the impacts of climate change, our two desalination plants already provide over 40 per cent of the drinking water for Perth and Peel, and all the way out to Kalgoorlie–Boulder and significant parts of the south west. Our ability to rely on rainfall has almost disappeared completely because of climate change. Had we not had those two desalination plants, a process begun by the Carpenter–Gallop government, we would have been in serious trouble here in Western Australia. We announced today that the preferred location for our third desalination plant is Alkimos. That will be a 100-gigalitre plant. It is a very significant investment. We have already set aside \$1.4 billion towards that project. The time line is that we plan to have the first stage of 50 gigalitres online by 2028. We announced that today, and that is very important.

What is also very important is that we announced that the plant will be powered by renewable energy. Desalination is very useful because it is very reliable, but it is also very energy intensive. The Water Corporation is the highest government greenhouse gas emitter, apart from Synergy itself. If we take away Synergy's coal-fired power stations, the Water Corporation is head and shoulders above all government agencies as a greenhouse gas emitter. In fact, it is one of the highest emitters on the grid. Therefore, it is essential that we deal with that issue.

We announced today that the new plant will be powered by renewable energy. The Water Corporation will be procuring 400 megawatts of wind energy. That will enable the Water Corporation to power with renewable energy not only the new desalination plant but also our two existing desal plants. In fact, the Water Corporation across all its operations is now on a pattern to be net zero by 2035. That is very impressive. The Water Corporation will go from being one of the largest emitters to being net zero by 2035. I want to commend the staff of the Water Corporation. Having been given that challenge, they have mapped out a plan that will enable us to do that. Of course, our announcement about the Water Corporation also fits very neatly with today's announcement by the Minister for Environment that all government agencies will have a target of an 80 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030.

I am really pleased about the work that the Water Corporation has done to be part of this government's drive to not only secure our water supply into the future in the face of climate change, but also make sure that we are addressing the causes of climate change, and that is greenhouse gas emissions. For the Water Corporation to secure our water supply and also be a net zero emitter by 2035 is a fantastic commitment.