

GROUNDWATER REPLENISHMENT SCHEME

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

I refer to this government's commitment to securing Perth's water supplies with today's decision to go ahead with stage 2 of the groundwater replenishment scheme.

- (1) Why is this project needed?
- (2) What does it involve?
- (3) How will it support jobs in the northern suburbs?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for Wanneroo for the question. I know she is very passionate about securing water supplies as well as providing good jobs in the northern suburbs.

- (1)–(3) WA Labor has always been the party that has secured Western Australia's water supplies going back to when Premier Geoff Gallop made himself Minister for Water Resources. He put in place the process that began our program of desalination plants that now supplies almost 50 per cent of our water supply. That then rolled into June 2008 when then Premier Alan Carpenter, along with Minister Kobelke, released the state water recycling strategy. That strategy earmarked wastewater from the Craigie wastewater treatment plant as a potential source for aquifer recharge to supplement our drinking water supply. That decision, taken by Premier Carpenter in 2008, was the start of the process that led to us being able to open stage 2 of the groundwater replenishment plant today. To the credit of some members opposite, under the leadership of the member for Cottesloe when he was Premier, he continued the groundwater replenishment program. I am not sure it would have happened if the current Leader of the Opposition had been the Premier. He is nodding, because he described the first desalination plant put in place by Premier Gallop as a "monument to waste". Where would we be now if he had been in charge? I am not sure if he had been the leader whether we would have had that continuity of policy. Today I went out and turned the sod for stage 2 of the groundwater replenishment program. That is a \$263 million project that will create 170 jobs in the northern suburbs. It will take about two years to build, but that will double the size of that plant. It will mean we will have 28 gigalitres of recycled water injected into the aquifer that it will then be able to be drawn on to supplement Perth's water supply. We on this side of the house take the issues of Perth and Western Australia's drinking water extremely seriously. We know the impact that climate change is having on our water supply. We can contrast that with the comments made last week by former Prime Minister Tony Abbott who actually said that climate change was a good thing and was doing us more good than bad. We can tell that certain members, certainly within the Liberal Party and the National Party, do not understand the impact that climate change has here in Western Australia.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Dawesville!

Mr D.J. KELLY: On this side of the house, we have been 100 per cent consistent for 20 years that we take seriously what is going on in this state. On the other side we have instead had ludicrous claims from the now Leader of the Opposition that they had in fact drought-proofed Perth. The current Leader of the National Party, when she was Minister for Water, claimed that she had drought-proofed Perth.

Mr V.A. Catania: Did we ever run out of water?

Mr D.J. KELLY: There we go! The member for North West Central just said, "We have drought-proofed Perth because we have never run out of water." What a nonsensical statement. This is a serious issue and we will continue to take it seriously. We will invest in the projects that secure our water future and create jobs in the northern suburbs. We on this side are serious and will continue to do the necessary work.