

WATER FOR FOOD — MYALUP–WELLINGTON PROJECT

355. Mr M.J. COWPER to the Minister for Water:

I understand that the significant state government investment into the Water for Food Myalup–Wellington project has been supplemented by the federal government to the tune of about \$1 million. Good work! Can the minister please explain what the project is about?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for the question and his interest in the project. The member is correct. Today the commonwealth announced that the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund will provide \$1 million to support the building up of a feasibility study on a project to reduce the salinity in Wellington Dam and to significantly increase productivity in the Myalup and Collie irrigation districts.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the first time.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This funding fits very nicely with the work that we have been doing on the Myalup Water for Food project that has been funded by royalties for regions under the Seizing the Opportunity Agriculture initiative. At the end of last year, we went out to tender as part of the Water for Food project and asked for expressions of interest from the private sector to deal with potential solutions to reduce the salinity in Wellington Dam and improve productivity in the Collie and Myalup irrigation districts. As a result, Harvey Water, which has been working extraordinarily hard on a project itself to pipe water under pressure into the Collie irrigation district, formed a partnership with an organisation called Aqua Ferre. They have been working on a much broader project that promises to offer benefits beyond what we could deliver under the Water for Food program. This funding will assist us to build up a feasibility study and business case, and if we can make it work, we can then seek further funding. For those members who are unfamiliar with this area, extraordinary constraints are placed on the growers because of the high salinity of water from Wellington Dam that is provided by Harvey Water.

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I am not going to put up with this anymore. I call you to order for the second time!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The previous work has not been ignored. It has gone into all the work we have done this far. Unfortunately, when we sent the money back previously, it was because the cost to deliver the water was not appropriate for its purpose. As a result of the involvement of Water for Food, we have a broader project that allows us to add in new elements that could potentially raise opportunities for not only potable water, but also water fit for purpose for agriculture and industry. The delivery of a higher quality water in a pressurised pipeline network from Burekup Weir, which will need to be shifted, through the grid and into the Myalup horticultural precinct, provides significant opportunities for growers if we can further diversify the economy in that part of the state. It is part of the state government's plan to continue to invest in agriculture and we welcome the investment from the commonwealth government in this and a number of other projects that have been announced recently across the entire state.