

WATER SUPPLY — SOUTH WEST

693. Mr G.M. CASTRILLI to the Minister for Water:

A lot of work has been undertaken to climate-proof the Perth drinking water supply. However, some parts of the south west are also experiencing a decline in rainfall. What has been done to secure water supplies in these areas?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for the question and his interest in what the government is doing in regional Western Australia to secure water supplies long into the future. We often speak in this place about the fact that we have drought-proofed the Perth metropolitan water supplies through the groundwater replenishment scheme and the desalination plants. However, recently, while I was in Manjimup for a regional cabinet meeting, I visited the Millstream Dam near Bridgetown to see for myself the work that has been happening with the Warren–Blackwood regional water supply scheme. This scheme will ultimately supply up to eight towns—Boyup Brook, Hester, Greenbushes, Balingup, Mullalyup, Kirup, Bridgetown and Manjimup. We are talking about connecting a number of towns into this supply. I am sure that members will remember going back some years there were serious concerns in that area about the supply of water. Following a number of dry winters, Manjimup was on stage 6 water restrictions and there was talk that water would need to be tanked or carted in over the summer. We continue to upgrade the surface and groundwater supply sources infrastructure to ensure that we have a reliable water source going into the future for these communities.

In 2009 under the previous government—I will give credit where it is due—a bore was drilled in Nannup to supplement the supplies from the Millstream Dam. In 2013, upgrades were completed on the Millstream Dam that increased the capacity of that dam by 120 per cent. It is now the central storage point for the whole scheme. That work was vital to ensure a sustainable water source going forward. We have also fast-tracked the pipeline between the Nannup bore and Manjimup to ensure that Manjimup's water supply can be guaranteed, which I know gives much comfort to the people of Manjimup going forward into summer this year.

The south west is a very important community that we have identified through our SuperTowns planning process. I am sure that members of cabinet who were there recently would agree that there are some fantastic things happening in that part of the world, and that it is our responsibility to ensure that we support not only the communities, but also industry and agriculture as they go forward. I would also like to put on record my appreciation for the work of groups down there, particularly the Warren–Donnelly group. We are doing some innovative work in that space, and the communities in this part of the world are very conscious about they use water sustainably going forward.