

WATERWISE TOWNS PROGRAM

Statement by Minister for Water

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [2.09 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the launch of the Waterwise Towns program for 2020 and 2021. The 2019–20 program was available to 14 towns. This year we have extended the program to 40 towns across five regions of Western Australia. The steep increase this year is due in part to the inclusion of several great southern towns that are experiencing water supply challenges linked to climate change. In areas of the south west, the impacts of climate change are being experienced more than in just about any region in Australia. As a result, it is vital we support and encourage waterwise lifestyle habits. For the first time, the program will be extended to several Kimberley town-based Aboriginal communities, offering free household leak inspections and minor repairs using local contractors. Since its inception, the program has saved around 1.27 billion litres of precious water. That is equivalent to 564 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Every drop of water is precious, particularly as we meet the challenges posed by climate change.

The program delivers community education campaigns to raise waterwise awareness and provides waterwise offers to encourage residents to make water saving lifestyle changes. Offers are tailored to suit the needs of each local community. The most commonly available offer is the free showerhead swap program, which allows customers in participating towns to swap two old, inefficient showerheads for water-efficient alternatives. Other initiatives offered in select locations include free plumbing checks, the rainwater rewards rebate and a water efficient evaporative air-conditioning service rebate. The evaporative air-conditioning service rebate is a trial running in Kalgoorlie–Boulder for 200 selected high-water-use households. Offers through the program are available from 1 October 2020 to 31 May 2021 or, in the case of the showerhead swap program, while stocks last.