

## **WORLD WATER DAY**

### *Statement by Minister for Water*

**MS M.J. DAVIES (Central Wheatbelt — Minister for Water)** [2.10 pm]: Members may know that today is United Nations World Water Day. I would like to highlight the science that is being led by the state government to ensure that this precious resource continues to support our communities, economies and environments across Western Australia. In its description of World Water Day, the United Nations highlights that enough quantity and quality of water can change people's lives and livelihoods, and even transform societies and economies. I recently updated members on the progress of more than \$100 million for groundwater investigations, most of which are funded by the state government's royalties for regions program.

Department of Water scientists are contributing significantly to an understanding of the drying climate in WA by developing modelling tools that capture surface and groundwater systems, and how they are influenced by abstraction and climate. Much of this information is shared widely to support agriculture, industry, regional development and community growth. Recently, royalties for regions has supported the creation of an improved picture of aquifers that run under the south west. As part of this study, our scientists have, for the first time, produced evidence to show how the region's only permanently flowing river, the Blackwood, is supplemented by natural groundwater flows. Rain gauging was combined with aquifer and river water sampling, and laboratory testing, to track the fingerprint of rainfall as it moves into the ground, through aquifers and back into the river system. We now know how the aquifer is recharged with rainfall and the impact that climate change could have on river flow. Many businesses, communities and tourists rely on the Blackwood, making this sort of research a valuable tool for understanding and managing the resource.

In the metropolitan area, the Department of Water and the Water Corporation are supporting government planners and developers with science and research to move Perth towards becoming a water-sensitive city. By the end of the year, the nation's first groundwater replenishment program will start recharging the Gnangara aquifers north of Perth with highly treated, recycled wastewater. This will enable sustainable, future access to groundwater and assist natural environments within the Gnangara system. In Perth, the Agricultural Region, goldfields and parts of the south west, the Water Corporation operates one of the world's most sophisticated water supply networks: the integrated water supply scheme. Last year, we had the worst inflows to our dams in history, followed by the warmest spring on record. Despite these two significant climate impacts, our system is still delivering water to households and businesses, and people are still able to water their gardens.

On World Water Day, I commend the water professionals and scientists who are working in our state's agencies to keep water flowing both to our taps and in our waterways. Protecting and best managing our most valuable resource is paving the way forward for the growth of our state.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean, I call you to order for the first time.