

WATER — PERTH AND INTERCONNECTED SYSTEM — DROUGHTPROOFING —  
MINISTER'S CLAIM

**884. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Minister for Water:**

I refer the minister to comments made yesterday by the chief executive officer of the Water Corporation, Sue Murphy, that this year's low run-off into Perth's dams and warmer-than-average weather constituted a perfect storm that had left the scheme supply system vulnerable and could result in new tougher water restrictions and the fast-tracking of capital works programs.

- (1) Does the minister now regret boasting only a few months ago that the government had droughtproofed Perth?
- (2) Does the minister now acknowledge that her comments were both factually wrong and sent the wrong message to water consumers?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:**

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for the question and the very simple answer to that is, no. I do not regret talking about the investment that this state government has made to make sure that we have options for —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** This state government and the government before made investments to make sure that we had climate independent water sources for the future of Western Australians. We now have two desalination plants. This state government made the decision to double —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean, you have been called to order twice already. You cannot ask a question and then ask a supplementary before she has answered.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** We made the decision to go down the path of groundwater replenishment—a first in Australia—and we doubled the capacity of that. That is on line to be completed by the end of next year. We have had very close management between the Water Corporation and the Department of Water for our very precious groundwater resources. There is absolutely no denying that we have had a very hot and early start to the summer months. Until August this year, the Bureau of Meteorology was predicting that we would have a wetter than normal spring, but by October—remembering that we use the Bureau of Metrology to do our long, short and medium-term planning as well—that had changed dramatically. The CEO's comments yesterday were in relation to the fact that we have a vast range of choices to manage our water resources going forward, that we have had a much earlier and much hotter start to the summer months than predicted, and that demand management—I have said this, too—is always a part of the mix of how we manage our water resources and our supply in this state. We live in the driest corner of the driest continent in the world, and we always need to be mindful that demand management is an important part of that mix. The Water Corporation, because it is tasked with managing that supply, is quite rightly reminding the public that they need to be very mindful of the amount of water they use because we have had that dry and early start to summer. We all have responsibility in this space. I am very confident that the investments that this government and the decisions that the previous government made —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Willagee, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Maylands, I do not want to hear from you.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am very confident that the investments that the state government has made puts us in good stead, but we have to be mindful that we live in a very dry climate, and that demand management will always be a part of that mix. That is exactly what the CEO of the Water Corporation was referring to yesterday.