

WATER DEFICIENCY DECLARATIONS — REVOCATION

Statement by Minister for Water

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Water) [9.11 am]: I rise to advise the house that nine water deficiency declarations across six shires have been recently revoked. A water deficiency declaration is a government response to provide water to farmers for emergency animal welfare needs during very dry periods. Climate change has significantly impacted rainfall in the dryland agricultural communities of the south-eastern wheatbelt. This led to an unprecedented 12 water deficiency declarations being declared over 2019 and 2020. In response to this, the McGowan government has spent more than \$3.7 million on direct water carting to central locations to support emergency livestock needs, \$2.2 million on the development and upgrading of strategic community water supplies and government-owned water sources since June 2018, and \$1.5 million partnering with local government to upgrade existing and develop new community water supplies.

Recent rainfall across the state's south has provided relief to many of WA's farmers. The rainfall and the McGowan government's investment in water infrastructure has allowed for the revocation of nine water deficiency declarations across six shires. The McGowan government's investment in farming communities is paying dividends by enlarging and desilting dams and improving catchments. Many of the on-farm dams and off-farm strategic community supplies have filled with recent rains, which provides for improved water security in the future.

Two water deficiency declarations remain in place, those being in Salmon Gums and Grass Patch in the Esperance shire. Rainfall in these areas has been variable and although sufficient to allow for the temporary suspension of emergency water carting, the availability of water in on-farm dams and off-farm strategic supplies is still limited. Climate change is having a significant impact on the south-eastern wheatbelt, which is why the McGowan government is working closely with local governments and farmers to bring new water sources online and maintain access to existing water supplies—even for the member for Roe!