

WATER CORPORATION — NET ZERO EMISSIONS

**794. Ms C.M. TONKIN to the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the impacts that climate change is having on the water supply for Perth and surrounding regions, and the McGowan Labor government's commitment to delivering net zero emissions by 2050. Can the minister update the house on how the Water Corporation will use zero carbon emission technology in its work to secure WA's long-term water supplies, including by securing the development rights for one of our state's largest renewable wind energy projects?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member for Churchlands for her question and her ongoing interest in all things to do with sustainability.

I am really pleased to draw the house's attention to an announcement we made on Saturday; that is, that the Water Corporation has purchased the development rights for one of the state's largest wind farm projects, which will be built near Kojonup. Why has it done that? Members will have heard me speak on a number of occasions about the impact of climate change on water supplies in WA, but particularly in the south west. Declining rainfall now means that dams make up less than 10 per cent of the water for Perth and surrounds, and that largely it is groundwater and desalination. Desalination is good in that it is reliable, but it is very, very energy intensive. Members will be aware that we have committed to a third desal plant by 2028 at Alkimos, so the situation will get even more critical for the Water Corporation. It takes 40 times more energy to create water through desalination than it does through dams. The Water Corporation's energy consumption has gone, if you like, through the roof.

Apart from Synergy itself, the Water Corporation is the government's largest consumer of electricity, and the Water Corporation is one of the largest individual customers. This means our greenhouse gas emissions have gone through the roof. The McGowan government is committed to getting to net zero by 2050. The Water Corporation, in response to its reliance on desalination, has committed to a plan to get to net zero by 2035. The first step is the purchase of this wind farm project at Kojonup. I congratulate the team at the Water Corporation for the work they have done on this project. It will consist of 24 wind turbines, each 200 metres high, about 20 to 30 kilometres south east of Kojonup. I will put that into perspective. I think that wind farms look absolutely fantastic. The wind turbines will be 200 metres high. The Statue of Liberty is 93 metres tall, so they will be more than twice the height of the Statue of Liberty. The top floor of Central Park in the Perth CBD is 200 metres off the ground. These turbines will sit up there at a height equivalent to that of Central Park. I love a good wind turbine. When we look at them, we see the engineering that goes into them. They are creating renewable energy and they are so important to the future of the planet. I think they are absolutely marvellous.

Not everybody shares that joy. I always like the former Leader of the Liberal Party, Tony Abbott, who once said in an interview with Alan Jones —

... the last thing we want is what I regard as the dark Satanic Mills of the modern era spoiling our landscape ...

That sentiment is why, on this side of the house, we take climate change really seriously. We will put the effort, rigour and investment into dealing with climate change. Unfortunately, on the other side, in the other corner of the house, the Liberal Party and the Nationals WA are still riddled with climate change deniers. We will get on and do the job.

As I said, I congratulate the team at Water Corp for the work that they have done. Finally, I give a shout-out to the board of Moonies Hill Energy, which is a local Western Australian company that got this project to the stage at which the Water Corporation has bought it. I understand that most of them, at least, are Kojonup locals. Sarah Rankin, Michael Baulch and Hamish Thorn are the directors of Moonies Hill Energy. I thank them and congratulate them for the work that they have done on this project. We look forward to being partners with them going into the future. The Water Corporation has an ambitious plan to be net zero by 2035. I am confident that it will do it.