

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE — BUNBURY

691. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's efforts to support local jobs and drive economic activity as the state recovers from the impacts of COVID-19. Can the minister outline in detail to the house how this government's significant investment in water infrastructure in Bunbury supports not only the local community, but also local jobs and local businesses, and how this investment will help address the impacts of climate change on the south west of our state?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question and, in particular, for his tireless advocacy on behalf of the people of Bunbury. The week before last, it was a pleasure to be there to announce these two projects. I could tell from the reception the member received in his electorate that he is extremely well regarded.

Two weeks ago, I had the pleasure to go to Bunbury with the member to, firstly, open a new water treatment plant in Bunbury. It is a \$15 million water treatment plant, and building it created 200 local jobs. The project was overseen by Aqwest. I congratulate it for the professional way in which the project was delivered. I note that Aqwest did a lot of work to engage the local Noongar community in the construction of that water treatment plant. It will officially be named the Ngoora Moolinap water treatment plant in recognition of the deep connection that the Aboriginal community has with water in the landscape. The name actually means "water sitting in a well in a swampy place", which is an appropriate name for a water treatment plant. That treatment plant is necessary because Bunbury is serviced by a number of bores that are located by the coast. With the declining watertable and rising sea level due to climate change, those bores are at an increasing risk of salt water intrusion. Aqwest has long sought funding to relocate its bores further inland so that it can access the groundwater that is needed without the threat of salt water intrusion.

In the first budget after we came to office, we allocated \$15 million for that project. It was a project that the previous Liberal-National government refused to fund. I wonder whether it was because so many of their members did not believe in the impacts of climate change. That was our first project in Bunbury. We opened that water treatment plant and it was very well received.

The second project was an announcement under the WA recovery plan for a \$11.9 million water resource recovery scheme. Basically, that is a water recycling scheme to provide recycled water for the public open space of Bunbury. Again, with the impacts of climate change, groundwater is precious. Currently, a lot of the public open space is kept green using scheme water. This water recycling scheme will see treated wastewater from the Bunbury wastewater treatment plant in Dalyellup, which is owned by the Water Corporation, provided to the City of Bunbury and other users for public open space. The water re-use scheme project will be operated by Aqwest. The \$11.9 million project will create approximately 200 jobs in construction. This project is needed because of the shortage of groundwater in Bunbury due to the impacts of climate change.

Members on this side of the house are prepared to spend the money to support communities in the south west, in this case with vital water infrastructure. The government has spent over \$20 million on that. People will recall that we are also building a pipeline from Albany to Denmark at a cost of \$25 million. This expenditure and these projects were not delivered under the previous government. We are delivering them, first, because we want to support those communities; and, secondly, because we recognise that climate change is impacting water in the south west in a significant way. The previous government would not let the relevant departments even use the term "climate change" because it simply did not believe in the science. Too many members of the Liberal and National Parties still do not accept the science of climate change. We do accept the science on this side of the house, and we are prepared to spend the money to support communities in the south west that are affected by climate change.

The SPEAKER: That is the end of question time.