

DESALINATION PLANT - BINNINGUP

224. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

Yesterday the Premier announced plans for the development of a \$1 billion desalination plant near Binningup.

- (1) How was it that the decision was reached, given that just a few days ago the Treasurer brought down a budget that made no mention of such an important project?
- (2) Before making the decision, what consultation did the government undertake with the local community and local government about the prospect of a massive desalination plant being built near their homes?
- (3) How many gegalitres of water will be produced for the projected \$1 billion cost?
- (4) What is the estimated cost of increasing the plant's capacity to 100 gegalitres?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(4) It is a very good project. It is interesting to see that people who had nothing to do with the development of the idea have leapt on and started claiming credit for it. I thought it was a comedy show when I saw the Leader of the Opposition saying that this was a great victory for the Liberal Party. Nevertheless, I appreciate that these things have to be said.

The project will deliver 45 gegalitres of water from the Indian Ocean, which will be converted into drinking water and integrated into the south west integrated water system. That water will be available for the entire system, and also available for the goldfields pipeline, the wheatbelt areas and Kalgoorlie.

Mr P.D. Omodei: Is that what we get for \$1 billion?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I think \$955 million was the actual figure; it has been rounded up by the media to \$1 billion. Approximately \$641 million is for the plant itself, the pipeline linking the plant to the existing infrastructure will be \$81 million and essential integration assets will cost \$118 million. That is a subtotal of \$840 million. Other integration assets in the broader system to allow pumping to dams because the dams do not get filled with water any more from rainfall is an additional \$115 million. That takes the cost to \$955 million. That is approximately \$1.90 a kilolitre.

Mr P.D. Omodei: What is the estimated cost of increasing the capacity to 100 gegalitres?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: I cannot provide figures because we have not costed that. Obviously, it would be a substantial cost, but not as substantial as the original part of the project because much of the infrastructure will be put in place during what we might call stage 1. If we build the inflow and outflow pipes to sufficient capacity, it would allow for a very ready expansion of the project should it be required. I am quite certain that, at some point in time, it will be required from 45 gegalitres -

Mr P.D. Omodei: There is no estimate?

Mr A.J. CARPENTER: - who knows when it will be built - to 100 gegalitres.

I spoke to the president of the Shire of Harvey, Peter Monagle, this morning and explained to him the process. The process has to be carefully managed because there was another process happening in relation to the assessment of appeals for the Yarragadee project and I did not want to be in any position where I was seen to be trying to shape the outcome of the appeals convener's report or of the minister's recommendation. Peter Monagle understood that perfectly well. He said to me that it was a very good project and he could not think of a better outcome.