

PREMIER, WATER-RELATED ACTS

**156. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:**

I refer the Premier to the Labor Party election policy “Labor’s plan to secure our water future”, in which it states “Premier Geoff Gallop will assume personal responsibility for the Water Resources portfolio under a re-elected Labor Government”. Of the following water-related acts, which does the Premier, as Minister for Water Resources, have gazetted responsibility for: Water Boards Act; Water Services Coordination Act; Country Areas Water Supply Act; Metropolitan Water Authority Act; Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act; Rights in Water and Irrigation Act; Water Agencies (Powers) Act; Water Corporation Act; Water and Rivers Commission Act; Waterways Conservation Act; Swan River Trust Act?

**Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:**

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition obviously does not understand what we need to do with water in Western Australia. We need to make sure that the state has a strategic direction and that that is coordinated right at the centre of government. That is precisely my role with water. The government is currently going through a process of administrative change. The minister assisting, the member for Balcatta, has responsibility for the day-to-day functioning of the state’s water service providers. He will have responsibility for the provision of all the hydrological advice that we will need when looking at our future water sources. Of course, I am at the centre of government, chairing a strategic body that will ensure we deliver water throughout Western Australia. We have a water strategy, unlike the opposition, which told us in the last session of the last Parliament that there was no water crisis. All the new members might be interested to know that their leader said there was no water crisis in Western Australia. We took the issue on board and produced a water strategy.

It was very hard to absorb all the acts that were mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. However, I suspect that each one of those would be in the ministerial portfolio of the Minister Assisting the Minister for Water Resources. My responsibility is to make sure that we get the strategic direction -

**Mr M.J. Birney:** Are you joking? Is this some kind of bad joke? Surely you are responsible for one of those acts.

**Dr G.I. GALLOP:** Leader of the Opposition, we are leading the way with our water strategy.

**Mr M.J. Birney:** How would you know?

**Dr G.I. GALLOP:** I will tell the Leader of the Opposition how I know. He should go to Sydney and Melbourne. They have complete sprinkler bans. That is the first point. Secondly, everyone knows that we are leading the way with our commitment to desalination, which is absolutely necessary now, given the drying climate in Australia. Everyone knows that we are leading the way with the cooperation we are getting from householders with the Waterwise rebates program. Everyone will realise how we are leading the way with our irrigation strategy, which we will outline soon.

The acts that were mentioned are the responsibility of the minister assisting. I take strategic responsibility. We are forming a new body at the centre of government to make sure we deliver water for the people of Western Australia, which the opposition could not do when in government and which it denied we had a need to do in the last session of the last Parliament.