

BORE OWNERS, MANAGEMENT FEES

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

I refer the Premier to the state government's response to the "State Water Strategy Irrigation Review Final Report", to which the Premier responded in this Parliament.

- (1) Given that it is intended to charge management fees for the 101 gigalitres of ground water used by horticulturalists in the northern suburbs, does the government intend to charge management fees to the 150 000 residential backyard bore owners who are using an estimated 112 gigalitres of water?
- (2) If not, will the Premier rule out ever introducing fees for private household bore owners?

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

- (1)-(2) There is no plan within the government to charge people a fee for backyard bores. It is not on the government's agenda and the government has no intention of doing that. In respect of the irrigation report, I will make one observation and that relates to the extraordinary response by the opposition. On the one hand the opposition says that the government should sign off on the National Water Initiative, put together by John Howard, which would require this government to have full cost recovery for any water initiatives in this state, while on the other hand it is attacking the government for coming up with a modest but important measure to ensure the funds are available to administer the water plans the government will put in place for the future of Western Australia. This is another example of the fact that we have a Liberal opposition in this state that is incapable of coming to grips with the important issues that face our community and will do so into the future. We are willing to face up to those issues on our own terms here in Western Australia. That is why we have our own water plans and water initiatives and will not be circumscribed by the national approach, which is primarily designed to deal with the Murray-Darling system. It is important and I do not deny that. Once again we have the hypocrisy of the Liberal opposition on this issue. Again, this is indicative of the fact that it is not doing its homework. It is incapable of examining the important issues that need to be addressed for the future of Western Australia. As long as it continues along this path, I am very confident and pleased to say that we will stay on this side of the house.