

NATIONAL WATER INITIATIVE

118. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Water Resources:

First, I congratulate the Premier for today signing the National Water Initiative.

Mr P.D. Omodei: I have done that.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: I know that, but I wanted to congratulate him personally. Am I not allowed to do that?

Mr P.D. Omodei: Yes.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: What projects are likely to be eligible for federal funding under this program?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for the question. The member has a very keen interest in this matter because water resources are very important to his constituency and, much wider, right across the south west. Western Australia has put in place a range of programs that are acknowledged as leading Australia. On that basis we found no difficulty in the whole approach of the National Water Initiative. As the Premier indicated, because the commonwealth changed the way in which the funds were held and the conditions that applied, the impediments that previously existed were removed. We look forward to working with the commonwealth and the various bodies involved in the National Water Initiative - the other states and territories - to share with them the good things that we are doing. We will learn from the things they are doing, which we have not yet done.

Also, we will investigate funding available to Western Australia. The government has committed \$29 million to the Harvey water trading project, which is in the member's electorate, but the whole project is likely to cost more than \$100 million. We will put that project on the table to get funding through the National Water Initiative to add to the amount this government has committed, so that the project can be completed more quickly. Metering needs to be installed on production bores that are used for horticulture and other industries. This government has committed \$6 million to metering, but it could cost in the order of \$35 million. Again, we will approach the commonwealth government to see how it might contribute funding under the National Water Initiative. The managed aquifer recharge project is something on which the member for Wanneroo is very strong. The government, together with other bodies, has committed \$3 million to conduct a trial, but the implementation of the project could cost between \$30 million and \$40 million. Again, we will be talking to the commonwealth, through the National Water Initiative, about receiving funding for that project. Source investigation and water planning are major issues that we are working on, but extra funding will speed up the process. Implementation of the irrigation review recommendations is being progressed, and we will ask the commonwealth to join in.

Stage 2 of the Ord project is anticipated to cost in the order of \$90 million and we will talk to the commonwealth about that. If we commit to the south west Yarragadee project, the cost will be in the vicinity \$400 million. The cost of the Wellington Dam recovery is between \$300 million and \$400 million. These are major projects and we believe we can talk to the commonwealth and, through the National Water Initiative, seek its partnership so that we can move these projects forward at a much greater pace than we could do with only state funding.