

WATER SMART AUSTRALIA PROGRAM - STATE PROJECTS

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

Western Australia submitted five projects to the commonwealth's Water Smart Australia program in June 2006. Can the minister outline what progress Western Australia has made in securing funds from the commonwealth?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for his question. It reflects the fact that he has a keen interest in ensuring that we use water resources as wisely as possible and that we secure the water future of Western Australia. That is something that this government -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: We can move on only after the minister has answered the question. That is how it works. If the same level of interjections continues, the time for questions will cease.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: It is interesting that at the same time that the federal Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Malcolm Turnbull, and the Prime Minister commented positively on Western Australia's leadership on water matters, all we heard from the state Liberal opposition was cries of derision. It simply does not want to face up to the facts. I was pleased to meet with Mr Turnbull in Perth last week. He was able to respond to some of our requests. Roughly \$30 million will be allocated to statutory water management plans for Gnamptarra, Pilbara, Collie and the south west. Of that, \$15 million will be spent on managed aquifer recharge at Beenyup. That \$30 million is only a fraction of what this government is spending. In fact, it is about 2.5 per cent of what the national government will provide the states under the scheme. We are certainly very thankful for the start of what we hope will be a productive partnership with the commonwealth. However, we must make it clear that we expect our fair share of the money. Given that Western Australia comprises 10 per cent of Australia's population, one-third of its land mass and one-third of the nation's material exports, the percentage should be somewhere between 10 and 30 per cent of the national money. If we were to receive all the grants that we have requested, we would still have only 6.5 per cent of the national money. We are still looking for money for the Kwinana reclamation plant stage 2 and for a high-pressured irrigation system in the Carnarvon area, which is a very productive horticultural area that could be enhanced with the pressuring of irrigation. The Harvey-Waroona piping project is a \$150 million project for which we hope the commonwealth will provide a fair share of the money. The partnership is off to a good start; however, in terms of what is a fair share for Western Australia, we have a long way to go. Members on this side of the house will battle to ensure that Western Australia is recognised and that it receives a fair share of the money. It is a pity that members opposite are not willing to stick up for Western Australia.