

DESALINATION PLANT - BINNINGUP

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

I have a supplementary question. What contingencies are in place to supply adequate water to the metropolitan region to avoid further water restrictions until the plant comes on line in 2011?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

It is an interesting question. One of the propositions put to me was that, by not developing the south west Yarragadee project, we were creating a risk that there would have to be - potentially, there might be - total sprinkler bans for at least one summer. The corollary to that argument is that, to avoid any risk of total sprinkler bans, we should have gone about the south west Yarragadee project, which to me would have been an amazingly short-sighted reason for pursuing that option. It was quite clear to me some time ago that the factors pointing to the desalination project as superior to the south west Yarragadee project were overwhelming. There is no advice from the Water Corporation that would lead us to suggest that, other than the potential for more severe sprinkler restrictions, there is any expectation that other water issues will arise in the interim period. I think, to be truthful, that the Western Australian community will see this as a very good project that underpins water security for a very long time. If it is required - I think that on the best estimates there is something like a seven per cent chance that we may have tighter sprinkler restrictions in the interim period - then that is a price well worth paying to get the desalination project on line and to avoid doing a south west Yarragadee project.

I think I gave a lot of information about this yesterday but let me rattle it off. When we came to government, about 2.6 per cent of wastewater was recycled. We have increased that to 13.6 per cent. We are on target to increase recycling to 20 per cent. We are piloting what will be, as I understand it, Australia's biggest recycling project, the aquifer re-injection project, which can deliver up to another 35 gegalitres. We have reduced personal consumption from something like 185 kilolitres to 150 kilolitres. Individual consumption per capita is something like 103 kilolitres. I believe that, without much effort and with no negative impact, that per person kilolitre consumption could be reduced by approximately another 10 per cent, which would save us another 10 to 15 gegalitres per annum. I am certain, given the disposition of the Western Australian community, that it will do everything it possibly can to cooperate in achieving such an outcome and that there will not be a need for tighter restrictions. If such restrictions are required, then so be it; we will have to have them. We are nowhere near the situation that other states are confronted with. We are recognised as having managed our water resources better than any other place in the country.