

WATER RESTRICTIONS, SOUTH WEST TOWNS

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

Will the minister please inform the house about the recent lifting of water restrictions in south west towns?

Mr J.C. KOBELKE replied:

I thank the member for the question. The member will be well aware that certain areas in the south west have suffered more severely than other parts of the state with the drying climate; in fact, in towns in one area the past four years have been the driest on record. That has led to very low levels in the dams and quite severe restrictions. From last November a number of towns in that area have had water restrictions, which allowed some people to water their gardens on only two days a week and others on only one day a week. The member and members opposite will be aware that people responded brilliantly. They realised the importance of conserving water, and using it efficiently and sparingly. They fully cooperated with those restrictions. I was very pleased on 6 October to be able to travel to some of the towns in that area and announce the lifting of restrictions for Manjimup, Bridgetown, Boyup Brook, Hester, Balingup and Greenbushes, which affects approximately 6 000 households. As of now, restrictions do not apply in those towns. Residents can be congratulated for the way in which they responded to the severe restrictions in that area.

Mr P.D. Omodei: I do not think there was any restriction in Pemberton. The dam was quite full.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: I did not mention it. The government now has plans well under way through the Water Corporation for a \$70 million investment in the Bridgetown regional water supply scheme, so that we can make sure that we upgrade the quality of water in a number of those towns. The scheme will not supply all of them. Through that we can ensure that as growth occurs, and there is growth in those towns, we will be able to provide a more secure high-quality water service to the people in a number of those towns. Some of those towns are experiencing growth in tourism and garden industries, and a more secure high-quality water supply will ensure that the people in those towns have the benefit of that supply and their industries can grow with the guarantee of an improved water supply which is now well into the planning stage.