

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 653

asked on Thursday, 19 April 2007

MRS SULLIVAN ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

With reference to water saving devices—

- (1) What can businesses and community groups do to help conserve water?
- (2) How effective has our water savings initiatives been since their introduction?

ANSWER:

- (1) For community groups and not-for-profit organisations, the State Government has launched the Lifestyle WaterWise grants program, with funding of \$10 million over two years, to encourage Queensland community-based organisations to reduce their consumption of treated drinking water. The grant program assists Queensland's not-for-profit organisations to save water and maintain gardens, parks and sporting fields during the drought, by installing dual-flush toilets and other water-saving devices, as well as providing alternative water sources such as the installation of rainwater tanks.

With regard to businesses, in some situations, the State Government can require businesses to become more water efficient via legislative provisions, including through water restrictions issued by the Queensland Water Commission. For instance, in December 2006 the Queensland Government amended the *Water Act 2000* to contain a regulatory framework for the preparation and implementation of Water Efficiency Management Plans (WEMPs) by non-residential water customers of water service providers. A WEMP outlines the measures a water customer will implement to save water, as well as timeframes for implementation of the measures.

In South East Queensland, the WEMPs fall under the jurisdiction of the Queensland Water Commission.

NRW is currently preparing guidelines dealing with the preparation of WEMPs outside South East Queensland and these draft guidelines will be distributed for consultation shortly. Approval and monitoring of compliance of the WEMPs across Queensland, lies with each water service provider which is generally a local government.

For additional information regarding WEMPs in South East Queensland or water restrictions issued by the Queensland Water Commission, enquiries would be best directed to my colleague, the Honourable Anna Bligh MP, the Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure, whose portfolio responsibilities cover these matters.

To help businesses in the private sector become more water efficient, they are able to access the Business Water Efficiency Program (BWEP). The BWEP aims to reduce water consumption, improve financial performance and build positive community profiles for businesses practising water efficiency. The BWEP is being delivered by SEQWater, on behalf of the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPSR).

Under the BWEP, businesses that are currently consuming more than one megalitre per annum of potable water can access funds of up to 50% of project costs for implementing water efficiency projects.

For additional information regarding the BWEP, enquiries would be best directed to my colleague, the Honourable Andrew Fraser MP, the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, whose portfolio responsibilities cover this matter.

- (2) The Queensland Government has introduced a range of programs that have been very successful in saving water and raising awareness about the importance of conserving water. The following programs have been initiated or funded by the State Government.

The Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme has paid out over 91,000 rebates including in excess of 42,450 rebates for rainwater tanks, 33,300 rebates for water efficient washing machines, and 8,900 rebates for 3-star showerheads. As of early May 2007, water savings for the entire State are estimated to be in the vicinity of 2,000 megalitres per year.

The Home WaterWise Service (the Service) is a joint initiative between the State Government (via DLGPSR) and South East Queensland local governments. The Service is available to householders in South East Queensland and involves a licensed plumber visiting homes to install water efficiency devices, such as showerheads and tap flow limiters, and to provide water efficiency information.

The South East Queensland Pressure and Leakage Management Project is a joint initiative between the State (via DLGPSR) and local governments in South East Queensland. This project has funding to assist local governments in saving water through reducing pressure, and detecting and repairing associated underground leaks within their reticulation networks.

For additional information regarding water savings as a result of the Home WaterWise Service or the South East Queensland Pressure and Leakage Management Project, enquiries would be best directed to my colleague, the Honourable Andrew Fraser MP, the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport, whose portfolio responsibilities cover these matters.