WATER CATCHMENTS — SOUTH WEST RECOVERY PROGRAM

Amendment to Motion

Resumed from 4 June on the following motion moved by Hon Giz Watson —

> That in the light of the declining rainfall and catastrophic decline in surface water inflow to our dams and the impact of salinity on our south west water catchments, this house calls on the government to implement as a matter of priority a comprehensive upper catchment recovery program based on farm forestry that aims to restore water and salt balance in the six key water catchments in the region.

to which the following amendment was moved by Hon Helen Morton —

> Line 1 — To delete the word "catastrophic";
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> Line 2 — To delete the words "calls on" and insert "notes" after "house";
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> Line 2 — To insert the word "initiatives" after "government"; and
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> Line 4 — To insert the words "and other initiatives" after "forestry".

HON SALLY TALBOT (South West) [4.11 pm]: When I had to wind up last week because of the expiry of the time allotted to this debate I was expounding somewhat fulsomely on the achievements of the Gallop and Carpenter Labor governments in this area. I was very pleased to have been afforded the opportunity to speak at some length on that matter and on this excellent motion moved by Hon Giz Watson. One of the reasons I was happy to take the allotted time was that both the Greens (WA) and the Labor Party are very interested to hear the view of the National Party on this motion. I remind members present in the chamber at the moment that, should they feel able to contribute, we await their comments with some interest.

I said that I would talk about the "State Water Plan 2007" introduced by the Carpenter government and the minister at that time, Hon John Kobelke. Before I do so, I refer to a very significant program undertaken by the Labor government that met with considerable success and was hailed as a national first in recovering waterways from salinity. Hon Giz Watson and Hon Helen Morton referred to five catchment areas that came in for some attention at the beginning of this century—the Collie, Denmark, Kent, Warren and Helena catchments. I understand that the Helena River at that time was still fresh at the dam site, and it would be interesting to hear an update on that situation. The Kent and Warren Rivers were both subject to programs that slowed and stabilised the rising rate of salinity, which was an achievement well worth noting. However, the real success story was in Denmark. I will quote at some length from a document entitled "Denmark River — Salinity Situation Statement" put out by the then Department of Environment in March 2004. Under the heading "Salinity trends", the document states —

> The Denmark River is a water source for Denmark with potential to become a major new water supply to the developing Denmark-Albany area. The current annual yield is 400 000 kL (0.4 GL) but might increase to 20 GL from a new damsite.
>
> More than 40% of the upper catchment was cleared by the 1970s. Since then, river water has been mostly too saline be for public water supply. The Quickup Dam was constructed as an alternative water supply in 1990.
>
> Without intervention the average annual salinity was calculated to peak at around 1400 mg/L TDS at the Kompup gauging station and 700 mg/L at the Mt Lindesay gauging station.
>
> Government, community and industry actions together have resulted in a measurable reduction in stream salinity — a rarity in a major river system.
>
> This is the first major catchment in Australia where a downward trend in salinity is being observed in response to direct intervention through on-ground works — primarily revegetation.

The document goes on to state that if the objective to recover a major river from salinity was met, it would be a national first. There are subsequent references to the desalinisation of the Denmark River in the state of the environment reports in 2006 and 2007. Both reports talk about reversing salinity levels in the Collie and Denmark Rivers and note that it is a national first. That is a very worthwhile achievement, and I am happy to see Hon Giz Watson nodding in agreement with me.

I want to draw the attention of members to the point at which I finished last week, which was to talk about the priority actions identified in the "State Water Plan 2007". There were seven of them, and I will quickly run through them —

1 Use and recycle water wisely

2 Plan and manage water resources sustainably

3 Invest in science, innovation and education
4 Protect ecosystems, water quality and resources
5 Enhance the security of water for the environment and use
6 Develop water resources for a vibrant economy
7 Deliver services for strong and healthy communities

Of those, number 4 is of particular relevance to this motion. We find in the notes on that point specific mention of exactly the issues that Hon Giz Watson touches on. This section is divided up into water in the environment, ecological conservation, protection and restoration, catchment management, aquatic ecosystems, energy use, and water and the environment. I urge honourable members on both sides of this chamber to have a look at that action plan. It sets the bar very high, and we will be holding the government accountable for scaling that bar.

On that note, I will sit down, because I know that several other members wish to participate in this debate, and I have said more than enough. However, I commend the motion moved by Hon Giz Watson. I acknowledge the role of Hon Paul Llewellyn in educating this house and leaving us with the legacy of this motion, which Hon Giz Watson has adopted since his departure. I assume that Hon Giz Watson will not support the amendment moved by Hon Helen Morton.

HON MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM (Agricultural) [4.10 pm]: I rise to speak, albeit briefly, about the substantive motion. I certainly acknowledge the work that Hon Giz Watson has put into this motion, and I also take on board the comments that Hon Sally Talbot has made. If I can say so, last night in his inaugural speech, Hon Philip Gardiner made some very pertinent remarks about climate change and the environment. In an agricultural context, bearing in mind the location of a lot of the catchment areas about which we are talking, I thought that those comments were particularly relevant to the debate we are having today.

I want to speak on the original motion moved by Hon Giz Watson. As Hon Helen Morton indicated in her address, albeit a week ago, these are the sorts of issues that perhaps 30, 40 or 50 years ago people living in the south west of Western Australia in particular—certainly where my family comes from on the banks of the Frankland River at Nornalup—did not really take too much notice of. I can certainly empathise with Hon Helen Morton's comments about getting out with a couple of bulldozers and a big chain and knocking over beautiful jarrah trees. I can recall my father telling me about felling timber, the likes of which we do not see any more, on properties anywhere between Mt Barker and Rocky Gully 50 or 60 years ago. All that the people did afterwards, of course, was put them into great big piles, strike a match, and that was it. These days money would not buy that sort of timber. The issues stemming from those practices, as we all well know, have caused significant damage to the various ecosystems that this motion specifically addresses. For me, it certainly is an issue of quite some importance to our capacity to restore natural environments to something like what they may well have been.

Hon Sally Talbot talked about the Denmark River success. I will certainly talk about the Denmark River in a while. However, that is a classic example of how we can engage in some form of agroforestry, some form of tree farming, to augment a farming business, and at the same time do significant good things to the environment about which we are talking. Certainly, by doing that, we are addressing this motion, and we are talking about improvement in water quality and quantity that may well flow into our dams. I might add, though, that I do not necessarily want to focus exclusively in my speech on the six critical areas or river systems that Hon Giz Watson addresses in the motion.

We have been talking about sustainability. In response to Hon Simon O'Brien's jibes about googling, I must confess to googling at length and coming up with the Greens' statement on regional sustainability. If I could be an apologist for the Greens at this stage, I suggest that all members look at that statement, because if they agree with the general thrust of the need to improve water quality and quantity in terms of run-off, they will find that some of the material that is presented in that statement makes for excellent reading. Therefore, I commend the Greens. I also want to put on record the Gallop and Carpenter governments' commitment to the environment in this sense—certainly down on the south coast. As some members would realise, prior to 22 May this year I was a member for the South West Region. I still live in the south west, as is also known, and my commitment to and passion for that area will always be there, I suppose as it is the place that my family comes from.

I want to talk in the broader sense about the idea of sustainability. I think members must understand—I am sure they do—that the notion of sustainability, in its broader sense, refers to things such as economic sustainability. In this day and age of market economics, economic sustainability is an important concept. When we are talking about economic sustainability, yes, we are talking about employment, or unemployment; we are talking about wealth creation; and we are talking about the provision of food. Certainly, in these areas, the movement towards food of zero or low contamination is something that people in those communities are very focused on. We are talking about the need to view energy as an economic sustainability issue also, as we do for a number of other

economic variables that we might want to talk about. There is also the notion of social sustainability. There is a community-ness and there is a oneness. There is an opportunity for wealth sharing in small communities. As we find in any of the three non-metropolitan regions where there are small communities, their sustainability is built upon a number of factors, but social sustainability is also a very important component of that sustainability.

I suppose, though, in terms of the motion that we are dealing with, it is fairly obvious that we are also talking about environmental sustainability. I can remember my grandfather saying to my father that the most significant crop that ever came out of the south coast was the one that grew there naturally. To the day he died, my father agreed with that. Although the President is motioning something to me, it is the karri, jarrah, tingle and associated crop that I am talking about, Mr President; I am sure the President is as well. Therefore, I do not think we need to go any further on that. The notion of environmental sustainability refers to, fairly obviously, things such as biodiversity. If we asked any schoolkid about the environment and about ecosystems, we would find that these days one of the buzzwords is "biodiversity". These kids are used to reading newspapers and watching television programs. They are used to looking at their laptops and finding stories about introduced pests such as cane toads and the like. The notion of biodiversity should be something that we embrace wholeheartedly, because this continent of ours, and, indeed, the south west of Western Australia, is a most unique place. I cannot quote the figures, but about a week or so ago I was watching a TV program about Ningaloo and the uniqueness of the marine species that exist in that particular marine national park. The percentage of species there that are not found anywhere else in the world is nothing short of staggering. Apart from the sheer percentage, of course, is the number. We need to maintain this uniqueness. Certainly, by supporting this motion, I believe we will be doing just that. It is also important to bear in mind that we are part of a unique global ecosystem. Australia, and, indeed, the south west of Western Australia, plays its role in helping to maintain our part of the global ecosystem.

I think the point must be made that if we do not address these issues or if we do not continue to monitor what we are doing, and if we do not look at our footprint on the landscape, significant issues will stem from that. I believe that all of us fully understand the issues that I am going to talk about. Certainly, in the motion, the issue of salinity is mentioned. I am not necessarily talking about just the inlets, the river mouths and so on, because the motion itself addresses catchment areas. If members are not au fait with these particular areas, I suggest that they have a look at them on a map and they will see that they are situated significantly inland. There is the capacity for some form of farm forestry or agroforestry in these areas. The federal government's programs associated with building up soil carbon content are the sorts of programs that members of Parliament should consider. We have a duty of care to the environment of the entire Western Australian landscape, particularly the south west of Western Australia. We must ensure that the generations that succeed us have an environment that is perhaps better than the environment we inherited. Salinity is a big issue.

Obviously, another issue associated with environmental sustainability is the idea of climate change. It is something that also stems logically from what we are talking about. There is a well-founded theory that the more land that is cleared results in the lack of capacity for environments to attract rain. By the same token, some people are sceptical about climate change and global warming, but I am still a firm believer. Hon Simon O'Brien may well be a sceptic. If members go into the agricultural areas, they might find, as I did, that in some instances rainfall exceeds the average from year to year. It is not a matter of how and when rainfall exceeds previous years' averages or whatever, but I can tell members that one of the big issues associated with climate change is when the rain occurs. I am not an expert in this issue, but I am interested in it and I put the problem down to climate change.

Many other issues are associated with environmental sustainability; for example, ocean temperatures, the role of migratory birds and, in the east, the issues associated with the Murray-Darling system and the Koorong. If members have the chance to either fly over or drive through that part of the world, they will see the obvious problems that the lack of environmental sustainability is causing in places such as South Australia.

I alluded earlier to some information that I found on the web. I suggested that perhaps it would not be a bad idea for members to look at the Greens (WA) sustainable region policy. I will make a couple of points about the Greens' goals and initiatives because I understand them to be the initiatives that Hon Giz Watson is focusing on in her motion. One of those initiatives under the banner of "Water Catchments" states —

> Replant the six critical South West water catchments — Collie Warren, Tone, Denmark Hay, Donnelly.

If I read Hon Giz Watson's motion correctly, that is the very nature of the motion before the house. I will not read the rest of the goals and initiatives, suffice to say that the Greens see the need to establish and implement community-based farm forestry programs. Therein lies the idea that I consider to be an integral part of the whole sustainability issue; that is, social or community sustainability. The minute that people work together to come up with a community-based solution to the problems, they will get a handle on things and there will be some sort of

success. It will not happen overnight. Some of the programs that were put in place by the Gallop and Carpenter governments for some of the systems in the south west are testament to the success of people working together. I will not continue to quote from the Greens' document on sustainable regions, but I draw the attention of members to that document.

The motion before the house needs teasing out to a certain extent. I do not necessarily agree with it inasmuch as I believe it could be broader. That might be asking a bit too much at this stage. The motion states —

> That in the light of the declining rainfall …

Hon Sally Talbot referred to some of the rainfall statistics. If I go back to my days at high school and university I studied a bit of geography. From my recollection of isohyet maps, as a kid it felt as though we had 1 200 millimetres of rain per annum. Certainly, when I was anywhere near Denmark and Walpole it never appeared to stop raining. I can assure members that that is not the case today. Rainfall in certain areas in the south west and along the south coast may have fallen by as much as a third, if not more. There has been a significant decline in rainfall and, as a result, there has been a catastrophic decline in surface water inflow into our dams.

As part of the Standing Committee on Public Administration in the previous Parliament, I, together with Hon Ed Dermer, had the privilege of being addressed by the Water Corporation or Department of Water at Woodman Point.

Hon Ed Dermer: I think it was the Water Corporation.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: We certainly went through its program of reafforestation of parts of the Swan-Avon system. It was pointed out to us in no uncertain terms that the idea of replanting many of the hillsides was not to prevent salinity, but to aid in the inflow into Mundaring Weir. According to the Water Corporation, inflow is certainly affected by significant increases in the planting of trees, agroforestry and the like.

The motion also states —

> … and the impact of salinity on south west catchments …

I have a heap of figures on this, but I do not intend reading them out. However, I know that in the Denmark River system and other river systems the total dissolved salts, expressed, I believe—I ask Hon Giz Watson to correct me if I am wrong—in milligrams per litre, was well in excess of 1 000 parts per million 30-odd years ago. The best example, which has already been given by Hon Sally Talbot, is that the Denmark River is a shining example of how that figure can be turned around. As a consequence of that, the physical environment and the capacity of the land to produce the sorts of sustainable goods and services that we have seen over the years since pre-World War II are returning to their previous levels, although it has taken 30 years. It is proof of the benefits of going down the pathway of developing ecologically sustainable programs in these areas.

The motion goes on to suggest that a comprehensive upper catchment recovery program be implemented, and that is obvious inasmuch as the problems associated with the salinity levels come from the fact that Western Australia is a very old landscape. Members know that if vegetation is removed from catchment areas, the salt levels rise to the surface and become part of the river and estuarine systems on the south and lower west coasts. As a consequence of that, we have degraded areas, both upstream and downstream, and, of course, we end up with problems such as those that exist with Wellington Dam. I understand that the government is attempting to rectify that situation but we obviously need to do more. If we can engage in some sort of meaningful agroforestry-style industry, we will perhaps go some way towards doing the sorts of things that we have managed to achieve on a smaller scale in places such as Denmark. This recovery program based on farm forestry aims to restore water and salt balance in the six key water catchments in the region. As I indicated earlier, and as I am sure everyone would agree, that is certainly something that we need to take on board. The Collie, Warren, Tone, Denmark, Hay and Donnelly river areas are very significant in terms of their water holding and storage capacity. I believe that we need to go significantly further.

I wish to talk briefly about agroforestry because I have looked at agroforestry in some of the work that I have done on possible solutions to the Ravensthorpe situation over the past nine to 12 months. I believe that in many respects significant further investment in agroforestry is one way that we may address the problems mentioned by Hon Giz Watson. Agroforestry produces a range of products and sustainable outcomes, engineered strand lumber being one, and also energy, eucalyptus oil, food, fodder, erosion control—these are all ecosystem services—salinity reduction and waterlogging reduction. There is also the use of high-quality timber coming out of some of these areas. Generally speaking, the value adding that agroforestry or farm forestry provides ultimately gives us jobs. There is our economic sustainability. We have jobs for people, and jobs in the regions bring communities together. There is our social sustainability. Sustainable communities are enhanced by a

greater commitment by governments to agroforestry. Having said that, there is significantly more to be done. If not, we will have more problems.

I now want to quote from an information sheet put out by Tree Plantations Australia entitled "Tree Plantations—One Solution to Salinity". It sums up the need to acknowledge and accept this motion that we are debating. It states —

> Eucalypt plantations can improve water quality by reducing the amount of salt being leached from catchment soils.
>
> New research within the Denmark River catchment, of southwest Western Australia, has shown that replacing traditional agriculture with tree plantations —

I dare say that we would not want to be talking to too many managed investment scheme investors at this stage —

> can result in an improvement in water quality due to a reduction in river salinity.
>
> The Denmark River provides water for the town of Denmark in Western Australia. Past clearing of trees in the Denmark River catchment has resulted in a rise in dryland salinity, leading to an increase in river salinity levels and a decline in the quality of the water the river provides to the town of Denmark.
>
> Tree clearing in the upper Denmark River Catchment began in the 1870's. By 1978, 34% of the catchment had been cleared. The clearing was variable across the catchment with 61% of the Yate Flat subcatchment cleared.
>
> …
>
> Salinity monitoring commenced in the area in 1954. By 1987, the salinity levels in the Denmark River were six times greater then in 1955.

That is a staggering figure. The information sheet continues —

> In 1990, areas suitable for plantation establishment were identified and the establishment of eucalypt plantations commenced in 1991. By 2002 the area of cleared land in the upper Denmark River catchment had been reduced by 50%.
>
> …
>
> Prior to plantation establishment annual stream salinity was increasing —

This is a very significant figure —

> at the rate of 17 mg/L/yr. Annual stream salinity is now decreasing at the rate of 8 mg/L/yr.

Hon Helen Morton: Do you think that's good progress?

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I think it is. It is probably better than anywhere else. That is why this particular quote is provided. I dare say that in some areas it may be worse. Here is a community-based program that has been funded by governments of all persuasions. I am not necessarily chest-beating for the Gallop and Carpenter governments because it started well before then. This is an example of how this works.

Hon Helen Morton: My point about the amendment is that that notes those sorts of programs.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I am talking to the substantive motion. If time permits, maybe later I will have a comment about the amendments. The point has to be made that these are significant improvements. The information sheet continues —

> The establishment of Eucalypt plantations has been recognised as a feasible management option for reducing the salt concentration or load in the Denmark River catchment.

There are significant improvements there because of the attempts to address those sorts of problems, albeit on a micro-level. The Denmark River, if anyone bothers going upstream, is nothing like the Frankland a little further to the west but it is very significant in terms of local ecosystems and the provision of fresh water for people in that part of the world.

I will also quote from a Forest Products Commission document entitled "Tree Farming and Industry Development Plan" dated July 2006. This document refers to the threat from salinity and waterlogging. In relation to the south west, where these critical catchment areas are, it suggests —

> The region's agricultural economy is at significant risk from salinity and rising water tables.

I do not think anyone here would dispute that. It goes on to state —

> … there is an opportunity for recovery over a large proportion of the core target area —

That is what Hon Giz Watson has been talking about —

> by extensive planting of trees integrated with other measures such as perennial pastures and drainage.

It goes on to state —

> … the soils of the core target area are suitable for widespread planting of commercially grown eucalypts.

From my trips to the Ravensthorpe-Hopetoun area, it is certainly applicable there as well. As we are talking about the south west, perhaps I should keep my comments to the south west. Eucalypts are literally grown over all parts of the south west of Western Australia. It continues —

> With a cleared area of 1.4 million hectares, over 200 000 ha of land is highly suitable for growing eucalypts.

It is fairly obvious that that is an issue. It goes on to state —

> Integrating trees with farming in the headwaters of the key catchments of Collie, Warren/Tone and Kent —

I did not mention Kent before —

> can limit dryland salinity and waterlogging as well as reduce stream salinity levels. Reducing the export of nutrients and salinity from the middle Kalgan catchment will have a beneficial impact on Oyster Harbour.

Finally, the document states —

> Strategic integration of trees onto farms can substantially recover or contain land salinity and waterlogging over large areas of farmland that are in the Blackwood, Murray and Frankland catchments.

Henceforth, I suggest to Hon Giz Watson that the motion could be even broader because the benefits to be had across the length and breadth of Western Australia are most significant.

I will continue with the salinity issue, given that it is a key component of this motion. The total dissolved salt levels in our water systems have increased dramatically since Europeans arrived in this part of the world, especially in Western Australia's south west. I suggest that the very economic, social and environmental sustainability of the entire south west, and not only those particular six mentioned river catchment systems, is under great threat.

I have also mentioned the associated issues of biodiversity, biosecurity and ecosystems. My contention is that these issues have been addressed to a certain extent, and are being addressed now, but it is incumbent upon all governments to step in and do significantly more to protect our previously pristine waterways, and certainly to maintain the ones that are in a relatively pristine condition. An even more detailed and meaningful plan of action is required.

Perhaps I can move down the pathway of even greater controls on land clearing. I have watched television news footage over the past 10 to 15 years of land clearing in places like Queensland. I know there seems to be a short-term economic imperative that we clear more land and devote that to extensive pastoralism; however, if we go down that pathway in 2009 and beyond, we are sowing the seeds of our destruction. As time goes by, we will see more focus on a reduction in land clearing across the south west of Western Australia. I recall an incident only three or four years ago when a farmer—I cannot quite recall the locality, but it may have been in the Woogenellup area, north east of here—was prosecuted for breaking a few branches off a tree that hung over a track. I know that Hon Max Trenorden is yet to give his inaugural speech, but he is nodding in agreement. If we get to that stage, we may well have lost the plot.

In relation to governments promoting the sort of thing that this motion is all about, we need to see over the forthcoming years—certainly in this thirty-eighth Parliament—a move towards improving that situation. The establishment of a more intensive and focussed farm forestry program is essential. I know of a project of this type on the south coast. It has not come to fruition yet, but the sorts of benefits that products like engineered strand lumber provide for us are quite amazing. The proponents of this product went through with me the benefits to the Albany area that would come from this plant, which has not yet gone ahead. This particular product has enormous advantages in terms of its uses not only as a structural timber, but also for certain forms of furniture and a range of other uses. They are the sort of things that we can talk about. Even fine furniture making, not so much in relation to engineered strand lumber but plantation timber or agroforestry, will provide these sorts of benefits.

I also believe we should again look at the areas around Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun and those sorts of localities. Just by planting rows and rows of trees up and down paddocks, as people do, will reduce erosion and the capacity to add soil carbon to properties. Those are the sorts of things that, in due course, will enhance significantly productivity levels on these properties.

This more intensive and focussed farm forestry program that Hon Giz Watson talks about is essential in terms of its capacity to maintain or to continue sustainability of the entire south west of Western Australia. It is imperative that these particular critical catchments are maintained. As I said, though, why on earth would we want to stop at six when we can look at areas such as the Frankland area? If members get a chance to go there, the Frankland catchment area starts 300-350 kilometres north-north-east of the mouth of the Frankland down at Walpole-Nornalup. If members consider the capacity of that area to deliver positive outcomes, not just for the farming community in the upper reaches but in the main catchment areas inland, all the way down to the mouth, it is quite significant. Utilising the capacity in those catchment areas would significantly enhance the sustainability of those areas.

I have one concluding comment before question time, Mr President. I refer to a Department of Water document titled "Looking after all of our water needs". I have not spoken much about the Collie River area, even though it is in my previous electorate. I have spent a little bit of time travelling through that area over the years. Taking note of the issues associated with the Wellington Dam, I think that all members would understand that dam is an untapped resource of enormous potential, with obviously a significant salt problem. Maybe Hon Giz Watson can give me the total dissolved salt figure for Wellington Dam. The water is certainly not potable. We have the capacity, perhaps, to do some work there.

Hon Giz Watson: It's about 1 500 parts per million.

Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM: I dare say that sits alongside some of the highest figures in Australia. If I am not mistaken, the figures for some of our south coastal rivers and inlets stand at around 500 or 600 milligrams per litre of dissolved salts. I am not super sure, but I recall those figures being mentioned. When one puts 1 500-plus alongside that, one can see why that represents a massive problem. I am sure that the agroforestry industry, which we have been talking about, will assist that.

I return to this Department of Water document about the Collie River. The document, which was published in 2001, states that the Collie River catchment is one of five catchments identified as water resources recovery catchments in Western Australia's state salinity strategy. The report states that the "salinity situation statement: Collie River" was published in 2001. It goes on to say that the report presents comprehensive information on the salinity situation for the Collie River catchment and includes an outline of the causes and processes of salinity and analyses trends in stream-flow salinity in groundwater levels. It states that the effects of salinity on various reforestation, perennial pasture and engineering options are modelled to estimate the extent of treatment needed to reduce the average salinity inflow to the Wellington reservoir to 500 milligrams per litre by 2015. That is a lofty ideal. Obviously, if that can be done on a micro scale somewhere like Denmark, there is the capacity to do something similar on a more macro scale. The Department of Water goes on to say —

> This information will help the Collie recovery team formulate effective land management plans to achieve this target.
>
> Located in the South-West of Western Australia, the Collie River catchment covers almost 3,000 square kilometres and includes the Wellington Reservoir, which is a potentially valuable water supply for the State's growing population. The flow weighted mean salinity of the total inflow to the reservoir in 1995 was 885 milligrams per litre . . .

That is an example for Hon Helen Morton of how things have become worse. That is perhaps an indictment of governments post the early 1990s.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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