

KARRATHA WATER SUPPLY

77. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the water supply in Karratha.

- (1) Is the minister aware of claims that a LandCorp representative told the Karratha community at a meeting in December that the town would run out of water in three years?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that Karratha has a requirement for an additional five gigalitres of water per annum in coming years?
- (3) Does the minister agree that it would not be wise to rely on either the Harding Dam or the Millstream groundwater supply to provide this additional water?
- (4) How will the minister provide the additional five gigalitres of water for Karratha?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

- (1)–(4) I thank the member for his question. This is a very important issue because this government has a plan for the Pilbara. There are some significant demands for water in the Pilbara, particularly in Karratha, to develop and revitalise the Pilbara. The main sources of water in the west Pilbara, which includes Karratha and Port Hedland, are the Harding Dam and the Millstream bore fields. My department, the Department of Water, has a water plan for the Pilbara. Our plan designates the consumptive pool and what is available in the region. The source of that water is about 10 gigalitres, give or take. It is important to expand that resource along with the development of the region and to implement projects that provide extra water. There is a plan in the interim to expand the allocation of water from the Millstream bore field and Harding Dam without prejudicing the groundwater source. It is important for this to be sustainable.

Mr E.S. Ripper interjected.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The Leader of the Opposition should listen. There are plans in the Pilbara to expand that resource. Rio Tinto is expanding its bore fields, which has the potential to supply an increased resource. There are also plans to treat the water from the Harding Dam and the bore field to expand the potable source and also to treat the wastewater so that it can be used to water public open spaces and make the area green so that it is an attractive place where people want to live. We must attract people to live and work in the area. Obviously, these plans must sit together. We are working on the expansion of the City Pacific project to build a desalination plant. I was speaking with the Department of Water this morning. There are potential plans for City Pacific to provide some water to Karratha from the desalination plant it uses for its major project in the area. These are some of the options and we are working through them. We will choose the responsible option to provide a sustainable supply of water to the Pilbara in the future.