



**HON. DR GEOFF GALLOP MLA
PREMIER OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**LAUNCH OF NEW ROUND OF FUNDING AND
ANNOUNCEMENT OF TWO PILOT RESEARCH PROJECTS**

CSIRO FLOREAT
10 NOVEMBER 2005
10.00AM

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dr Jim Gill - CEO of Water Corporation

Dr Wally Cox, Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority

**Professor Doug McEachern, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation,
University of Western Australia**

INTRODUCTION

Might I extend a warm welcome to you all, and thank you for being here to be a part of this exciting program.

As Premier, I am thrilled to be launching these projects, which demonstrate yet another example of how Western Australia continues to lead the world in innovation and technology.

And I am particularly pleased to be launching a project which addresses one of the fundamental challenges that has always faced and continues to confront Western Australia— access to sustainable water supplies.

Nearly three hundred years ago, the author and doctor Thomas Fuller observed that we never know the worth of water, until the well is dry.

And it's no secret that in the West, we have always known the worth of water.

The well might not be dry, but if we do not take strong and decisive action today to meet this challenge, it might be too late tomorrow.

Water resources have been, in recent years, placed front and centre in national policy-making and importance.

This is where it deserves to be.

Water resources right across the country have come under increasing and intense scrutiny.

A declining pattern of rainfall, and the reality of climate change has made this not just a priority, but a necessity.

The evidence is unarguable. Stream flow into Perth's dams has been reduced by two thirds over the past thirty years – a significant shift.

In 2001/2002 we experienced our worst drought on record.

This is a trend that we cannot ignore, a trend that is not going away.

It is, of course, an issue of fundamental importance to us all, an issue that will affect our State not just today but for generations to come.

We must look forward and find sustainable and positive solutions.

GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP

I am pleased to say that through our State Water Strategy and its many initiatives – such as the Waterwise Rebate scheme, this Government has taken a lead in responding to this issue.

Our leadership in this area is increasingly recognised on the national stage and over the past months we have experienced unprecedented interest in our water efforts from the media, water planners and governments in other states.

We must continue to be leaders in this field – and we must be innovative.

We must be at the cutting edge, at the very forefront of water strategy, if we are to be successful and sustainable and remain one of the best places to live in the world.

Looking backwards is not an option.

We need to set the example in water management, not just in Australia but for everywhere where water scarcity is an issue.

WASTEWATER RECYCLING

Through the State Water Strategy we have made recycling our wastewater a priority.

We have set a target of achieving 20% reuse by 2012 and we are putting in place actions to deliver this.

A major initiative identified to help reach and potentially pass this 20% target is the recharge of recycled water to aquifers, particularly those beneath the Swan Coastal Plain.

We believe that the technique known as Managed Aquifer Recharge presents as our best possible opportunity to reuse large amounts of wastewater.

By infiltrating the wastewater back into our depleted aquifers we can counter some of the impacts of a drying climate and make available significant quantities of additional water for industry, horticulture and in the long term, possibly even drinking water supplies.

GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH

The projects that we are launching today are groundbreaking.

They will help investigate how we can harness the 100 gigalitres of wastewater that is pumped into the ocean each year and turn it into a new water source.

It takes established technology that is already in use in many places in the world, and applies it to the challenges we face right here in Western Australia.

I would like to recognise the project partners for both initiatives and acknowledge the collaborative efforts of these organisations in undertaking such vital research.

The State Water Strategy highlighted the need for government, industry and community partnerships to achieve advances in conservation and efficiency.

These projects are an excellent example of how successful such partnerships can be.

The projects are part-funded by two of the State Government's most successful grants programs, the Premier's Water Foundation and the Premier's Collaborative Research Program.

I must acknowledge the work of the CSIRO, the Water Corporation, Curtin University, the Chemistry Centre of WA, the University of WA, the Centre

for Groundwater Studies, the Departments of Health and Environment and the National Measurement Institute.

This research being undertaken by these organisations aims to study both the health and environmental impacts of managed aquifer recharge to determine how wastewater recycling can become a reliable alternative for safe new supplies of water.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

I would also like to acknowledge the community engagement that has already occurred as part of the investigative process into managed aquifer recharge. The State Government recognises that water recycling programs cannot proceed unless they have a high level community understanding and support.

The Environmental Protection Authority held several community workshops in the metropolitan area about managed aquifer recharge to inform participants and hear feedback on the issue.

The CSIRO have also undertaken some leading edge research into the social perception surrounding the use of recycled water as a drinking source.

Such research will continue to shape the investigations into managed aquifer recharge, so informed decisions can be made by the State Government, with input from the community, on the implementation of water recycling programs.

PREMIER'S WATER FOUNDATION

Again, I would like to convey my excitement at being here to launch two such innovative and progressive projects.

This research complements the work the Government is undertaking in other areas, including the development of strategic water plans and reviewing water use in other sectors, such as industry and agriculture.

By funding research projects like these, the State Government is continuing to invest in smarter ways to conserve and reuse water to help secure the WA water future.

Subsequently, I have the pleasure of announcing today, that a further \$3 million in grants has been made available by the Premier's Water Foundation to fund new water related research projects.

I invite interested parties to apply for this second round of funding, which will support research and development into water supply and management projects.

This second round of funding will build upon the work being undertaken by the eight projects currently funded by the Premier's Water Foundation, which have so far attracted an additional \$9 million investment into water research in the State.

It is through mechanisms like the Premier's Water Foundation that the State Government demonstrates its commitment to finding sustainable solutions to our water shortage.

CHEQUE PRESENTATION

On that note, I am pleased to provide a cheque for the first instalment of a \$750 000 grant from my Water Foundation's first round of funding, to Dr Simon Toze from the CSIRO.

This grant is supporting research into appropriate methods for conducting managed aquifer recharge and will assist government regulators to develop rigorous guidelines for water recycling.

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