



## House of Assembly

Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2011  
Page 6179

### Far North Water Supplies

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (14:42): My question is to the minister for water. What is the government doing to identify water supplies in remote Far North communities to enable future development?

The Hon. P. CAICA (Colton—Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation, Minister for Water and the River Murray, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation) (14:43): I thank the honourable member for Light for his important question. New mining and potential geothermal energy development in the Far North of South Australia are being facilitated by the state government through the Plan for Accelerating Exploration.

The scale of the planned developments and potential activity from current mineral exploration is set to generate significant economic value for our state. This new development activity will require reliable water supplies. Industry growth will only continue if we can discover new outback groundwater sources and investigate the future capacity of the existing aquifers.

In recognition of this, I am pleased to inform the house that the state government has committed \$3.7 million towards a suite of projects to explore the region's groundwater potential. A number of major projects are already underway as part of a new initiative called Finding Long-Term Outback Water Solutions (FLOWS).

This initiative will increase our existing knowledge of the region's water resources by identifying their capacity, quantity and quality.

FLOWS will develop information packages for industry and local communities on potentially viable water resources. This will in turn enable both industry and communities to gain a greater understanding about available water and how it can be used. A report has already been prepared on the groundwater resources across the AW region. This was released on 21 September and is available at [www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au](http://www.waterconnect.sa.gov.au). This report is amongst the first of its kind and it will not only collate available knowledge but also guide further investigations into future groundwater development opportunities.

The Goyder Institute for Water Research will also carry out research for this initiative. The institute will undertake an analysis of airborne geophysical information to identify potential groundwater resources which may be suitable to provide water supplies for mining and energy development. In addition to this, a major project will be undertaken to develop a comprehensive water resource state and condition report from the Far North prescribed wells area and monitor the implications of climate change on the resources.

The state government realises the importance of the Far North region's economic, social, cultural and environmental assets. This is why we have invested in FLOWS. Work such as this will not only boost our knowledge and expertise, but it will also serve as an investment in the region. Through these leading-edge projects, the state government is making it even easier for industry to access important information about the Far North's water availability.