

STATE BARRIER FENCE — ESPERANCE EXTENSION

183. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I refer to the Esperance extension of the state barrier fence.

- (1) Since the completion of the initial 63 kilometres of fence in April 2020, have any additional sections of the fence been constructed?
- (2) If no to (1), what has been the cause of the delay?
- (3) Have any materials for the construction of the remaining sections of the fence been procured; and, if so, how are they stored?
- (4) Can the minister commit to a definitive time line within which the remainder of the fence will be completed; and, if not, why not?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. I think he probably knows the answer because he has been following the issue for some time.

- (1)–(4) Our inability to start the remainder of the project is because we are still undertaking the Indigenous land use agreement negotiations, and I can understand that they are taking a long time. There has been some impact from COVID in that some of the group meetings had to be cancelled. We certainly have looked at other ways that we might be able to do this. I presume that the member has been contacted by the farmers on whose property the fencing is stored. There is a view that 70 per cent of the remainder is on freehold property, so we should be able to get on with it. My understanding is that only around 25 per cent of the remainder is on freehold property and it is very interspersed.

I have certainly had a letter from Mr Neil Wandel about whether we can look at having some arrangements whereby those little bits that are there can be done separately while we are trying to resolve the native title issues for the other areas. The advice from the department initially was that that would be too expensive, but if we can negotiate something, we are happy to do it.

On the idea that somehow or other there is a problem with this fencing being out in the weather, it is outside. Certainly, the member can assure Mr Wandel that this is designed to be out in the weather. It is our intention that it will be out in the weather for many, many decades. It is galvanised and certainly from the pictures I have seen, it looks quite bright and shiny, so I am not quite sure what the cause of concern is. It has taken much longer —

Hon Colin de Grussa: Will you table it?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I am quite happy to table the photograph of Mr Wandel, who would like to get into *Hansard*!

[See paper [229](#).]

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN: I understand the frustration. Certainly, the ILUA negotiations are taking a long time. The department is very focused on trying to bring those to a resolution, but there are processes that are outside of our control.