

GOGO STATION — IRRIGATION

167. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

Gogo station is currently planning a major expansion of irrigated agriculture. However, the proposed irrigation area sits downstream from a former Pilbara iron and zinc mine that is listed as a contaminated site and is known to be leaching thallium and heavy metals.

- (1) Has the Department of Health conducted testing of the thallium and heavy metals in the soil at Gogo Station?
- (2) If so —
 - (a) what were the outcomes;
 - (b) can the department provide a copy of the assessment;
 - (c) is the contamination of soil and water a health risk for people living on, or growing food on, the station; and
 - (d) could future irrigated crops, or beef fed from irrigated crops, be contaminated at unsafe levels?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY replied:

This question was also asked last Thursday, 22 March, and that was question without notice 126. I have the reply to give to the honourable member at the conclusion of question time, but I am happy to provide the answer now.

The PRESIDENT: You might as well provide it now.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. I am advised of the following.

- (1) As the former mine has been classified as a contaminated site, the assessment and management of both the source site and any potential downstream affected sites is being addressed through the Contaminated Sites Act 2003 and the “Assessment and management of contaminated sites: Contaminated sites guidelines” of 2014. These require the owner or person responsible for remediation to undertake investigations.
- (2) (a)–(b) Not applicable.
(c)–(d) The health risks associated with living on, or growing food on, the station are required to be addressed by the contaminated sites assessment. The Department of Health recommended to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation in 2016 that these future land uses be included in the assessment.