

WATER — LICENCE FEES

1042. Hon COLIN TINCKNELL to the minister representing the Minister for Water:

I visited Manjimup last week where proposed fees of \$6 668 to renew a water licence are strongly opposed. The fees are to be initially introduced to the mining industry and then to agriculture. Local food producers are justifiably upset at these fees, which they regard as an attack on both agriculture and mining by a Labor government. The food-producing families appreciate that the mining industry contributed towards the recently opened \$37 million Warren Health Service hospital in Manjimup.

- (1) Why does the Minister for Regional Development not protect food producers and miners in the regions from these absurdly high water licence fees?
- (2) Will the Minister for Regional Development ask the Minister for Water to withdraw this water tax?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. This is slightly complex, because these matters the member has raised fall within the jurisdiction of the Minister for Water. I am answering these questions in my representative capacity from information provided to me by the Minister for Water.

- (1) The preamble to the question is incorrect. The May 2018 state budget introduced fees for the assessment of water licence and permit applications for the mining and public water supply sectors only. The fees reflect the annual cost of \$720 000 incurred by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation in undertaking assessments of water licence and permit assessments for these sectors. These costs are currently borne by the Western Australian taxpayer. No decision has been made to introduce water licence fees to other water use sectors.
- (2) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation is currently undertaking a consultation process that includes a discussion paper and community workshops in Bunbury, Perth, Carnarvon, Broome, Manjimup and Margaret River. The consultation process will inform the government's decision on whether water licence and permit fees will apply to other sectors.