

WATER — VARIABLE TAKE LICENCES

1367. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the minister representing the Minister for Water:

I refer to the determination of spring rights as it applies to surface water irrigators in the Manjimup–Pemberton irrigation district.

- (1) Why are some farmers, with previously approved spring rights, now being told they no longer have spring rights?
- (2) Why are farmers with an A-class water licence now being told they need a licence again when they were previously told they did not need a licence due to spring rights?
- (3) Given that catchments are fully allocated in the region, when will this quagmire of uncertainty be resolved and how will this be communicated to all in the region?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Water.

- (1)–(3) The questions contain a certain number of misconceptions. Firstly, one of the deficiencies of the current legislation, which was not remedied by the previous government, is that there is no formal process for farmers to get a definitive declaration that they have a spring right. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has put in place a voluntary process to assist farmers. The government believes that it will be necessary to modernise water management in Western Australia, including improving the processes around establishing a spring right.

Minister Kelly has advised that his office is willing to meet with anyone who is concerned. I would be more than prepared to organise a briefing with Minister Kelly for the member.