

DROUGHT — SOUTHERN RANGELANDS

966. Mr K.M. O'DONNELL to the Premier:

Thank you, Premier. I have a supplementary question. Would the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Regional Development accept an invitation to come out to the southern rangelands and the goldfields to assist some of those pastoralists and reassure them about what he has told us?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I was out in the southern rangelands a few weeks ago, meeting with a range of people. Obviously, the Minister for Agriculture and Food; Regional Development is there regularly. The main thing is that the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development provides support services. We will reinforce with it the issue of support services and will seek support from the commonwealth.

I realise that the member for Kalgoorlie has raised this issue in good faith. It is a difficult issue. Australia has been prone to drought for a considerable time—forever, in effect—and recent climatic changes are making the situation worse. It is not an easy issue to solve. We do our best to support farming families and communities, and pastoralists and pastoral communities, and will be doing more in that regard over the coming year or so. There is no magic solution to any of this. Although we will do our best for people involved in those industries, I think they also know that it is a difficult problem for anyone to solve, but we are doing our best.