

AGRICULTURE — RANGELAND CONDITION MONITORING

1104. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

Up until 31 December 2009 Rangeland Condition Monitoring (RCM) was undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) for the Pastoral Land Board (PLB) by onsite inspections. This system has ceased. The new RCM system requires pastoral lessees to monitor the Rangeland Condition and report annually to the PLB via an online portal called ARCADIA managed by DAFWA. All RCM sites must be installed and baseline data collected by 2015. I ask:

- (a) how many lessees have reported data during the period 31 December 2009 to 31 December 2013;
- (b) although mandatory reporting does not come into effect until 2016, how has DAFWA and/or PLB monitored the 452 Stations since 31 December 2009;
- (c) what guidelines will be used in determining whether a pastoral lease is renewed, and what constitutes a viable property, for example carrying capacity, soil, and vegetation condition; and
- (d) where it can be established that minimal pastoral activity is being undertaken, and by the use of a diversification permit income is realised by camping fees, should the pastoralist be subject to appropriate Caravan Park Operator Rates?

**Hon Ken Baston replied:**

Rangeland Condition Monitoring (RCM) is a new initiative of the Pastoral Lands Board (PLB) involving self-assessment of indicators of rangeland condition by pastoral leaseholders. Prior to its adoption by the PLB in May 2009, the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) performed regular rangeland condition assessments of all pastoral leases. This assessment was not RCM, rather DAFWA employed a method referred to as the 'Traverse Method'.

- (a) This question refers to data collected by the Department of Lands for the Minister for Lands.
- (b) During the RCM implementation period, DAFWA has collaborated with the PLB and the Department of Lands to monitor indicators of rangeland condition on all leases in the pastoral estate. Where leases are identified as being at risk of inadequate management of rangeland condition, DAFWA conducts a ground inspection and reports their assessment to the PLB.
- (c) The Minister for Lands is responsible for the renewal of pastoral leases under the *Land Administration Act 1997*.
- (d) This question should be redirected to the Minister for Lands.