

AGRICULTURE — DOPPLER RADAR

744. Hon NIGEL HALLETT to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

- (1) What research has been conducted by the Department of Agriculture and Food to fully understand the value of Doppler radar technology to the agriculture and emergency services sectors since the matter was raised in the chamber this year?
- (2) Is DAFWA aware that Doppler radar technology is not only commonplace in all other Australian states and territories and around the globe, but significantly enhances efficiencies and advances in agriculture as well as being a valuable tool for fire and emergency services, bushfire control, aviation and mining?
- (3) Given that this government remains committed to increasing the availability of new technology to the WA agriculture sector and \$10 million in royalty for regions funds, what steps has the Department of Agriculture and Food taken to develop a business case for the installation of Doppler radar in WA?
- (4) If a business case is currently being prepared, when will this document be released?
- (5) How confident is the government that Doppler radar technology will be installed in strategic locations, such as WA's wheatbelt, for the 2015 growing season?
- (6) If no progress has been made on the development of a business case for the installation of Doppler radar, why is this matter not on the government's agenda?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The Department of Agriculture and Food has commissioned a consulting company to provide the state government, DAFWA and agribusiness with information concerning the likely benefits and costs arising from expanding the availability of radar and telecommunications services within Western Australia in terms of enhancing the competitive position of farm businesses and the wellbeing of rural communities.
- (2) The Department of Agriculture and Food provided consultants with a Bureau of Meteorology map that details the location of high resolution Doppler radar in other states as well as a list of many of the benefits potentially accruing to rural businesses and communities from the availability of high resolution Doppler radar.
- (3) Refer to the response to (1).
- (4) The Department of Agriculture and Food anticipates the consultant will complete its report by the end of September.
- (5)–(6) The consultant's report will need to be assessed before any decision can be made on whether the matter should be progressed.