

KUNUNURRA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT — DISCHARGE

882. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Water:

My question is with regard to the discharge from the Kununurra wastewater treatment plant facility into the M1 irrigation channel.

- (1) What impact has this had or is having on the farmers taking water from the M1 downstream from the discharge point?
- (2) Which agency is responsible for monitoring the nutrient loads and potential pathogens in the water, and what has been the result of monitoring?
- (3) Has there been an increase in the use of chemicals to control the increased plant growth in the channel that has occurred as a result of the discharge, and what are the costs to taxpayers?

Hon COL HOLT replied:

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

- (1) The Water Corporation believes there is no impact on farmers taking water for agricultural purposes.
- (2) The Water Corporation samples three places of the channel on a weekly basis and reports these results to the Department of Environment Regulation, as required by its licence conditions. The corporation has not been required to make any changes to its operations based on these results.
- (3) The Water Corporation contracts the maintenance of the M1 channel to the Ord Irrigation Cooperative. The Ord Irrigation Cooperative uses chemicals as part of its maintenance program, but the corporation does not believe there has been any increase in the use of chemicals as a result of the discharge. Note that the wastewater discharge makes up a very small amount of the flow down the channel. During the irrigation season when farmers are taking water, wastewater is one megalitre a day into an irrigation flow of 500 megalitres a day.