

YULLEROO 2 — PROTESTERS

249. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to an ABC online news story dated 20 February 2015 in which the minister is reported as criticising protesters that he suspects of being involved in vandalising a wellhead at Yulleroo 2, 70 kilometres east of Broome.

- (1) Given that police investigations are ongoing, with police still gathering evidence, what is the basis for the minister's public comments criticising the protesters?
- (2) Does the minister have any evidence to hand that the protesters are guilty of damaging, or causing to be damaged, the apparatus at Yulleroo 2?
- (3) If no to (2), will the minister apologise to the protesters if they are found not to be involved in vandalising the equipment?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. On behalf of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, I advise —

- (1) As the minister responsible for safety in the Western Australian onshore gas industry, I am concerned about any behaviour which may put lives at risk. Unauthorised entry into the Yulleroo 2 well site during the filming of the video that was later provided to the ABC is one example of irresponsible and dangerous behaviour. Blocking access to Department of Mines and Petroleum inspectors who arrived at site to verify the claims of the video is another.
- (2) The Department of Mines and Petroleum is assisting the police with their ongoing investigations.
- (3) No.