

ALCOA — ASBESTOS FIBRES

475. Hon KATE DOUST to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to recent reports of workers being unknowingly exposed to asbestos fibres at Alcoa in Kwinana. As the minister will be aware, a fundamental principle of occupational health and safety practice is that workers have a right to know about workplace hazards. With this in mind —

- (1) Will an investigation be undertaken to establish how the workers were unknowingly exposed and whether —
 - (a) the employer has breached their duty of care;
 - (b) effective control strategies are in place, including, for example, an asbestos register, a management plan and decontamination procedures;
 - (c) Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations or legislation have been breached; and
 - (d) employees have been provided with appropriate information, such as the risk of contracting an asbestos-related disease based on concentration of respirable fibres in the air, length of time of exposure, type of fibre and size and shape of the fibres?

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) The circumstances of the report are currently under investigation by DMP mines inspectors who have visited the site.
 - (a) The investigation will ascertain whether there has been a breach of duty of care by any involved party.
 - (b) The investigation will include a review of all the applicable management processes and any relevant documentation.
 - (c) The investigation will consider breaches of applicable legislation.
 - (d) The investigation will also include the ongoing management processes and practices for communication and education of personnel exposed to asbestos fibrous materials.