

CANNING BASIN — GAS RESERVES

115. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

In regard to statements made about the Canning Basin by the Director General of the Department of Mines and Petroleum Mr Richard Sellers as reported in the *Sunday Times* of 11 June 2013 under the heading “Our Next Resource Boomer”, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of these statements and does he concur;
- (b) in relation to Mr Seller’s statement “There is potential for there to be enough gas (in the Canning Basin) to unlock some of the very large mineral deposits that haven’t been unlocked to date because of lack of infrastructure and energy”, can the Minister explain specifically which “very large mineral deposits” the Director General was referring to;
- (c) given that the Premier has clearly indicated that the very large bauxite deposits in the north Kimberley will not be developed and will instead be incorporated into the recently announced Wanjina National Park, will the Minister rule out any use of Canning Basin gas to process bauxite from the north Kimberley;
- (d) if no to (c), why not;
- (e) how many fracking wells does the Minister expect will be required to extract the 288 trillion cubic feet of gas that the Director General says is predicted to be available from the Canning Basin; and
- (f) what form of public environmental and social impact assessment will the Government undertake to ensure that any extraction of gas from the Canning Basin will not have unacceptable impacts on people, communities and the environment?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) Yes
- (b) Mr Seller's statement was not specific to any particular mineral deposits but rather a general reference to the band of known mineralisation and discoveries around the margins of the Canning Basin ranging from gold, through to base metals (copper, lead, zinc, nickel) and specialty metals (rare earth elements, platinum) to diamonds.
- (c) I fully support the stated policies of the Government in relation to 'Wanjina National Park'.
- (d) Not applicable
- (e) The latest shale gas resource estimate for all of Western Australia published in the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) report of June 2013 is 268 trillion cubic feet (tcf) of gas, with the Canning Basin accounting for 235 tcf. It is very early days for any major development of the Canning Basin with only one well being subject to hydraulic fracturing since 2005. Any development of the Canning Basin will be determined by future exploration, analysis of the shale and the technology to be adopted.
- (f) The extraction of gas from the Canning Basin will be subject to existing public environmental assessment requirements.