

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD — PASTORAL LEASES

989. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Lands:

I refer to comments made by David Pollock on *Australian Story* last night that the WA government is effectively “trying to make us sign a lease that traps us in for the same sort of problems as we have had for the last 50 years.” I refer also to the minister’s previous comments that he was committed to rangeland reform.

- (1) Why is the government penalising pastoralists such as David Pollock for actively improving the environment?
- (2) Why is the minister reissuing leases while ignoring Department of Agriculture and Food reports and numerous other government reports on the biophysical viability of these leases?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1)–(2) When I get a question from the opposition such as this, I really struggle to understand what its policy settings are as they apply to the pastoral areas in Western Australia.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members! I cannot hear myself think.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The member quite rightly knows that we have embarked upon a path to allow opportunities for diversification in the pastoral areas of Western Australia, both within the constraints of the current legislative framework, which was part of the Water for Food announcement that was made with the member sitting next to me in recent months, and at a broader level looking at pastoral industry reform to allow alternative options to be brought to the pastoral areas of Western Australia.

I remember responding to a question in this place when the member for Gosnells got up and asked, “When are you going to weed them out?” The opposition’s position on the pastoral areas of Western Australia is to weed them out. That is the position over there. Members opposite want to weed them out. On this side of the house this government wants to actually do something.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells!

Mr D.T. REDMAN: This side actually wants to do something. We are embarking upon a legislative path to get the framework to allow diversification to come to those areas. I know Wooleen Station very, very well, and I know Brett Pollock, who is David’s father, and I know the contribution —

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the first time. Member for Girrawheen, I would suggest that you stop shouting out.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I know the station very well and I know the contribution that they are making to conservation in that area. We want to provide all the opportunities for those who have pastoral leases, not only to be able to roll over the leases when this rollover happens in June next year on arrangements as they have asked for similar to those they have had before. I am working through that process. It is quite complex and I am confident of getting a good outcome. However, in time, we want to allow for the opportunity for people such as David Pollock on Wooleen Station to progress options such as tourism, which I think is a venture that he is pursuing there, and he is also pursuing conservation strategies. We are not out to penalise them at all; we are out to support the pastoral industry in Western Australia and to do it in a sustainable way.