

MINES AND PETROLEUM — BURU ENERGY — YULLEROO 2 GAS WELL

3155. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to the statement made on 19 February 2015 by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum about Buru Energy's Yulleroo 2 gas fracking well wherein he stated, "When they examined the wellhead installation, they found that two of the valves were in the open position. There are other safety factors to make sure that gas does not leak if the valve is open, but I will not go down that track. Fortunately, no gas was escaping. However, when the officers examined the valve, they found that the shaft had been bent and they could hear some gas leaking. They measured the gas and, fortunately, it was not a large quantity. However, there was visible damage to the valve. The initial inspection by Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) officers indicated that it could have been caused only by someone wielding a very large instrument such as a sledgehammer. This is an alarming incident and shows the lengths to which some people will go to stop proper gas and mining exploration in Western Australia. It is okay for people to protest peacefully, but this goes well beyond the standards that the people of Western Australia expect. I hope we get to the bottom of this matter and, if so, I will report back to Parliament.", and I ask:

- (a) Given the Minister stated that two valves were open but no gas was escaping, due to other safety factors, whilst also stating that the DMP officers could hear a leak and measure gas coming out of a valve, will the Minister please clarify whether gas was leaking or not;
- (b) If there was gas leaking, what was the reading on the gas meter that led the DMP officers to determine that it was not a large quantity;
- (c) If there was gas leaking from a damaged valve, why was there no gas leaking from the other two valves that were determined to be in the open position;
- (d) Did the DMP officers have evidence to show that the alleged damage to the valve was not, or could not have been, caused by Buru Energy or its contractors;
- (e) If no to (d), on what basis did the Minister conclude that the damage was caused by people trying to stop gas and mining exploration in Western Australia;
- (f) Has the DMP investigation into this matter been concluded:
 - (i) if yes to (f), what has been the outcome of the investigation; and
 - (ii) if no to (f), when will it be concluded; and
- (g) Has the police investigation into this matter been concluded:
 - (i) if yes to (g), what has been the outcome of the investigation; and
 - (ii) if no to (g), when will it be concluded?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum advises:

- (a) Gas was not observed to be escaping when DMP officers arrived at the well. Following an inspection and manipulation of the well, some gas did escape via the valve stem seal due to physical damage to the valve stem.
- (b) Gas detectors do not measure the total amount of gas that has leaked, they measure a percentage level of gas in the immediate vicinity of the gas detector. The inspectors made an assessment based on their experience to the size of the leak.
- (c) The release was not connected to the position of the valve, as the release continued when the valve was exercised from the fully open, to fully shut position. The path resulting from the opening of the valves (two separate valves in two separate paths) was not sufficient to allow a gas release. Secondary backup valves/devices were still in the 'shut' position in each of those paths preventing gas from escaping, gas could only flow when this secondary valve was opened.
- (d) The evidence suggests that the valve stem was hit with a blunt object and that considerable force was required to physically damage the valve.
- (e) The damage was caused by a person or persons unknown, WAPOL's investigation is continuing.
- (f) The DMP investigation is ongoing.
 - (i) Not applicable

- (ii) After being written and formally peer reviewed within DMP the report will be made available for WAPOL as part of their investigation. Interim findings have already been made available to WAPOL to help with their investigation.
- (g) This question should be asked of the Minister for Police.
 - (i) Not applicable
 - (ii) Not applicable