

CANE TOADS — INITIATIVE OF STOP THE TOAD FOUNDATION

521. Mr C.J. Tallentire to the Minister representing the Minister for Environment

Given the urgent action required to halt the advance of cane toads to Western Australia, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of the success of the fencing around waterholes technique developed and field tested by the Stop The Toad Foundation to capture cane toads in the Northern Territory;
- (b) does the Government recognise that the Stop The Toad Foundation developed the fencing technique, and that the Foundation has the expertise to continue its implementation;
- (c) why is the Government giving funds to the Kimberley Toad Busters for fencing of waterholes when the group has been publicly critical of this technique; and
- (d) why is the Government not providing the Stop The Toad Foundation funds that would enable it to provide continuous dry season waterhole fencing and cane toad capture?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

- (a) Yes, I am aware of the results of the Foundation's fencing trials in the Northern Territory.
- (b) The State Government recognises the efforts of the Foundation and in particular, their cane toad fencing trials, and is grateful for these efforts which have added to our understanding of cane toad management.
- (c) The State Government, in recognizing the importance of action by local community groups, has funded Kimberley Toad Busters (KTB) to undertake a program of work against cane toads over four years to a total value of \$1,200,000. This funding will give the KTB funding certainty for its field work over the next four years and will be backed up by a joint KTB and DEC program to fund "toadbusting kits" for local community groups and schools to encourage acceptable toad action.
- (d) Since December 2004, successive WA State Governments have committed over \$13 million to mitigate the threat that cane toads pose to Western Australia. This includes over \$745,000 in financial assistance to the Stop The Toad Foundation. I am aware that the Foundation has recently received additional funding of \$150,273 from the Australian Government through the Caring for our Country program to continue the fight against toads, and has also attracted funds and donations from other sources. The State's programs against cane toads will be further assessed after public input to the draft State Cane Toad Strategy, which will be released for public comment in the near future. I encourage all groups interested in cane toads to provide comment on this document.