

PUBLIC HOUSING — TJIRRKARLI, WAKATHUNI AND BIDYADANGA

1105. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Housing:

I refer to question on notice No. 855, asked on 11 March 2014, regarding water towers in remote communities, and I ask:

- (a) for all of the water towers that cannot be filled or are substandard, what is the filling regime;
- (b) is the filling regime having an impact on power generation in each of the community locations or regions;
- (c) if no to (b), why not;
- (d) if yes to (b), why and how;
- (e) what is the level of load being placed on each community location or region during the filling regime;
- (f) please list the water consumption efficiency measures that have been introduced to affected communities, for example education, spring loaded taps with auto turn on and off, repairs to leaking taps and pipes;
- (g) if none to (f), why not;
- (h) does the infrastructure of the remaining water towers meet safety requirements;
- (i) if yes to (h), please list the water towers that do;
- (j) if no to (h), please list the water towers that do not;
- (k) of the ones listed in (j), does the department have any plans to replace the water towers;
- (l) if yes to (k), which water towers are to be replaced and when; and
- (m) if not to (k), which water towers are not to be replaced and why not?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

The Department of Housing advises:

- (a) The filling of the water towers is automated. Water towers that cannot be filled to capacity, due to their condition or age, have the following procedures in place to mitigate risk:
 - Undertake visual inspection of tank prior to entering the water compound, to ensure no apparent change in condition.
 - Reduce the volume of water stored in tanks to minimal operational levels to reduce stress on infrastructure.
 - Restrict access into water compound where possible.
 - Reduce water levels to an absolute minimum, if working on the tank or structure.
 - Ensure water compound is not occupied during filling and emptying procedures.
- (b) No
- (c) The same amount of power is required to maintain minimal supplies of water. The electrical components of the water infrastructure run more frequently, but for shorter periods of time, as a result of the reduced water limit.
- (d) Not applicable
- (e) The load placed on power stations varies across the program subject to the community size and infrastructure system.
- (f) The Department of Housing ensures that water systems in communities under the Remote Area Essential Services Program are maintained and repaired on a regular basis. The Department also undertakes regular maintenance and repairs of internal plumbing under agreed housing management arrangements.

Tenants are also encouraged to report leaks and defects in a timely manner. In addition, through its Beyond Town newsletter the Department publishes educational articles about water efficiency that assist in managing water demand.

The Department is in ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth Government under National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing (NPARIH) to develop targeted initiatives to

reduce demand on water supply. Through NPARIH, over the last six years the Department has built or refurbished approximately 1780 community houses with a key focus of ensuring house plumbing and facilities are in good working condition.

- (g) Not applicable
- (h) Safety standards vary across communities. Some tanks have exceeded their recommended operational life, and have been identified for replacement from the findings of an inspection program.
- (i) [See paper 1620.]
- (j) [See paper 1620.]
- (k) The Department has recently received government funding of \$15 million in the 2014-15 financial year to undertake some critical infrastructure works. The program of works is prioritised based on the outcome of a risk assessment process and is subject to change should needs arise due to the condition or failure of existing essential service assets.
- (l) [See paper 1620.]
- (m) [See paper 1620.]