

MAGELLAN METALS — CONDITIONS BREACH

187. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Premier:

I refer to the Premier's recent comments regarding Magellan Metals, which state, according to my notes —

I am furious at this latest breach by Magellan. I have sent Magellan a letter, it could be described as a rocket, and my tolerance has run out with Magellan. They are right on the edge of their right to operate in this state.

- (1) Does the Premier accept that his failure to act has led to the latest catastrophic failure by Magellan to protect our community?
- (2) Will the Premier cancel Magellan's licence to operate?
- (3) What explanation has Magellan provided the Premier on the most recent breach?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

(1)–(3) I am happy to make a comment. I really do think that question would have been far better directed to the Minister for Environment, who is directly handling the issue.

Mr E.S. Ripper: You made the comment about the rocket. You have engaged with the issue!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am giving the member the option. I will sit down, with the indulgence of the Speaker, and let the minister answer it. He is dealing with it.

Mr M. McGowan: You said “rocket”!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Okay; if the opposition does not want to. The member would be far better asking the minister who is dealing with this situation and who has been in contact with Magellan.

Mr P. Papalia: You know you don't want him to stand!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. I have made my comments. I stand by them. Magellan is right on the edge. It has made successive breaches going right back to the situation in Esperance, which cost the state—and therefore taxpayers—\$30 million to rectify. We are still spending money in Esperance cleaning up. That is something, I must say, that the former government—which knew the problem was there—ignored. One of the first decisions of this government was to act on the Esperance situation and deal with it directly. The member for the former electorate of Roe was actively involved in that. This has been the fourth breach. It is unacceptable. There will be a proper process, but the minister has made it very clear that he has run out of patience—whatever term he used. I totally concur with that. I have run out of patience, too. If Magellan wishes to continue, it will have to redo its whole system of operation, in my view—whether it is in a pellet or briquette form—or totally change its transport system. For lead to be found not in the containers, but on the outside of the containers, is a serious breach. Lead is a serious problem. If lead, particularly in that form, gets into the atmosphere it is extremely dangerous, particularly for mothers-to-be and children.

The member for Kalgoorlie asked about the jobs. I am concerned about the jobs, as everyone should be.

Mr E.S. Ripper: If they downstream processed, there would be more jobs.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Maybe; it would depend on the value of the resource. I assume that Magellan's parent company is very concerned about the adverse publicity that has come about due to the way the lead has been handled and transported in this state.