

WATER FOR FOOD WEST KIMBERLEY PROGRAM — WATER SUPPLIES

1441. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Water:

With regard to the Water for Food West Kimberley program, I ask:

- (a) what evidence is there that the groundwater supplies at Knowsley, Mowanjum and Fitzroy Valley are adequate and sufficiently sustainable to support intensive, irrigated agriculture projects such as those announced recently;
- (b) what will be the environmental and health impacts of the drawdowns being proposed, especially in Derby, where there has been an inland migration of the salt water interface and a consequent rise in salinity levels of drinking water for some years; and
- (c) what monitoring will be put in place to measure the rate of salt water intrusion into the Derby town water supply, and what contingency procedures are in place?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) Preliminary investigations undertaken by the Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia and Department of Water identified potential water resources that could be made available for irrigated agriculture.
- (b) Department of Water determines the amount of water that may be licensed for sustainable use. This includes a detailed assessment of the impact of the licensed use on water dependent environments and other users.
- (c) For any irrigation developments that could potentially increase the salinity risk for Derby or have a saline intrusion risk, monitoring would be included in the licence conditions.