

JIGALONG COMMUNITY — NITRATE LEVELS

**845. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the minister representing the Minister for Housing:**

- (1) Does the Department of Housing plan to install reverse osmosis filtration units to teacher and police housing at the Jigalong community; and if not, is the minister aware of plans by either WA Police or the Department of Education to install such filters?
- (2) Is the Minister aware of students at Jigalong Remote Community School being provided with bottled drinking water during school hours?
- (3) Are the actions in (1) and (2) a response to reports of higher than normal nitrate levels in the drinking water at Jigalong?
- (4) If no to (3), what is the reason for the proposal to install reverse osmosis filtration units to teachers and police housing at the Jigalong community?

**Hon PETER COLLIER replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) No. The Department of Housing is responsible for maintaining water compliance for the Jigalong community as a whole and does not provide individual house treatment options under the remote area essential services program. If other organisations are considering the installation of independent treatment options, it has not been raised with the department.
- (2) No. The Department of Housing provides free bottled water for infants under three months of age who are fed bottled formula. This water is stored and distributed as appropriate via the community clinic. The department does not provide free bottled water to anyone outside of this parameter as it is not a requirement under protocols established with the Department of Health.
- (3) No. Water quality at the Jigalong community aligns with the 2004 Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, with nitrate and nitrite concentrations averaging 50 milligrams per litre to 100 milligrams per litre. This is considered safe to drink for adults, including pregnant women. As outlined above, alternative water is supplied for infants up to three months of age.
- (4) Any proposal to install independent treatment systems at selected housing has not been at the request of the department and is not within the requirement of the remote area essential services program. The department is not aware that this option has been considered or undertaken by any other agency.