

PASTORAL LEASES — KIMBERLEY — NATIVE VEGETATION

1410. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Water:

I refer to question on notice No. 1069, dated 9 April 2014, regarding the clearing of native vegetation on Kimberley pastoral leases, the part-reply to which was tabled on 17 June 2014 by the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Lands, and I ask:

- (a) for each of the past seven years, how many hectares of native vegetation clearing has been approved for pastoral leases in the Kimberley region, on a property by property basis:
 - (i) what is the total amount of water use expected as a result of these clearing approvals;
- (b) for each approved clearing, how many mega litres of water are expected to be used for the resulting agricultural activity, including for hay growing, stock watering and pasture irrigation;
- (c) has there been any regional assessment of the potential cumulative environmental impacts of the native vegetation clearing and water use activities as described above:
 - (i) if yes to (c), what are the results of the assessment; and
 - (ii) if no to (c), why not; and
- (d) does the Government have any policy or regulations on limiting the extent and impact of native vegetation clearing as it relates to increased surface and groundwater water use in the Kimberley:
 - (i) if yes to (d), will the Minister please table or describe this policy or regulations; and
 - (ii) if no to (d), why not?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) Refer to part (a) of Legislative Council Question on Notice 1409.
 - (i) Water requirements will depend on the proposed crop types.
- (b) As per (i) above.
- (c) The level of clearing in the Kimberley is proportionally very low compared with the amount of native vegetation remaining. The Department of Environment Regulation will continue to evaluate the level of clearing in the Kimberley and, should it be considered warranted, carry out an analysis of satellite imagery and other data to determine cumulative impacts.
 - (i) As per (c) above.
 - (ii) Not applicable.
- (d) Yes
 - (i) Impacts of native vegetation clearing to water are considered in the clearing principles contained in Schedule 5 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Clearing principles (i) and (j) state that native vegetation should not be cleared if the clearing of the vegetation is likely to cause deterioration in the quality of surface or underground water or is likely to cause, or exacerbate, the incidence or intensity of flooding.
 - (ii) Not applicable