

MINES AND PETROLEUM — LAKE WELLS POTASH PROJECT

578. Hon Dr Steve Thomas to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to the running of Lake Wells Station north of Laverton and the exploration and mining of potash in the area, and I ask:

- (a) what mining or exploration approvals have been submitted for the lands covered by Lake Wells Station;
- (b) what mining or exploration has been approved for the lands covered by Lake Wells Station;
- (c) have any camp sites been approved for mining applicants on Lake Wells Station, and, if so, who received the approvals and for what sites;
- (d) are any roads on Lake Wells Station being used by mining companies;
- (e) if yes to (d), which roads are being used, and by what authority or approval has this access been granted;
- (f) has any mining company been granted a water license on Lake Wells Station;
- (g) if yes to (f), what water extraction licenses have been approved;
- (h) do any mining companies have contracts with the owners of Lake Wells Station to enable them to access the station;
- (i) are any access agreements or contracts formalising access required; and
- (j) if no to (i), why not?

Hon Alannah MacTiernan replied:

- (a) At least 65 exploration proposals and at least four mining proposals.
- (b) At least 41 exploration approvals, generally involve drilling, clearing of tracks, test pits, and pump testing of bores. Three mining proposals, all for Australian Potash Limited's Lake Wells Potash Project, have been approved. The first was to develop a trial evaporation pond. The second was for early works at the Project, including a camp, access tracks, borefields and causeways. The third was for the substantial commencement of the Lake Wells Project.
- (c) Yes, for Australian Potash Limited's Lake Wells Potash Project.
- (d) Yes.
- (e) Many unnamed roads and tracks are used by mining companies. Named roads that are used include the Lake Wells Road, Yilly Yilly Road and Warren Bore Road. Publicly gazetted roads can be used without approval under the *Mining Act 1978*. Generally, agreements are struck between mining companies and pastoral station owners regarding use of other tracks.
- (f) This would be a matter for the Minister for Water.
- (g) Not applicable.
- (h) Any private agreements between mining companies and pastoralists are a matter between those parties.
- (i) The *Mining Act 1978* provides protection for certain areas of crown land, including some pastoral infrastructure. Tenement holders cannot mine in these areas unless they have the agreement of the occupier of the land. The *Mining Act 1978* also provides provisions for compensation to pastoral lessees by tenement holders in certain circumstances.
- (j) Not applicable.