

HEALTH — VACCINE TRANSPORT

1478. Hon Dr Steve Thomas to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the transport of vaccines within Western Australia by WA Country Health Service (WACHS) in the large polystyrene boxes, and I ask:

- (a) how many polystyrene boxes are distributed by WACHS each week to each regional area (region) they administrate;
- (b) are these returned to Perth after use for re-use;
- (c) if no to (b), why not;
- (d) how many ice packs or freezer bricks are in each polystyrene box;
- (e) are those packs or bricks in part (d) returned or re-used;
- (f) if no to (e), why not;
- (g) given that Coronavirus vaccines are transported in reusable freezers or eskys, why is this method not used for the transport of all vaccines;
- (h) does the Minister support the current system of vaccine transport ending up in landfill or littering the countryside as throw away fishing boxes; and
- (i) what is the cost of providing one time vaccine transport as opposed to a reusable system over the life of a reusable system?

**Hon Sue Ellery replied:**

- (a) Approximately 50.
- (b) No.
- (c) The polystyrene boxes that WACHS uses for distribution are in continual circulation in our regions and are not returned to wholesalers in Perth. Most are reused by pharmacy or vaccinators, and they are also utilised for transport and storage of non-pharmaceutical cold lines in WACHS facilities.
- (d) Depending on specific circumstances ice bricks can vary from 2 to 16.
- (e) Yes.
- (f) N/A
- (g) Vaccines are generally transported in either polystyrene boxes or CoolPac® polyurethane boxes. Both types are re-usable and are re-used in practice.
- (h) Both types of transport packaging are only disposed of when damaged or unable to be reused. Disposal occurs in line with waste management procedures.
- (i) All current packaging is re-usable.