MARTUWARRA FITZROY RIVER — SEWAGE SPILL

**139. Hon NEIL THOMSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Water:**

I refer to the 47 days it took to stem the flow of raw sewage into the Martuwarra Fitzroy River.

(1) Did the waste service provider erect signage or barriers to keep the public out of affected work area?

(2) Has the WSP cleaned, disinfected, and remediated the impacted area?

(3) Did the WSP collect details on the composition of wastewater?

(4) Did the WSP collect bacterial and physicochemical water quality indicators from the affected water environments?

**Hon PIERRE YANG replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Water.

(1) Yes. Water Corporation placed signage and barriers around the discharge area, as well as at the downstream community of Ngurtuwarta, to advise people not to swim or fish in the river. It worked closely with the Department of Health to consolidate and disseminate safety messaging to the public via Department of Fire and Emergency Services daily communications.

(2) The wastewater pipe has now been repaired and Main Roads WA has installed clean earth fill over the area where the wastewater had been discharging. The discharge site has been cleaned and remediated.

(3) Testing was not conducted on the wastewater being discharged because there was no safe access to do so. Due to stormwater infiltration of the wastewater system in the peak of the weather event, the initial wastewater was heavily diluted before it entered the river. Furthermore, due to the magnitude of floodwater flows, the discharge was further diluted upon entering the river. Wastewater in general is made up of 99.7 per cent water.

(4) Safe access to the river was not possible during the discharge event and was the cause of the delay in repair of the pipeline. Water Corporation worked with the Shire of Derby–West Kimberley and Shire of Broome, who conducted water testing of the river; however, this was only possible in two areas upstream of the discharge location. The results show moderately elevated levels of contaminants, which is expected after a flooding event.