

HEMP — MILITARY UNIFORMS

357. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the minister representing the Minister for Defence Industry:

I refer the minister to the answer he very kindly provided to my question asked on Wednesday, 22 March 2023. I confess that his answer has left me somewhat confused as to what the minister understands his role to be in this area, and so I ask the following.

- (1) Am I correct in my understanding that as Minister for Defence Industry, he has staff reporting to him, not least the Defence Advocate, Rear Admiral Philip Spedding, whose stated role is to support the expansion of WA's defence industry to create more local jobs and promote the state's defence industry capability?
- (2) What, if anything, in that job description, summarised in the minister's own media release of 18 December 2022, precludes discussions with local hemp producers to better understand how they might contribute to this sought after growth?
- (3) Will the minister reconsider his response to my earlier question, given that he clearly has a role to play here, or will he continue to demonstrate that deflection and avoidance are the forms of defence he best understands?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Defence Industry.

- (1)–(3) I have received no advocacy from any company based in Western Australia to manufacture hemp clothing for the Australian Defence Force. Western Australian-based companies interested in providing products to the Australian Defence Force should contact Defence West initially for further advice. To reiterate, the procurement of products for the Australian Defence Force is the responsibility of the commonwealth government, which manages the tender process.