INDUSTRIAL HEMP — PFAS CONTAMINATION

1478. Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to a recent study published by Swedish agricultural scientists suggesting that PFAS—a compound threatening water quality worldwide, as well as here in Western Australia—can be mitigated through phytoremediation, with cannabis, in the form of industrial hemp, proving to be a fine candidate crop for such clean-ups.

(1) How many cases of PFAS or suspected PFAS contamination have been reported to the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation in the past 12 months?

(2) What clean-up options are currently employed or recommended by the department in the event of PFAS contamination?

(3) Will the minister encourage the department to consider phytoremediation, particularly as it relates to industrial hemp, as one of its potential solutions going forward?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Environment, I provide the following answer.

(1) There were 31 cases.

(2) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's *Guideline: Assessment and management of contaminated sites*, published in 2021, outlines in section 12.3 the general process for undertaking an evaluation of remedial options for all contaminated sites. This guideline does not recommend any specific remediation options for PFAS. However, nationally consistent guidance and standards for the management of PFAS contamination is provided in the *PFAS national environmental management plan*. Appendix C of the PFAS NEMP provides an overview of a range of common treatment technologies that are available in Australia.

(3) While DWER does not recommend or endorse any specific technologies for remediation, options such as phytoremediation, including using industrial hemp, may be considered and assessed by the party responsible for remediation in accordance with the guidelines mentioned above.