

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

- 1 MAY 2012

Thursday, 29 March 2012

5393. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Health.

With regard to the issue of uranium levels in water supplies at the Parngurr and Yandeyarra communities, I ask -

- (1) The Department of Housing tabled a list of priority water projects and indicative cost estimates in relation to Indigenous Remote Community water supplies at the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations hearing on 14 June 2011. The paper indicated that works were required at Parngurr and Yandeyarra to 'remove uranium and meet Australian Drinking Water Guidelines'. Is the Minister aware of the uranium levels in the water supply at Parngurr and Yandeyarra?
- (2) If yes to (1), what is the level of uranium in the water supply at each community?
- (3) What are the possible health impacts of drinking uranium contaminated water?
- (4) If no to (1), will the Minister investigate and undertake to inform this House?
- (5) What action has the Health department taken in relation to this issue?

Answer

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Parngurr = 0.015mg/L (16/1/12); Yandeyarra = 0.028mg/L (23/2/12). The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines 2004 recommends a guideline value of 0.02mg/L.
- (3) Inflammation of the kidney can occur at very high doses of uranium. The effect is reversible when uranium exposure ceases.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The Department of Health has directed the Department of Housing to remediate the system by installing treatment systems that will reduce the uranium concentrations in the water to Australian Drinking Water Guidelines compliant level.