

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Tuesday, 12 August 2014

1435. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Water.

Regarding the plan by Buru Energy to frack for tight gas in the Laurel Formation in the Kimberley region, I ask:

- (a) how much water will be required for the proposal, and for what purpose;
- (b) what is the quality of water required for the proposal;
- (c) where will the water come from;
- (d) is Buru Energy in possession of a licence to take water for its proposal:
 - (i) if yes to (d), will the Minister table the licence(s) and, if not, why not; and
 - (ii) if yes to (d), who is responsible for monitoring and regulating the licence(s);
- (e) what affect will groundwater abstraction, as proposed by Buru, have on the aquifer, and the ecosystems that are dependent upon it;
- (f) what is the separation between the aquifers used to supply drinking water, and those to be exploited for use in the fracking process;
- (g) what is the separation between the aquifers used to supply drinking water, and those in the area to be fracked; and
- (h) will the Minister table the advice her department put forward to the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Mining and Petroleum regarding the risk of impacts of fracking on the hydrogeological function of the shallower aquifers (from which drinking water is drawn):
 - (i) if no to (h), why not?

Answer

- (a) 184.4 megalitres for hydraulic fracturing and site management operational purposes.
- (b) There are no specific water quality requirements.
- (c) Canning Kimberley, Canning Liveringa, Canning Broome aquifers.
- (d) Yes:
 - (i) The Department of Water (DoW) does not release individual licences issued under the *Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914*; and
 - (ii) The DoW.
- (e) There will be no adverse impact on the groundwater resource and dependent ecosystems from the take of water under the licence issued. DoW determines the amount of water that may be licensed for sustainable use. This includes a detailed assessment of the impact of the licensed use on water dependent environments and other users.
- (f) The shallow/superficial aquifer is used to supply water for drinking and other purposes, including supplying water to be used in the hydraulic fracturing process. Hydraulic fracturing will be separated from any shallow/superficial aquifer and will occur two kilometres or more from the surface.
- (g) See answer to (f).
- (h) No.

- (i) The Department of Water's advice is incorporated in the published decision of the Environmental Protection Authority, and is also incorporated in Buru's final Environment Plan as endorsed by the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. W. G.', located in the upper right quadrant of the page.