

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
(Of which some notice has been given)

Thursday, 23 October 2014

Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

I refer to the Minister's statement in reference to Question Without Notice 828 asked on Tuesday, 19 August 2014 that "there is no such thing as unconventional gas in Western Australia", and a further statement in reference to Question Without Notice 1166 asked on Tuesday, 14th October 2014 that "there is no accepted definition for the term 'unconventional gas'", and I ask:

1. To what were you, as Minister for Environment, referring to in the answer to Question on Notice 7974 asked on 15 May 2012 in the Legislative Assembly when you answered "The unconventional gas proposals referred to the EPA have been small scale trial proposals"?
2. To what were you referring to in your Ministerial Statement (Tuesday, 7 May 2013) when you reported on your visit to the United States for the Liquefied Natural Gas 17 conference held in Houston, Texas and you stated "These messages were well received, especially at a time when Western Australia's emerging unconventional gas sector is gaining early momentum in the exploration and appraisal phase"?
3. What definition of unconventional gas, outlined in questions 1.) and 2.) above, were you using?
4. If there is no such thing as unconventional gas in Western Australia, to what were you referring to on these occasions?

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum advises:

- 1-4. In my role as the Minister for Mines and Petroleum I have become increasingly aware that the term 'unconventional gas' is inappropriate. 'Unconventional Gas' has been a popular umbrella term for natural gas from shale, tight sands, coal seams and ocean floor hydrates.

With over twenty years of extracting natural gas from the first three sources it is difficult to continue to classify these sources as 'Unconventional'. Further, natural gas sourced from shale and tight rocks is identical to other sources of natural gas available in the State.

