

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL Question On Notice

Tuesday, 15 August 2017

136. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment representing the Minister for Lands

I refer to Rangeland condition on pastoral leases in the Kimberley, and ask:

- (a) are the Minister for Lands and/or Pastoral Lands Board (PLB) responsible for ensuring that pastoral land is managed in an ecologically sustainable manner;
- (b) how does the Minister and PLB ensure that pastoral land is managed in an ecologically sustainable manner;
- (c) is it compulsory for pastoral leases to be managed in an ecologically sustainable manner;
- (d) if no to (c), why not;
- (e) during the past five years, how many pastoral leases in the Kimberley have been identified as having a "rangeland condition issue" as described on the Department of Lands, Planning and Heritage website, located at <http://www.lands.wa.gov.au/Leases/Rangeland-Condition/Pages/default.aspx>;
- (f) will the Minister detail what these "rangeland condition issues" have been and on which leases they have occurred;
- (g) if no to (f), why not;
- (h) how many leases in the Kimberley have been issued with notices to reduce stock numbers in the past five years;
- (i) will the Minister table the details of the notices to reduce stock numbers, including the name of the pastoral lease, issued in the last five years; and
- (j) if no to (i), why not?

Answer

- (a) Yes. Section 95(c) of the *Land Administration Act 1997* (LAA) provides that one of the functions of the Pastoral Lands Board (PLB) is to ensure that pastoral leases are managed on an ecologically sustainable basis.
- (b) The Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage (DPLH) and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) identify pastoral stations at risk of declining rangeland condition, based on reported stocking rates, seasonal quality, changes in vegetation cover obtained from satellite monitoring, period of time since the previous inspection and relevant anecdotal evidence. At-risk stations are then prioritised for on-ground inspection based on a Desktop Audit, with the subsequent reports submitted to the Pastoral Lands Board (PLB). Any identified breaches are dealt with in accordance with the PLB Compliance Policy.
- (c) No

(d) Pastoral leases are granted for pastoral purposes, being the commercial grazing of livestock. Section 108(2) of the LAA provides that pastoral lessees must use methods of best pastoral and environmental management practice, appropriate to the area where the land is

situated, for the management of stock and for the management, conservation and regeneration of pasture for grazing. In addition, section 108(4) of the LAA provides that lessees must maintain the indigenous pasture and other vegetation on the land under the lease to the satisfaction of the PLB.

(e) Since 1 July 2012, Rangeland Condition Reports for 17 pastoral stations in the Kimberley identified concerns about rangeland condition.

(f) In all cases, the issue related to declining rangeland condition on parts or all of the pastoral station. Alice Downs, Bedford Downs, Billiluna, Bulka, Christmas Creek, Koongie Park, Lake Gregory, Lansdowne, Lissadell, Moola Bulla, Mt Amhurst, Mt House, Nerrima, Rosewood, Springvale, Texas Downs/Mabel Downs, and Yeeda Stations.

(g) N/A

(h) 2

(i) Yes. On 18 December 2014 the PLB directed the lessee of Moola Bulla and Mt Amhurst Stations to maintain livestock numbers below 27,000 units.

(j) N/A

A handwritten signature or set of initials, possibly 'RS', written in dark ink. The signature is stylized and appears to be written over a horizontal line.