Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The two previous questions asked were as follows: On 28 May 1997 the Minister was asked: How many Keystart loans are currently more than 60 days in arrears? The Minister responded that as at 30 April 1997, 479 Keystart loans were more than 60 days in arrears. This number included loans that were classified as mortgagee in possession but excluded loans in arrears less than 60 days, as required by the question.

On 28 August 1997 the Minister was asked, inter alia, two questions: How many homes which have been foreclosed or returned to Keystart have not been sold; and how many Keystart loans are currently in arrears? The Minister responded that there were 147 loans as mortgagee in possession and 413 Keystart credit foncier loans including arrears less than 60 days.

The two questions asked about arrears were different. The first question asked how many loans were more than 60 days in arrears, and did not request the mortgagee in possession loans to be specified separately. The second question required a further categorisation into mortgagee in possession and arrears of less than and greater than 60 days current arrears. The second answer only included credit foncier loans in arrears.

For comparison, the figure of 479 loans in arrears, which included mortgagee in possession loans but excluded those loans less than 60 days in arrears, would compare with 466 loans in July calculated on the same basis. The decrease in the number of loans reflects the improvement in arrears over this period.

749. Hon J.A. SCOTT to the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

(1) Has the Department of Environmental Protection forwarded any recommendation to the Minister for the Environment on the decommissioning options for the PCB contaminated Stephenson and Ward Pty Ltd Incinerator site?

(2) If yes, what were the recommendations, and was this done before the conclusion of the consultation process through the community liaison committee chaired by Professor Arthur McComb?

(3) What is the status of the McComb report? Does it -

(a) reflect the views of the committee, or

(b) reflect the views of Professor McComb?

Hon MAX EVANS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

(1) In planning the proposed clean up of this contaminated site, the Department of Environmental Protection prepared a proposal for remediating the site based on extensive scientific examination of the soil and ground water. This was submitted to the EPA, which recommended it be assessed at the level of informal review with public advice. The Minister upheld this level of assessment after considering appeals against it, and then appointed Professor Arthur McComb of the Murdoch University Institute of Environmental Science to chair the community liaison committee and act as an independent adviser to the EPA.

The Minister understands that in June 1997 the DEP submitted to the EPA a draft work plan for the site clean up in order that the EPA can consider the advice that it will give, and that the EPA will receive advice from regulatory agencies and Professor McComb. The DEP has kept the Minister aware of its progress on this project, but the work has been directed primarily towards the EPA’s consideration of the matter and receipt of its consequent advice.

(2) The Minister understands that the DEP work plan recommends clean up of the site and adjacent road reserve land to the Australian and New Zealand Environment Conservation Council residential land standard for PCBs - 1 part per million - except for some low level contamination - less than 20 ppm - beneath the actual incinerator, which it is recommended be contained and then excavated and removed in the future when land use may change. As part of the work plan, a risk assessment of the site was completed by the then Rust PPK Pty Ltd Consultants. Its essential conclusion was that the site could be retained in its current state until change of land use, based on purely technical grounds.
The Minister has not been involved in the preparation of the report by Professor McComb. The Minister understands that it will reflect his views of all the information he has considered but that some members of the committee that met yesterday indicated they could not support various parts of the report. The Minister has been advised that Professor McComb’s report to the EPA will acknowledge that these different views exist.

TELEVISION - REMOTE AND REGIONAL WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Purchase of Second Satellite Dish

750. **Hon TOM STEPHENS** to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Commerce and Trade:

(1) Is the Minister aware of reports that people in remote and regional Western Australia may have to purchase a second satellite dish if they want to continue receiving Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Golden West Network broadcasts?

(2) Can the Minister confirm whether there is any substance to these reports and outline what steps the Government is taking to minimise the cost implications for people in remote and regional Western Australia?

**Hon N.F. MOORE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

(1) Yes.

(2) The Minister for Commerce and Trade wrote to Senator Alston, the federal Minister for Communications and the Arts, on 26 August outlining the impacts of the conversion of remote area television services to compressed digital video broadcasting. Since GWN has selected PanAmSat as its satellite television delivery program and the ABC has selected Optus, when the change from analog to digital technology occurs, those people dependent on a satellite dish to receive television will need to buy a new integrated receiver decoder to replace their current B-MAC decoder, a second dish, complete with low noise converter, and a second, different, IRD.

The view of the Western Australian Government is that the Commonwealth Government should offer some financial assistance towards the purchase of these new decoders, estimated to cost at least $1 200 each. The latter is a considerable burden for remote area residents simply to retain the services they already enjoy. The Commonwealth stands to make a considerable saving from the introduction of CDV through both reduced transmission costs by the national broadcasters and the elimination of subsidies to the remote commercial television broadcasters. The Minister strongly recommended to Senator Alston that a proportion of these savings be used to offer a subsidy to all existing satellite receiver owners and community retransmission site owners who will be forced to convert to CDV. The Minister has yet to receive a reply from Senator Alston.

EDUCATION - ABORIGINAL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENTS

Retain in Department

751. **Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH** to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Education:

(1) Can the Minister confirm that there were two Aboriginal district superintendents prior to the Education Department restructure?

(2) Can the Minister confirm that neither of these Aboriginal superintendents was a successful applicant for the 21 newly created district director positions?

If yes to the above -

(3) Will these two experienced Aboriginal educators be retained by the department?

(4) If yes, in what capacity?

**Hon N.F. MOORE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

(1) In the previous structure, two district superintendents were Aboriginal.