

WATER LICENSING FEES

**136. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources:**

I refer to the new water licensing fees proposed to be introduced on 1 July 2007.

- (1) What public consultation has occurred between landowners, the wine industry and the agricultural industry in the south west?
- (2) What form did this consultation take?
- (3) Will the minister specify what additional consultation will take place before the water licences and fees are introduced?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank Hon Barry House for giving some notice of the question. It is a lengthy answer, made long because of the naming of a lot of different organisations. Therefore, I will table the answer and seek leave for its incorporation.

Leave granted.

[See paper 2590.]

The following material was incorporated -

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

1. The introduction of water licence administration fees in Western Australia has a long history and the Government has facilitated extensive consultation on this matter through a variety of forms since 2002, including in the South West region.

The Premier's Water Symposium (2002), the then Department of Environment's Stakeholder Reference Group (which included representatives from the Wine Industry Association and other agricultural stakeholder groups) (2002) and the Irrigation Review Steering Committee (2004-2005) have all actively considered this matter in consultation with stakeholders and the community. The 2005 Report of the Irrigation Review Steering Committee (consisting of industry representatives and Government agency representatives) specifically recommended the introduction of water resource management charges that recover the share of management costs attributable to water users, starting with the costs of licensing and compliance.

Most recently, in early 2006 the Government requested the Minister for Water Resources to develop a proposal to introduce cost recovery mechanisms for water licences and the Water Reform Implementation Committee to undertake public consultation on a proposed fee structure and amount. In July 2006, the Committee's *A draft blueprint for water reform in Western Australia* was released for public consultation, and included a fee structure and proposal.

2. In preparing its advice on water licence administration fees, the Water Reform Implementation Committee undertook the following consultative activities in the South West from July to September 2006:

- Five public workshops (of a total of 17 held statewide) were held in the South West at Manjimup, Donnybrook, Collie, Busselton and Harvey attended by a total of 212 people. Workshops were attended by water users, landowners and representatives of stakeholder groups and local governments. The workshops were advertised through the media, advertisements in local press, circulation through membership of the Western Australian Farmer's Federation and the Potato Grower's Association.
- The Committee's draft report was made available on the internet, in advance of and at the public workshops, as well as being sent direct to stakeholder organisations inviting written submissions. Stakeholder organisations with an interest in the wine industry and agricultural industries in the South West were also sent the draft report including Wine Industry Association, Potato Growers Association, Vegetables WA, Commercial Egg Producers Association of WA, Turf Industry Association, Nursery & Garden Industry Association, Irrigation Association of Australia Ltd, Baldvis Market Growers, Harvey Water, WA Farmers Federation, Preston Valley Irrigation Cooperative, WA Fruit Growers Association, South West Table Grape Growers Association, Vegetables WA, Pastoralists & Graziers Association.
- The Committee also met with representatives of stakeholder groups, including the Western Australian Farmers Federation, the Pastoralists and Graziers Association and the Vegetable Growers Association, on request.

3. The Department of Water will be writing to all licence holders providing them details on how the fee will affect them. The licence holders will be provided with the opportunity to reduce costs by reviewing their water entitlement or combining licences where they have more than one.

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