

WEST ATLAS OIL SPILL — KIMBERLEY MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

895. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the West Atlas oil spill off the Kimberley coast.

- (1) Is the Department of Environment and Conservation assessing the impact of the oil discharge from the West Atlas oil rig on the wildlife and environment of the Kimberley coast?
- (2) If yes to (1), how is this being done, and what has been found to date?
- (3) If no to (1), what role does or will the Department of Environment and Conservation play in assessing the impact of the oil discharge on the Kimberley marine and terrestrial environment?

Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:

I thank the member for her question. The Minister for Environment has provided the following answer —

- (1) Yes. However, at this stage the oil spill is outside state waters and is in waters for which the commonwealth government has responsibility.
- (2) The Department of Environment and Conservation is in daily contact with the Department of Transport, which is the conduit for information gathered by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority—the lead agency managing the current oil spill response operations in the Timor Sea. The Department of Environment and Conservation is also in regular communication with the federal Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts—which is responsible for environmental and scientific advice coordination and oiled wildlife response in commonwealth waters—and the Western Australian Department of Fisheries, which is responsible for fisheries in the area. The Department of Environment and Conservation receives and evaluates data collected by trained oil spill observers from AMSA on a daily basis. In addition, DEC has cross-checked the recorded observations against available satellite-derived imagery to give reassurance that the threat to Western Australia's coastal areas remains low.