

SUSSEX LOCATION 2123 AT AMBERGATE NEAR BUSSELTON

1365. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Government Enterprises:

In relation to the retention basin currently being constructed by the Water Corporation on Sussex Location 2123 at Ambergate near Busselton -

- (1) As extensive clearing in and around the Vasse River is involved, was a notice of "Intention to Clear" lodged before construction?
- (2) Was an agricultural impact study done?
- (3) Was an Environmental Protection Authority assessment done?
- (4) Were adjoining and adjacent landowners with a common interest in the watercourse consulted and informed prior to work commencing?
- (5) Have provisions been made for preventing the spread of noxious weeds contained on the site?
- (6) Have provisions been made for compensation to neighbouring landowners for resulting loss of productivity and other injurious effects on their properties?
- (7) If yes to the six questions above, please provide details.
- (8) If not, why not?

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

Hon Barry House: I gave a week's notice at least.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: The answer was ready a week ago. I advise that the compensating basin is being constructed on Sussex locations 2123 and 2124 at Ambergate, not location 2133.

Hon Barry House: I said 2123.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: The notice of the question contains "location 2133".

Hon Barry House: The typographical error is in your system not mine.

Hon N.D. GRIFFITHS: I doubt that. Typographical errors did not occur on questions when Hon Barry House was in government.

- (1) A notice of intention to clear is required to be lodged wherever it is proposed to clear more than one hectare of native vegetation. The extent of clearing required for this compensating basin measures significantly less than one hectare; therefore, a notice was not lodged.
- (2) No. It is considered that there will be no impact on privately owned agricultural land. Nevertheless, prior to commencing a project, advice was obtained from the Department of Conservation and Land Management and the Department of Agriculture in Western Australia, which are also represented on the Busselton Flood Management Steering Committee. As a result, a two-year monitoring program commenced in July 2001 to measure aspects such as stream levels, groundwater levels, salinity, nutrient retention and pasture growth rates in the first compensating basin. No adverse findings have been reported to date. The compensating basin that is being built on Sussex locations 2123 and 2124 is situated on Water Corporation land.
- (3) The project was formally referred to the Department of Environmental Protection on 12 December 2000 and was assessed by that department as requiring only informal review with public advice.
- (4) Landowners adjoining Sussex locations 2123 and 2124 were informed of the proposed works before construction commenced. In addition in August 2001, a farmers' information workshop was held at Acton Park Hall to inform the farming community of the completion of the first compensating basin, answer any questions and announce that land at Sussex locations 2123 and 2124 had been purchased for the second compensating basin. Invitations to this workshop were mailed to all property owners in the area. The farmers' information workshop was followed by a community information day to inform the wider Busselton community. These events also attracted wide local media coverage.
- (5) Yes. All earthmoving equipment is required to be clean of soil and seeds before it is brought onto the site. Occasional emergent weeds are controlled by application of a herbicide spray.

(6) The compensating basins have been designed so that the floodwater they accumulate does not back up onto privately owned farmland. Consequently, the Water Corporation does not expect that neighbouring landowners will experience any loss of productivity or other injurious effects.

(7)-(8) Not applicable.

I suggest to the member that questions of this nature would be better placed on notice when they may elicit a faster answer. As the member said, he gave notice a week ago.