

WATER LICENSING OF FARM DAMS, COMMUNITY CONSULTATION GROUPS

1135. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage:

It is good to see the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development today.

Hon Tom Stephens: It is nice to see you too.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I ask -

- (1) At what stage is the community consultation group process relating to the water licensing of farm dams in Western Australia?
- (2) How is the membership of these groups decided?
- (3) Does the Government believe that regional Western Australia is properly represented on these groups?
- (4) What is the make-up of these consultation committees, who are the members and where are they based?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

- (1) No consultation is occurring in relation to water licensing for farm dams in Western Australia; nor is there any proposal to license farm dams other than those that already require licensing in proclaimed surface water management areas. I assume that the honourable member is referring to local water resources management committees, which can be established under the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914. The establishment of WRMCs has been progressing since the amendment to the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914 was proclaimed on 10 January 2001. No committees have been formally established; however, two are progressing through the statutory process as required. The Water and Rivers Commission and its predecessors previously established and used local area advisory committees to facilitate community input. Although these committees are still in use, they will gradually be replaced by WRMCs.
- (2) The Rights in Water and Irrigation Act requires members of WRMCs to be drawn substantially from people who are water users; reside or are employed or operate a business within the area for which the committee is established; are representatives of local government; are officers of public authorities with functions in the locality or area; have knowledge and experience relating to the water needs of local communities, including Aboriginal communities; or are members of the board of management or staff of the Water and Rivers Commission.
- (3) Yes. I believe that given the criteria enshrined in the legislation, regional Western Australia will be properly represented on these groups.
- (4) The Water and Rivers Commission is in the process of establishing two committees. The first is the Whicher water resources management committee, which will cover the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River, Busselton and Nannup. The commission is considering the inclusion in this committee of the Shire of Capel due to its location in the Busselton-Capel ground water area. The second is the Gingin-Dandaragan water resources management committee. It will cover the proclaimed Gingin and Jurien ground water areas in the Shires of Gingin, Dandaragan, Moora, Chittering and Victoria Plains. For the honourable member's information, I table a list of the proposed members of the Whicher and Gingin-Dandaragan WRMCs and their backgrounds.

[See paper No 1343.]