

WATER CORPORATION — ASBESTOS — MINNIVALE

901. Mr W.J. JOHNSTON to the Minister for Water:

I refer to the serious incident in which Water Corporation staff and contractors have been exposed to dangerous asbestos.

- (1) Will this serious and dangerous incident be independently investigated; and, if so, by whom?
- (2) When did the Water Corporation notify WorkSafe WA of this serious and dangerous incident?
- (3) Why did the Water Corporation not notify the Western Australian public today about this serious and dangerous incident, as it told the member for Bassendean yesterday it would?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

- (1)–(3) I cannot believe that we are having this conversation after I explained to the house why we were not having the conversation publicly. I do not resile for one moment from the seriousness of this situation. That is why yesterday I went to the shadow Minister for Water to advise him of the situation, offered the briefing in full and said that I would not be making a public statement until such time as we were confident that everyone who had been exposed was aware. Today we have a media scrum called by the shadow minister to make a political point.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I asked: will there be an independent investigation; when was Worksafe notified; and the third point, which I understand the minister is answering. But I would like the first two points answered, which are as equally important.

The SPEAKER: Thank you; sit down, please!

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Mr Speaker, it is a serious issue. The Water Corporation is conducting an investigation and will provide all the information to WorkSafe, as required. We are currently working through that process. I will not discuss, and I cannot pre-empt, any of those findings because the investigation is currently underway. What I did ask for was a little bit of human consideration from the member opposite not to play this matter out in the media until such time as everyone had been notified and had time to come to terms with the fact that they had been put in this situation. I therefore do not resile from the fact that this is a serious incident.

Several members interjected.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The member is laughing. He is sitting over there laughing about people —

The SPEAKER: I want to tell members now that some people are on three strikes. You are starting to bellow out, member for Albany. A short answer through the Chair and let us try to move on.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Mr Speaker, I —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, member for Moore, please!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: The incident is being investigated, WorkSafe will be involved and that information will be provided to WorkSafe.