

VARANUS ISLAND GAS PLANT — ALLEGED POLLUTION

1811. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to airborne Nitrogen Dioxide and Particle Matter clouds seen over Varanus Production Area, centred to the east of Montebello Islands and north of Lowendal Island, using Copernicus satellite imagery and showing extremely high and dangerous concentrations of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} since at least Friday 27 October 2023, and I ask:

- (a) is the Department aware of a breach of the Santos gas production license to operate smokelessly from the Varanus Production Area at any time during:
 - (i) August 2023;
 - (ii) September 2023;
 - (iii) October 2023; and
 - (iv) November 2023;
- (b) if yes to (a), what was done or is currently being done to contain the pollution;
- (c) if nothing was done at any point during breaches, why not;
- (d) will Santos be fined for breaching their gas production license;
- (e) if not, will the department investigate the matter;
- (f) if not, why not;
- (g) if any breaches are confirmed, will decisive action be taken against Santos;
- (h) if no to (g), why not; and
- (i) what was done to ensure health impacts of NO₂ and PM_{2.5} were advised to City of Karratha residents and further minimised for Dampier, Karratha, Roebourne and any other residential communities impacted?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a) (i)–(iv) The Department of Energy, Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety is aware of reports of emissions from the Varanus Island facilities.
- (b) The relevant licence that sets limits on nitrous oxides and particulate matter is L6284/1992/10 is granted by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DEWR) under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. Any questions relating to this should be directed to the relevant Minister.
- (c)–(i) Not Applicable.