

WHICHER WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND SOUTH WEST YARRAGADEE
AQUIFER

1074. Hon Barry House to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources

Will the Minister please provide -

- (1) A breakdown of the total budget for the Whicher Water Resource Management Committee?
- (2) Details on any remuneration provided to the Chairman of the committee?
- (3) Details on which Agency or Department provides funding to the Whicher Water Resource Management Committee and through what program is funding provided?
- (4) Details as to whether the Government has any plans to establish other committees following the Whicher Water Resource Management Committee model?
- (5) Details as to how these committees will be funded?
- (6) Details as to whether the Government has plans to introduce any form of water management charge or licence fee for access to ground or surface water?
- (7) Details as to what action is being taken to ensure that reasonable regional needs will be provided for in regards to the current investigation into the export of water from the South West Yarragadee aquifer formation?
- (8) Details as to what constitutes reasonable regional needs in regards to the proposal to export water from the South West Yarragadee aquifer formation?
- (9) Details on what action will be taken to ensure that appropriate water resources are provided to meet the growing needs of the South West region, particularly in regards to land identified as being suitable for irrigated agriculture?
- (10) Details as to whether the Government plans to provide any form of compensation to private land owners in the South West where access to surface or ground water on their properties is restricted to meet the needs of another region?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

The Minister for Water Resources has provided the following response.

- (1) The Department of Environment advises that the total budget for the Committee for 2004/05 is \$56,547. This is for a part-time Executive/Project Officer \$41,026 and \$15,521 for committee member expenses, meeting venue hire, catering, printing and so on.
- (2) Whicher Water Resource Management Committee members are remunerated in accordance with a schedule set by the Office of Public Sector Management. The Chair receives \$323.00 per full day meeting (over 4 hours) and \$213.00 per part day meeting (less than 4 hours). Individual members receive \$215.00 per full day meeting and \$142.00 part day meeting.

Travel allowance is also payable in accordance with requirement set by the Office of Public Sector Management. However, as per Government policy, no reimbursement is made for the first 40 kilometres of any journey.
- (3) The Department of Environment, through the Water and Rivers Commission, provides funding to the Whicher Water Resources management Committee.
- (4) The Department of Environment has identified 16 committees that could be established throughout the State (East Kimberley; West Kimberley; Pilbara; Gascoyne; Goldfields; Mid-West; Central Wheatbelt; Gingin/Dandaragan; Swan/Wanneroo; Perth Urban; Perth South; Peel/Preston; Vasse (Whicher); Warren/Donnelly/Blackwood; Albany Coastal; Esperance Coastal). To date, the Whicher and the GinGin Dandaragan Water Resources Management Committees have been established. Committees will continue to be established on a case by case basis as determined by the Department of Environment where they are required to meet the needs and level of water resources management required.
- (5) The Department of Environment, through the Water and Rivers Commission, would provide funding to future Water Resources Management Committees.
- (6) The government's policy is not to charge a water management or licence fee. Should this policy change it would be announced at that time.

- (7) The Government has undertaken through its State Water Strategy to ensure that, for where new water resource development projects involve inter-regional transfers, 'all reasonable regional needs including social, recreational and projected future development will be satisfied before transfers can take place'.
- The Department of Environment is committed to ensuring reasonable regional needs are satisfied before water is exported from the South West Yarragadee aquifer formation. As part of its licence evaluation and assessment, the Department of Environment is currently developing a process that will detail how reasonable regional needs will be taken into consideration. When the Department of Environment makes its decision on the Water Corporation's licence, the assessment report, including details on reasonable regional needs, will be made public.
- (8) It has been agreed with the Whicher Water Resources Management Committee that for the determination of reasonable regional needs, 'regional' has been defined as those areas of the South West land division, represented by Local Government Authorities who are, because of their location, primarily contained within the hydrogeological boundaries of the southern Perth Basin. Shires within this area includes the Shires of Bunbury, Dardanup, Capel, Busselton, Nannup and Augusta-Margaret River. In addition 'regional' in the context of the current investigation includes the Local Government Authorities whose cultural and socio-economic links are strongly aligned. This includes the Shires of Harvey, Collie, Donnybrook-Balingup, Boyup Brook, Bridgetown-Greenbushes and Manjimup.
- The Department of Environment is currently developing a process for the determination of reasonable regional needs with key stakeholders. .
- (9) Reasonable regional needs refers to projected future development needs which includes appropriate water resources for irrigated agriculture, industry and public water supply in the region, in addition to social and recreational needs.
- (10) Landowners do not have an inherent right to water below their property and hence compensation is not applicable.