

EGG MARKET

1498. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

In light of that answer, I have another question for the Leader of the House in a similar vein.

- (1) Was the purpose of the submission that the Western Australian Government put to the National Competition Council to establish a public interest case before the egg market was deregulated?
- (2) If yes, to (1), will the minister table the submission?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) How much money is at stake regarding the decision on the egg industry?
- (5) When the Government obtains this money, will the money get swallowed up in the consolidated revenue fund or will it be used today to “compensate” the egg farmers who are severely affected by this decision?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I do have an answer to this question.

- (1)-(3) The Government’s decision was to deregulate the egg industry by no later than 1 July 2007, subject to advice from the National Competition Council on the impact on the State’s payments under the national competition policy. The National Competition Council supports earlier deregulation - that is, earlier than that date - but the Government is aware that this would impose additional adjustment costs on producers. The public interest case for maintaining regulation until July 2007, which focuses on adjustment costs, is being developed by industry and government following recent interaction between the Government and the National Competition Council. The Government has had a response from the council.
- (4) Not known. It is the subject of ongoing discussion between the Government and the National Competition Council.
- (5) Payments from the Australian Government to the State Government depend on an assessment by the National Competition Council of further progress with competition reform. Payments that may be suspended for non-compliance with National Competition Council advice on egg marketing reform have not been announced.