

SALINITY PROGRAM, NORTH WEST

1040. Mr L. Graham to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

I refer to the recent announcement that the State Government has begun a four-year program to upgrade research and development into specialist plants for conservation projects as part of the Western Australia's Salinity Strategy, and I ask -

- (a) how much of the State Government's proposed \$165million salinity program is to be spent on programs in the North West of the State;
- (b) in which towns and communities will the funds be spent;
- (c) who will be responsible for administering the funds; and
- (d) when will the programs commence operation in each town referred to above?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

It is not clear from your question, but I assume that you are referring to the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality.

- (a) The Ord catchment is one of the 21 priority regions as part of the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality and as such may receive funding from this initiative. However there has not been specific funding decisions for the Ord River Catchment made as yet.
- (b) The decisions on what towns and communities will receive funding has not been made, but funds will be spent on priorities identified in the Salinity Investment Framework and by the Natural Resource Management regional groups.
- (c) The National Action Plan funds will be administered by a Joint Steering Committee made up of Federal and State representatives.
- (d) The bilateral agreement for the National Action Plan was signed by the Premier last year and is waiting on the Prime Minister to sign so that the initiative can commence.