

GORGON GAS FIELD DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL SAFEGUARDS

1209. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I ask this question on behalf of the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon Tom Stephens: What? He is not here again? Is he jetting off around the country again?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: He is away on very important parliamentary business.

Hon Tom Stephens: Why is he not here in the Chamber?

Hon Ken Travers: The longer members are here, the less we see of them!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I would hate this to go unnoticed. The Leader of the Opposition is in Broome on very important business to do with native title matters.

Hon Tom Stephens: How come when I am in Broome you always complain about it?

Hon BARRY HOUSE: I ask: I refer the Premier to the decision to give in-principle approval for the use of Barrow Island for the development of the Gorgon gas field, and particularly to the press release statement that the approval was conditional on the joint venture partners meeting state and commonwealth environmental safeguards. Can the Premier confirm that the project's final approval remains subject to environmental approval at state and commonwealth levels, when a detailed proposal is presented by the proponents, and thus it still faces the risk of not being given final approval?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Barry House for asking the question of which notice has been given. The project remains subject to environmental approval at both state and commonwealth levels, and the Government is not in any way pre-empting those processes. Environmental Protection Authority bulletin 1101 of July 2003 states -

The EPA recommends that the developer be advised that the formal environmental impact assessment process under Part IV of the *Environmental Protection Act* will require clear demonstration of the developer's ability to meet any environmental and conservation risk standards. In doing so, they can expect to set new benchmarks in conservation management performance that go significantly beyond current best practice.

It is the Government's expectation that the Gorgon joint venture will be able to meet those new benchmarks.