

WATER CORPORATION — MINNIVALE RESERVOIR — ASBESTOS

983. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Minister for Water:

I refer the minister firstly to the ongoing issue of exposure of workers to asbestos due to mistakes made by the Water Corporation; and, secondly, I refer the minister to the Water Corporation's 2015–16 business plan known as the "Statement of Corporate Intent" that was tabled by the minister last week.

- (1) Why has the minister and the board deleted all references to occupational health and safety from the Water Corporation's 2015–16 business plan?
- (2) In particular, why has the minister deleted the sections "Keeping our People Safe" and "Zero Harm" from the document, along with statements such as "Safety is our first priority" and commitments to having a safety culture that all appeared in previous years?
- (3) Does this not support the view of many employees that under the minister's leadership safety is now being compromised by her emphasis on cost cutting and improving the dividend to government?

Ms M.J. DAVIES replied:

I thank the member for the question. I start by also adding sincere condolences to the families of those who have been impacted by the fires in Esperance. Our thoughts are with the community as they go through the following days and months. It will be a difficult time for that community. I know that the rest of Western Australia is thinking of them.

- (1)–(3) I absolutely reject the premise of all three questions. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind, and I am very aware, that the Water Corporation puts the safety of its employees front and centre. The member will be very aware that that statement of corporate intent is developed over a period of time. That occurred well in advance of any of the incidents that we have been referring to in relation to Minnivale.

Mr D.J. Kelly: That was the plan.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Sorry, did the member just say that we planned to do this at Minnivale?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Thank you; through the Chair.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: There is absolutely no link between the changes under the business program at the Water Corporation and the restructuring of the organisation with the incident that occurred at Minnivale—absolutely none. I stood in front of this place yesterday and said that the earliest assessment of this—bear in mind that the investigation is still underway—is that there was a process breakdown in Water Corporation's operations. WorkSafe is responsible for, and will be responsible for, managing the outcomes of the report and the investigation that is currently underway. It has the power to issue infringement or enforcement notices and to undertake prosecutions if required. We do not shy away from the seriousness of this situation, but there is absolutely no link between the changes that have been occurring under the business reorganisation at the Water Corporation and the incident at Minnivale. It is unbelievable that the member is making that link.