

OOMBULGURRI — HOUSES DEMOLITION

629. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs:

- (1) Is the minister aware that the Balanggarra Aboriginal Corporation has invited officers from his department to attend the BAC annual general meeting on 22 and 23 October 2013 in Wyndham to provide a report on Oombulgurri?
- (2) Will the minister make a commitment to send an officer or staff member to the AGM to provide an update?
- (3) Is the minister aware that many Oombulgurri residents left their community with nothing more than they could carry?
- (4) Given that the government is now planning to demolish everything at Oombulgurri except the clinic, school and seven houses, what is the minister doing to ensure that residents' property—for example boats, furniture, whitegoods and personal belongings—is protected and returned to the owners?
- (5) Who owns the buildings marked for demolition and the land title?
- (6) Will the minister table the Department of Housing report he referred to yesterday?

Hon PETER COLLIER replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)–(2) Yes.
- (3) Oombulgurri residents, as at December 2011, were provided with an opportunity to pack and remove belongings. It was neither feasible nor cost effective to take larger items of furniture and items such as whitegoods. Residents at that time packed their own belongings and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs removed them to Wyndham. Some residents did have some large items of furniture remaining that could not be retrieved.
- (4) All relocated residents were provided with a new whitegoods package. A comprehensive photographic record of all items remaining in homes was made by DAA, and consideration will be given to compensating owners for any items of value lost in the demolition process. Most residents assured DAA staff that any remaining items were unwanted. DAA is unaware of any large items such as boats remaining at Oombulgurri. There are some car and truck bodies and shells of boats et cetera; however, these items are not in useable condition and will be removed to the landfill site.
- (5) The Aboriginal Lands Trust owns the buildings and holds the land title.
- (6) No. The Aboriginal Lands Trust has reviewed all assets at the community and identified which are to be retained for possible future use as a commercial venture for the Balanggarra traditional owners. All other assets are to be demolished.