

MIRIUWUNG-GAJERRONG LAND, ORD PROJECT

957. Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for State Development:

- (1) Can the minister confirm that an offer has been made by the Government to the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people to exchange crown land for other land held under native title to facilitate the Ord project stage 2?
- (2) If yes, will the minister provide details about the two parcels of land; their location, size and geographic relationship with the Ord project stage 2?
- (3) Is the crown land subject to any competing native title claim?
- (4) Is it proposed that the crown land to be exchanged will be incorporated as part of the Miriuwung-Gajerrong native title lands, even though it did not constitute part of the land granted to the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people by the decision of the Federal Court in November 1998?

Hon KEN TRAVERS replied:

I note that the member changed the wording of part (4) of the question to include the decision by the Federal Court.

Hon Derrick Tomlinson: It was a typographical error.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I do not think it materially changes the question.

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I am advised that following the withdrawal of Wesfarmers/Marubeni from the Ord stage 2 project, the Government has determined that if Ord 2 is to proceed, it is first necessary that there be full input from the community, including traditional owners, and horticultural and other interests. The member's question refers to an offer made prior to that withdrawal and, accordingly, the terms of that offer are subject to review consequent upon that community consultation. The specific answer to the member's question is as follows -

- (1) Prior to Wesfarmers/Marubeni withdrawing from the Ord stage 2 project, the Government made a comprehensive offer to the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people to facilitate the land tenure changes necessary for the various Ord irrigation project developments under stage 2. That offer included land exchange proposals involving a number of areas of crown and pastoral leasehold land.
- (2) That government offer would have resulted in about 161 000 hectares of land being granted to the Miriuwung-Gajerrong people, in return for the surrender of their native title rights and interests over approximately 42 500 hectares of land required for Ord stage 2 developments. I refer the member to the document containing a description and map of the land in question now tabled. The copy of the document has been faxed. It is not a very good copy. I am happy either to read it to the member, which I am sure he does not want me to do, or seek to get a better copy and table it at a later stage.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps the parliamentary secretary will table the document and then provide a better replacement.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Very well. [See paper No 1084.]

- (3) The proposed exchange land is located on mostly pastoral leases and is subject to the No 2 Miriuwung-Gajerrong native title claim, WC 94/06. One of the areas is also subject to an overlapping native title claim known at Ningbing WC 99/31.
- (4) It was proposed to grant the exchange land in a manner that would have ensured that any native title rights or interests that may currently exist in the land were not extinguished by the grant. It is not possible to incorporate the exchange land into the area subject to the Federal Court's determination of 1998.