

MOSQUITO PLAGUE — MANDURAH AND PEEL REGION

4796. Mr D.A. Templeman to the Minister for Health

I refer to the current mosquito plague that is being experienced in Mandurah and the Peel Region, and ask:

- (a) how many cases of Ross River Virus and Baha Forest Virus have been reported to the Health Department from people in the Peel Region in the last 12 months and the last six months respectively;
- (b) what funding resources are currently allocated by local and state governments annually to mosquito control measures in the Peel Region;
- (c) what is the breakdown in cost for the current mosquito control program for the Peel Region;
- (d) does an implementation plan exist for any additional actions to combat this problem; and
 - (i) if so, can the Minister provide me with details of what other measures are being implemented and/or considered; and
- (e) have any additional resources been allocated to address the current problem; and
 - (i) if so, what is this additional funding?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

- (a) There have been 149 cases of Ross River Virus (RRV) disease reported from the Peel region in the last 12 months (April 2010 to 11 March 2011). Of these, 131 occurred in the last 6 months (1 Oct 2010 to 11 March 2011). There have been 25 cases of Barmah Forest virus in the last 12 months, of which 13 occurred in the last 6 months.
- (b) The Department of Health provides funding for 50 per cent of the chemical larvicides that are sprayed onto the saltmarsh mosquito breeding grounds and 100 per cent of the cost of the helicopter hire. Since August 2010, there have been sixteen aerial applications and there is funding to continue treatment as needed. The annual expenditure varies substantially depending on environmental conditions that influence the breeding and survival of saltmarsh mosquitoes.
- (c) Since 1991, the Department of Health has spent over \$2 million in the Peel region on larvicides and the helicopter. Considerable funds are also spent on mosquito and virus surveillance undertaken by the University of Western Australia, as well as training mosquito control officers from across the State, including from the Peel region.
- (d) Yes.
 - (i) There are a range of approaches adopted in managing mosquitoes, including the physical modification of breeding sites where environmental approvals permit, the application of larvicides to kill mosquito wrigglers in breeding sites, fogging to kill populations of adult mosquitoes and personal avoidance measures to limit mosquito bites. Larviciding is being undertaken using the helicopter and ground applications as frequently as is required. However, this season there have been significant problems with the larvicide being diluted and made ineffective. High wind conditions have meant that fogging is simply not possible. Unfortunately, this season while mosquito managers have achieved considerable kill rates, significant numbers of mosquitoes have managed to survive and cause problems to the community. The Department of Health and affected local governments are also pursuing planning and environmental management approaches with the relevant State Government Departments.
- (e) Yes.
 - (i) The Department of Health has already funded 16 applications of aerial larvicide in the Peel region at a cost of over \$218,000.00 on helicopter hire alone, compared to just seven treatments costing \$58,000.00 in the previous season. Further expenditure on the helicopter and ground-based treatments is anticipated before the current season is over.