

**KIRKALOCKA STATION — OIL SPILL**

*Statement*

**HON NEIL THOMSON (Mining and Pastoral)** [6.35 pm]: I rise tonight to raise the issue of a very serious oil spill that happened at Kirkalocka station, which is just south of Mt Magnet in my electorate of the Mining and Pastoral Region, and also in the electorate of North West Central. My office has been in touch with Blair Allan and Jared Ridley, the owners of that station. Obviously, they are deeply upset. I know that Vince Catania has also been in touch and has spoken with them directly to understand their situation and hear from them. Furthermore, I have spoken to the office of Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson today to see what is going on, and her chief of staff has contacted me, which I appreciate, and I will see whether further material will come back about the progress of the clean-up.

This is a very important matter for the house to be aware of. North West Coastal Highway is one of the state's main transport routes to the Pilbara and beyond that to the Kimberley, where I live. It has become a key road for a lot of industrial-related transport and for the transport of toxic materials, including fuels. There are approximately 800 vehicle movements a day on North West Coastal Highway, of which 42 per cent are trucks. It is a hugely important route.

On 31 July, a truck carrying 33 000 litres of oil rolled over and a considerable oil spill occurred. Because of the recent rains in the region, the creeks are moving, and very unfortunately, according to the owners of the station, it was not until five days afterwards that officers from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation were present on site and did a report, and it appears that the oil has now travelled a considerable distance—hundreds of kilometres—down the creek line. That is very upsetting for the station owners, and no doubt will be extremely upsetting for the whole community, because of the fauna that will be impacted by this terrible oil spill.

From the reports that I have so far, the company that is responsible—I do not have the name in front of me, but I think it is Wren Oil—has removed 8 000 litres, but there seems to be a lot more oil in the system and it is continuing to spread. Concerns have been raised on Facebook. If members go on Facebook, they can see some very moving videos made by Blair herself, who presented the issue and the small turtles that have been cleaned up. This is obviously a situation in which the problem is so great that it is beyond the capacity of the people on that station. I understand that the responsibility lies with the company to resolve the matter.

It really does raise a number of questions, which I will pursue with the minister, about how this sort of thing can be avoided in the future. We have a vast state. Apparently, it took five days for a response team to get up there and start doing some work. In that time, the oil had spread. I challenge members of the house: if that were to happen in Perth, how long would that take? I do not think it would be five days. It is not really that far up the road and it should not take that long. Without criticising, and without knowing the facts fully, I think it is worthy of further investigation.

On behalf of pastoralists in that region and people in my community in the Mining and Pastoral Region, I want to raise the issue and ask how we can do this sort of thing in the future. What are the emergency management plans and key performance indicators for responding to situations like this? If members look at the excellent Main Roads traffic map, which is an excellent tool for members wanting to understand transport tasks across Western Australia, they will see data that shows that over the last 12 months there has been a massive increase in the movement of vehicles in the region, which is obviously related to the mining boom in the north at the moment. I have seen that firsthand, as I have driven probably 50 000 kilometres across the region over the last 12 months. There is just a huge amount of transport moving on the roads. Do we have proper emergency management plans? Who is responsible when these situations arise for landowners? Who should they call to get a proper response and how should they deal with it? Then there is the challenge of how landowners will be compensated for anything that may affect their livelihood—their cattle or the environment. How can we be sure that the environment will be properly restored to its near pristine condition in that part of the world?

I pass on my thoughts to Blair and Jared. They are in a very difficult situation. I heard the emotion in what they were saying when they spoke directly to one of my staff members today. I have seen it online; they posted a comment about madly calling and speaking to every person and department to make sure they do the best they can in this beautiful landscape. They are just looking and calling out for help. I impress upon my colleagues here tonight to pause and have a look online on Facebook under Kirkalocka station. It is easy to find and they can read about the situation. I am really hopeful that the minister will take some stern and strong action to see what we can do to resolve this issue. That is my report tonight, thank you.

*House adjourned at 6.43 pm*

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