

STATE BARRIER FENCE NEAR HYDEN — COMPENSATION TO FARMERS

791. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister for Agriculture and Food

Given that the Government has made funding available to provide materials to farmers to build and repair the State Barrier Fence near Hyden, including an area that is a State Reserve, I ask:

- (1) Why are the farmers in the vicinity expected to build or repair a part of the fence which borders their farms through the Forrestania State Reserve?
- (2) What recompense for labour, machinery and fuel will be made to the farmers?

Mr D.T. REDMAN replied:

- (1) The State Government did not make any additional funding available to provide materials to farmers to build and repair the State Barrier Fence near Hyden. The materials that will be used to replace 31km of the State Barrier Fence to a wild dog standard had been purchased previously by the State Barrier Fence Project as part of its annual fence maintenance budget.

The State Barrier Fence is currently maintained as a barrier to protect the agricultural region from emu migrations; however, there is growing recognition that the fence also provides some protection against wild dog activity. The 31km of fence being replaced east of Hyden and Ravensthorpe had not been budgeted for replacement at this stage, because it was still suitable for emu migration management; however, local farmers had requested the particular sections of fence be upgraded to wild dog standard.

Local farmers were canvassed to see if they would be interested in carrying out the erection of the two sections of fence, because the State Barrier Fence Project was not in a budget position to pay for the required contract labour to erect the 31km of fence. Farmer meetings at both Hyden and Ravensthorpe endorsed the proposal for the Department of Agriculture and Food to provide the materials required to replace the fence and for local farmers to carry out the erection of the fence at a convenient time around their seeding programs.

- (2) Farmers will not be reimbursed for their costs to build these sections of fence.