

BIOFUELS TASK FORCE

668. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture and Forestry:

The minister is aware that the government has supported the private member's motion introduced by the member for Stirling for the formation of a task force to fully explore the potential for the biofuels industry in Western Australia.

- (1) What form will the task force take and will the Department of Agriculture be the lead agency?
- (2) Will the minister support the nomination of the Leader of the Parliamentary National Party - the member for Merredin - for a position on the task force?
- (3) Does the minister envisage the community and industry being represented on the task force?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for some notice of the question.

The task force was an excellent initiative of the member for Stirling and one that I think the government will be very keen to follow through on.

- (1) The task force will consist of representatives from appropriate government departments, including the Department of Agriculture and the Department for Planning and Infrastructure. Appropriate industry bodies and community-based organisations will also be involved. In a sense, that answers part (3) of the question.

I believe the Department of Agriculture is best placed to take the lead role due to the critical importance of the production system in biofuels viability. The potential regional benefits of biofuels are also important, and the department's leading role in renewable energy research and development in Australia is a factor.

- (2) I would support the inclusion of appropriate members of Parliament provided that the members brought particular expertise to the task force, which could include detailed knowledge of grain production and the rural economy. Both the member for Merredin and Hon Murray Criddle have that expertise.
- (3) Yes. See the answer to (1).