

WITTENOOM

**450. Hon WILSON TUCKER to the minister representing the Minister for Lands:**

Will the minister please update the house on the progress of the demolition of the remaining structures at Wittenoom, including —

- (1) what is the expected completion date;
- (2) has the government reached a position on the clean-up of the surrounding landscape, including asbestos tailings; and, if not, when can a decision be expected; and
- (3) will the government commit to ensuring that family members with relatives buried in Wittenoom cemetery will continue to have access after the removal of the remaining structures?

**Hon SUE ELLERY replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The following response is provided on behalf of the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Lands.

- (1)–(3) Demolition has commenced and is expected to be completed in 2023. It is unlikely to be technically feasible to remediate the total area from contamination, and this will be considered by the Wittenoom Steering Committee. All roads into the former town site and nearby gorge have been permanently closed to undertake the planned demolition works within the asbestos-contaminated area. Warning signs have been installed around the active worksite. There is no visitor access to the area and trespassers may be subject to prosecution given that the area is an active worksite. The cemetery remains in situ and undisturbed. However, the Wittenoom asbestos management area covers more than 46 000 hectares and is the largest contaminated area in the Southern Hemisphere. There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibres.