

GRASS PATCH GRAIN BIN - CBH GROUP

928. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Given that Grass Patch is a quality assured strategic receival point for the CBH Group that receives 240 000 tonnes of various segregations of grain, and that Main Roads WA has only in the past week decided that the truck configurations of 27.5 metres or less are allowed to access the Grass Patch bin for access to the Coolgardie-Esperance Highway and seven other locations, and given that the harvest has commenced and safety issues have been identified, I ask -

- (1) Will the minister immediately allow longer truck configurations to access the Grass Patch bin, both immediately and in the long term?
- (2) Has the minister considered the ramifications of heavy haulage going to Esperance during the harvest period, leading to congestion at that receival point?

Hon ADELE FARINA replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1)-(2) Main Roads' action in restricting access for vehicles exceeding 27.5 metres in length at the locations specified in the questions has been made on safety grounds due to insufficient clearance between the highway and the railway line. This issue was raised with Main Roads at a meeting in July with representatives of CBH and the Grass Patch bin users. A subsequent investigation recommended placing a restriction on vehicles that exceed 27.5 metres. This recommendation has also been supported by the railway operator on safety grounds. Notwithstanding the above, the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure recognises that the timing of the restriction will impact on the farming and transport sectors, as the industry would not have sufficient time to reconfigure itself for the 2007 grain harvest. With this in mind, the minister has asked Main Roads to immediately consult the rail operator about establishing a radio call system with spotters on the ground who could advise the transport operators of the train movements through the CBH facility. If Westnet Rail Pty Ltd agrees, Main Roads will agree to lift the truck restriction immediately to allow the 2007 harvest to proceed unhindered. However, if this option proves to be unviable, Main Roads will investigate some of the other short-term solutions that were proposed at the meeting held with affected stakeholders on 17 October to address the safety risk and access concerns. It should be noted that any longer term infrastructure solution would require a financial contribution from CBH.