

SOIL AND WATER CONTAMINATION — WEST BULLSBROOK

1096. Hon TIM CLIFFORD to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to question without notice 1072 asked by Hon Charles Smith on Thursday, 1 November, regarding the per-fluoroalkyl chemical—PFAS—contamination in west Bullsbrook.

- (1) When will the discussion between the WA government and the Department of Defence be finalised, and will the outcomes be made public?
- (2) How many properties in Bullsbrook are impacted by the contamination?
- (3) Is the contamination able to be remediated?
- (4) If yes to (3), who will bear the cost of the clean-up?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

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

- (1) As previously indicated in response to question without notice 1051, answered by me as Minister for Environment, and question without notice 1072, answered by Hon Alannah MacTiernan representing the Minister for Water, the legal situation is complex. State agencies do not have control over the investigation, remediation and mitigation practices of commonwealth agencies. In accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Framework for Responding to PFAS Contamination, the Department of Defence is responsible for investigation and management of PFAS contamination at and near RAAF Base Pearce, and Defence is leading discussions regarding the options for provision of sustainable long-term drinking water supplies to affected properties. The time frame and communication of discussion outcomes are a matter for Defence. I understand that Defence's next community information kiosk for its Pearce investigations is scheduled for Thursday, 15 November 2018, in west Bullsbrook.
- (2) As I indicated in my answer to question without notice 1051 on 31 October 2018, by July 2018 the Department of Defence's investigations had detected PFAS levels above drinking water guidance values in groundwater samples from six residential bores.
- (3) National guidance on PFAS treatment and remediation is provided in the "PFAS National Environmental Management Plan". Using the Pearce environmental investigation findings, the Department of Defence has advised it is developing a PFAS management area plan. The aim of the plan is to provide options to manage and reduce the risks of PFAS exposure near the base and to outline ongoing monitoring.
- (4) As I indicated in my answer to question without notice 1051 on 31 October 2018, in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement on a National Framework for Responding to PFAS Contamination, the commonwealth is responsible for identifying and managing PFAS contamination on and from commonwealth sites and on sites where commonwealth government activities have resulted in PFAS contamination.