

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 760

asked on Thursday, 11 May 2006

MR KNUTH ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES, MINES AND WATER (MR PALASZCZUK)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the Gulf Rivers Water Resource Committee which for over two years now has been providing input in relation to the water entitlements for its area and in view of the time now elapsed since consideration was first given to this matter—

When can a decision be expected regarding the current moratorium on water entitlements for this area?

ANSWER:

I expect to release a draft Water Resource Plan (draft Plan) for the river systems that drain Queensland's Gulf Country in the near future. The Community Reference Panel to which you have referred has provided invaluable advice to the Department during the preparation of the draft Plan.

Upon the draft Plan's release, the community will have the opportunity to provide their views on proposed strategies that will address the area's water allocation and management arrangements for the next ten years. Public submissions on the draft Plan will play an important role in shaping the final Gulf Water Resource Plan.

At the start of this water resource planning process, a moratorium was introduced to restrict activities that would lead to more water being taken. The moratorium is intended to maintain the status quo during the planning process so that the Plan can be prepared from a stable base from which all existing water entitlements are accounted for and protected from the effects of additional development.

The moratorium will remain in place until the final Plan is released later this year. In the meantime, some water can be made available now through exemptions in the moratorium to ensure that any town water needs or those of an expanding mining industry can be met. The construction of infrastructure that allows overland flow water to be captured to meet stock and domestic and other small scale uses is also unaffected by the moratorium.