

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 854

**asked on Wednesday, 6 June 2007**

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MR FENLON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

Will he provide an update on the Government's commitment to the sale of unallocated water in the Warrego catchment?

ANSWER:

As the member will be aware, there is 8,000 megalitres per annum of unallocated water entitlement available for release in the Warrego catchment. The sale of this opportunity to access unallocated water was included in the Resource Operations Plan process and was part of the end of system flow figures. This water was identified as part of the water planning process for the Warrego and is intended to assist in the development of that area by providing for industry and employment opportunities.

Following the proposal by the Prime Minister announced in January 2007 to review the arrangements for water management in the Murray–Darling Basin, a letter was sent to the Prime Minister offering to suspend the release of this water. The Prime Minister indicated, in a letter on 25 March 2007, that the sale of this water can proceed as originally planned. These actions caused the sale of this water to be delayed.

As a consequence of the delays, it has been decided to reissue the public notice to allow additional registrations of interest. This will ensure that as many interested parties as possible have the opportunity to purchase the unallocated water. Previous registrations will be carried over.

The auction is scheduled to take place in September 2007, with the finalisation of the sale and the issuing of entitlements occurring by early 2008.

Conditions will be attached to the entitlements for this water to ensure that it is only taken in times of high water availability, when the Warrego River is flowing.

The Prime Minister, the National Water Commission and all of the Murray Darling Basin Ministers, including the Commonwealth Water Minister, the Honourable Malcolm Turnbull MP are fully aware that Queensland intends to proceed with the sale of the Warrego Water.