

ENVIRONMENTAL APPEALS — MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

959. Hon BRIAN ELLIS to the Minister for Environment:

Will the minister advise of the status of environmental appeal determinations made by her in the past 12 months?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question, and note his longstanding interest in matters surrounding environmental approval processes for a number of major projects in his region.

Yesterday marked the first anniversary of the Liberal-National government. I can inform the house that from 24 September 2008 to 23 September 2009, 445 appeals were determined on 93 proposals. The previous government, in the period August 2007 to August 2008, determined only 221 appeals. At the same time, in the 12 months to 23 September this year, I have issued 34 ministerial statements. I believe that this demonstrates a very clear commitment by the government and by me to ensure that appeals are properly assessed, that decisions are made and that strong environmental conditions are set.

The ability for me as minister to process this very large number of appeals is in large part due to the professionalism and dedication of the Office of the Appeals Convenor. As members would know, that is a very small office. It has dedicated officers who work tirelessly to deal with very complex issues. I also want to commend the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Environment and Conservation, which obviously provide advice during the course of determining those appeals.