

WILSON INLET, NUTRIMENT STATUS

1740. Hon. M.G. House to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

- (1) Will the Minister advise the current nutriment status of Wilson Inlet?
- (2) Why does the Government not support the Wilson Inlet Restoration Group's proposal to dredge a channel to increase the salt-water exchange and flushing effect in the inlet?
- (3) How will the Minister address the community's concerns about the unsightliness and odour problems that are evident around Poddy Shot Point, which is an acknowledged popular local recreational area?

Dr EDWARDS replied:

- (1) The Water and Rivers Commission advise that the Inlet is considered moderately eutrophic, or nutrient enriched. There has been no recent change in this status.
- (2) The Wilson Inlet Restoration Group's proposal for dredging is not supported by the Water and Rivers Commission and was not supported by the former Wilson Inlet Management Authority. Research indicates the only long term solution to Wilson Inlet's problems is in reducing nutrients entering the Inlet. Modelling shows the Wilson Inlet Restoration Group's dredged channel will not significantly increase nutrient loss from the Inlet. Increased water exchange can be more effectively achieved through minor dredging of existing channels. This option has been put to the group.
- (3) The long term solution to rotting algae and aquatic plants at Poddy Shot requires the reduction of nutrients into the Inlet. The Water and Rivers Commission is working with local stakeholders in prioritising and implementing measures to achieve this goal. An Action Plan is being prepared itemising these measures.

In the short term the Water and Rivers Commission will be advising the Shire of Denmark to encourage the use of alternative boat launching sites at certain times of the year, and to collect washed up algae should this prove a health issue.

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