

SEWAGE SPILLS, CONTAMINATION

1881. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for the Environment

I refer the Minister to the draft report on 'Wastewater Overflows in the Perth Metropolitan Area' compiled by the Water Corporation, and ask -

- (a) is the Minister aware that the Water Corporation asserts, (page 1, paragraph 5) that 'raw' sewage spills are not a public health hazard;
- (b) prior to this report, was the Minister aware that there were an average of 800 unreported (to the EPA) sewage overflows per year;
- (c) if yes, what action has the Minister taken to ensure that no environmental or local area contamination remained after the overflow was rectified;
- (d) if the answer to (b) was no, what action will the Minister take; and
- (e) what is the total estimated measure of raw sewage lost in these unreported overflows?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) No.
- (c) Not applicable.
- (d) The Water Corporation is required to report all spills that may enter the environment and cause pollution to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under Section 72 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. A written procedure exists which I now seek leave to table (attached). The DEP investigates major spills to determine whether enforcement action is appropriate. [See paper No 1625.]
- (e) Unknown, as under the Environmental Protection Act 1986, they are not required to be reported.