

NUCLEAR WASTE

1263. Hon GIZ WATSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Health:

I refer to the report of the Radiological Council of Western Australia for the year ending 31 December 2001. Page 5 refers to the Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act and the disposal of radioactive waste. Currently, the council is considering a situation whereby waste is generated just outside Western Australian territorial waters that may invoke the Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act.

- (1) What is the situation referred to in the report?
- (2) Where is the waste being generated?
- (3) What is the nature of this waste?
- (4) How much waste is being generated?
- (5) Who is generating this waste?
- (6) What is currently happening to this waste?
- (7) Is the Government considering allowing this waste into Western Australia?
- (8) Who has asked the Radiological Council to consider this situation?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Mildly radioactive waste was produced as a result of the production of oil and gas.
- (2) This waste was generated from an oil and gas well offshore of the north west coast of Western Australia.
- (3) The waste consists of scale removed from pipes. The scale contains naturally-occurring radioactive materials.
- (4) The amount was seven 205-litre drums, approximate total one cubic metre.
- (5) The waste is produced by an oil and gas company, and under the provisions of section 49 of the Radiation Safety Act, the company name cannot be disclosed without its consent. However, the Minister for Health will be asking the Radiological Council of Western Australia to approach the company and request that it grant permission to disclose its identity.
- (6) The waste is being stored on the offshore facility.
- (7) The Government is awaiting a recommendation from the council, which has sought legal advice from Crown Law on whether this waste is classified as “nuclear waste” under the Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act.
- (8) Under section 49 of the Radiation Safety Act, this information cannot be disclosed without the consent of the applicant. However, the minister will be asking the Radiological Council to approach the company and request that it grant permission to disclose its identity.

Point of Order

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: Before I ask my question, I seek some information from Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich, who I assume is representing the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. Yesterday I asked a question of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, and Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich indicated that no answer was available.

I take it from her shaking her head that I need not waste my time asking that question again.

Questions without Notice Resumed