

LITTER REGULATIONS

1006. Mr A.P. O'GORMAN to the Minister for the Environment:

What effect will our Government's recent changes to the litter regulations have in the community?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for the question and for raising a number of littering issues with me. The Government is undertaking a lot of reform in the environmental protection area with the upper House, dealing with the contaminated sites legislation and amendments to the Environmental Protection Act. However, the entire littering issue has not received enough attention. I recently received a report from the Keep Australia Beautiful Council, which recommended a fourfold increase in fines for littering. That is very appropriate given that the fines have not increased for approximately three decades. Western Australia will move into line with other States by having similar fines. The fine for general littering will increase from \$50 to \$200 and the fine for cigarette butt littering will increase from \$50 to \$75. As well as increasing the fines, the Government is looking at littering behaviour. It is interesting to note that people continue to litter and that roadside litter represents nearly half of all littering. Even when bins are nearby, people need to be reminded to put their litter in a bin rather than throw it onto the ground.

Approximately \$16 million is spent each year in this State cleaning up litter and illegally dumped material. Littering is an environmental and social amenity issue. It has economic ramifications. A combination of these new fines plus increased awareness about littering will help to address what is an ongoing issue for the entire community.