

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION WEBSITE — AIR QUALITY PAGE

727. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to the following statement on the air quality page on the Department of Environment and Conservation's website —

Perth, like most urban areas of Australia, experiences occasional episodes of poor air quality. The main issues are photochemical smog in summer and particle haze during winter. Major sources of pollution are motor vehicles, domestic sources (mainly wood heaters) and industry.

Regional areas of WA may also experience poor air quality at times. Pollution can be caused by bushfires and windblown dust, industrial facilities and hazard reduction burns.

- (1) Does the minister agree with that statement?
- (2) If yes to (1), can the minister outline what programs the government has in place to facilitate the phase-out of smoky motor vehicles and solid-fuel heaters?
- (3) Will the minister consider establishing an independent monitoring mechanism to oversee DEC's prescribed burning program?
- (4) If yes to (3), how will this mechanism work; and, if no to (3), why not?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. I would like to point out that the answer was provided on 16 August.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Department of Environment and Conservation has two programs. The CleanRun program, aimed at reducing vehicle emissions to improve air quality, consists of a range of targeted initiatives, including vehicle emissions testing, community education, an ecodrive behaviour change initiative, and a smoky vehicle reporting program, administered by the Department of Transport and DEC. The Halt the Haze program is an initiative of the Perth air quality management plan. DEC offered wood heater replacement programs in 2004, 2006 and 2007, and a rebate program in 2008. These programs removed noncompliant wood heaters from use.
- (3)–(4) No. Air quality impacts of DEC's and other prescribed burning programs are adequately monitored by DEC's existing monitoring stations in the metropolitan area and in regional areas. DEC monitors the effect of its prescribed burning program on air quality in the context of the current National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality) Measure standards.