

CHEMICALS - COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

2978. Hon Nigel Hallett to the Minister for Education and Training representing the Minister for the Environment
- (1) What schemes does the State Government currently provide funding for to remove group 2 rural chemicals?
  - (2) Is the Minister aware that the national initiative called Chemclear is seeking funding from the State Government?
  - (3) If yes to (2), why hasn't funding been approved to subsidise their services to collect and dispose of group 2 chemicals in Western Australia?
  - (4) If the Minister will not support the Chemclear initiative, please give details as to what should be done with group 2 chemicals currently on rural properties?
  - (5) Is the Minister aware of how much dumping of group 2 chemicals currently takes place on Western Australian farms to avoid the high costs associated with authorised removal?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

The Minister for the Environment; Science has provided the following response:

The following information is correct as at 16 January 2006.

- (1) The State Government does not currently provide funding for the removal of group 2 rural chemicals.  
Western Australia was a participant in the ChemCollect program, which ran over a number of years until 2002-03. The ChemCollect program was funded on a dollar for dollar basis between the State and Commonwealth Governments. The purpose of the program was to remove chemicals from farms, prior to the commencement of the ChemClear program. The collection in Western Australia was State-wide and accessible to all rural residents. The State contributed about \$1.3m to this national program.
- (2) The Minister has been made aware that there were preliminary discussions between the DoE and Chemclear over the capacity of the Strategic Waste Initiative Scheme to provide support for the Chemclear program. However, no formal application for funding has been received by the DoE.
- (3) At the time of the ChemCollect agreement, there was no separation of chemical types to define what are now being referred to as Group 2 chemicals. This is a new term that has recently been coined by the industry organisation, Avcare, and is not a term generally in use.  
Under the commitment agreed for ChemCollect, Governments would make a one-off contribution in order to deal with the back-log of waste chemicals, and then industry would run the subsequent ChemClear program to deal with these kinds of waste in the future. On a number of occasions the State Government has reminded industry of the commitments it made to continue the program following the conclusion of ChemCollect. No other relevant funding scheme is available from the State.
- (4) This is a matter for industry to resolve, in line with commitments it made at the time ChemCollect was running. The purchasers and uses of any chemicals including so called Group 2 chemicals have a responsibility to use them and dispose of unused portions in accordance with the manufacturers specifications in a manner that does not cause pollution or environmental harm. The industry Chemclear program is a program to provide users with a disposal option.
- (5) Dumping of chemicals is not condoned whether it is in the urban or rural environment and would be subject to investigation and possible enforcement action. Any information regarding illegal dumping of chemicals should be immediately referred to the Department of Environment pollution hotline.