

COCKBURN CEMENT — DUST POLLUTION

79. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to the recent media reports about unacceptable levels of lime dust and odours from the operations of Cockburn Cement Limited that has affected surrounding suburbs.

- (1) Is it true that the Department of Environment and Conservation relies solely on information provided by the Kwinana Industries Council and a consultant firm employed by CCL for all wind-borne emission data in relation to this operation?
- (2) What advice can the minister give about the apparent inconsistency between the data being used by DEC to monitor the current licence conditions, which show no increase in dust and other pollution, and the public acknowledgement by DEC officers that there are hundreds of complaints from residents actually experiencing this pollution?
- (3) What action will the minister take to address the residents' concerns regarding the pollution from CCL?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for the question. I cannot give specific responses to some of the questions because they are quite technical, but I am happy to provide further information to her.

Hon Sally Talbot: You have had your staff down there to sort it out.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Just let me answer the question!

- (1)–(3) I am aware of community concerns about Cockburn Cement; it has been raised with me through letters from concerned members of the community. In addition to that, departmental staff and officers from my office have met with some community members and, I think, with an opposition member, Mr Fran Logan, to discuss this. Issues surrounding the impact of dust and other pollutants have been raised and I have asked the department for advice on those health impacts. I cannot give the member a specific answer about the licensing of Cockburn Cement, but I can say that the department is currently reviewing the licence. I understand that it will be looking at improving the dust and monitoring requirements in all of those sorts of things in order for Cockburn Cement to step up, because the department has been concerned as well. I understand that probably later this week the department will be issuing for public comment draft amended conditions to the licence. That will allow members of the community to put forward their concerns, and I certainly encourage them to do that. Once the department has had the opportunity to review those comments from the community, and from anyone else for that matter, a licence will be issued. That will then be subject to appeal. Obviously, that will go through the normal processes. With respect to Cockburn Cement, if I recall, a proposal relating to burning recycled fuel oil was referred to the Environmental Protection Authority. It is proposed that “not assessed” public advice be given under part 5. That is currently under appeal. The Appeals Convener will provide me with advice in due course. As I understand it, there have been appeals relating to that matter.