

MOSQUITO BREEDING, MANDURAH, IMPACT OF SPRAYING

251. Mr A.D. Marshall to the Minister for Health

- (1) How much money was allocated to mosquito spraying in the Mandurah area in the 2002/2003 budget?
- (2) How many spray trips does this represent?
- (3) Is the spray environmentally friendly?
- (4) What impact has spraying had on curtailing mosquito breeding?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

1. Under the current Cabinet-approved Contiguous Local Authority Group funding scheme, the Department of Health funds 50% of the cost of larvicides and 100% of the cost of a helicopter for aerial application of larvicides to approved CLAGs. Using this formula, the Department of Health has budgeted approximately \$120 000 for mosquito control in the Peel Region in 2002/03, reflecting the funding request by the Peel Region CLAG. This amount does not include the CLAG's contribution to the program in 2002/03.
2. The projected budget for 2002/03 will enable up to 18 aerial applications of larvicide of up to 250 hectares each and 1 application of up to 1000 hectares.
3. The larvicides applied by helicopter for control of larval mosquitoes in the Peel Region have little or no toxicity for non-target (other than mosquito) species at the rate at which they are applied. The main larvicide currently used has the added benefit that larval mosquitoes remain alive, unable to emerge into adults, but still available as a food source for fish, birds and other saltmarsh fauna.
4. Post-treatment surveys by officers from the Peel Region CLAG show that the larviciding program is extremely effective in curtailing mosquito breeding. However, it should be noted that it is not possible to eradicate mosquitoes without completely removing their breeding habitat, with consequent impacts on fisheries, migratory bird life and other important conservation aspects. In some years (eg 1999/2000), tidal and rainfall conditions will mean that larviciding is not effective. Therefore, residents of the Peel Region (and other regions with extensive mosquito breeding areas) must realise that mosquitoes are part of their natural environment and be prepared to take personal measures (e.g. repellents, screening) to reduce their exposure to biting mosquitoes.