

CIGARETTE BUTT LITTERING

352. Mr R.C. KUCERA to the Minister for the Environment:

I compliment the Minister for Health for the smoking programs in this state. I have recently returned from Europe, which is probably 10 years behind us in banning smoking. I compliment the Minister for Health on the Quit campaign.

Will the Minister for the Environment advise the house of the measures currently in place for tackling cigarette butt littering, and is he aware of any other proposals on this matter?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for his question and his obvious interest in the issue. The state government is concerned about cigarette butt littering and smoking. We are introducing new laws to address the issue of littering and dumping, with a particular emphasis on increasing fines for people who engage in those types of behaviours. The fine for cigarette butt littering will increase from \$75 to \$100. In some circumstances the fine could potentially be \$5 000.

I am aware of a range of other initiatives that the Minister for Health in particular has established. Over the past 20 years the rate of smoking in the community has decreased from 40 per cent of the population to about 15 per cent of the population. It is one of the great public health victories in the history of this country. Members can imagine my surprise when I saw a press release by Senator Ian Campbell in which he called for a national no-butts day funded by the Butt Littering Trust, which is also funded by British American Tobacco Australia. The federal Minister for the Environment and Heritage has issued a press release calling for a national no-butts day that is funded by British American Tobacco, which is the same company that provided undeclared donations to the state Liberal Party in the lead-up to the last election. I was surprised on one level, but on another level I should not have been surprised. It is like putting Dracula in charge of the blood bank or the Liberal Party in charge of renewable energy! On neither of those accounts could either Dracula or the Liberal Party be trusted. The federal minister will raise this issue at the environment minister's meeting next week. He will encourage state environment ministers to participate in the national butt-free day that is funded by British American Tobacco. I will tell him on behalf of the Western Australian government that we will not be a part of one of his programs that is funded by a big tobacco company. The best way of reducing that type of littering is to reduce the number of smokers, which is what we are doing.