

LANDFILL WASTE LEVY INCREASE

935. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the minister's decision to increase the landfill levy by 300 per cent, which was announced as part of the 2009-10 budget.

- (1) Was the increase originally scheduled to start on 1 July 2009?
- (2) Did the minister subsequently decide to cancel the 1 July start date and introduce the 300 per cent increase in landfill levy charges on 1 January 2010?
- (3) Is the minister aware of any local councils or regional councils that are already collecting the increased landfill levy; that is, councils that are already charging ratepayers as though the levy had increased on 1 July 2009?
- (4) If yes to (3), which councils?
- (5) Is the extra money collected—that is, the difference between the levy as it is set today and the levy after it has increased by 300 per cent—being paid into the waste avoidance and resource recovery account?
- (6) If no to (5), where is it being held?
- (7) If the government succeeds in changing the regulations to effect the 300 per cent increase on 1 January 2010, will the extra money collected by councils between 1 July 2009 and 1 January 2010 be paid into the WARR account?
- (8) If no to (7), why not?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of her question.

- (1) Yes, it was announced in the budget.
- (2) As advised in the house on 23 June 2009 through a ministerial statement, the government, having received legal advice, decided to defer the proposed increase until 1 January 2010.
- (3) The new levy rates will apply for the second half of the financial year 2009-10. As council budgets are prepared for a full year of operations, councils may have incorporated the impact of the proposed levy increase, along with other local government waste charges, into their budget projections.
- (4) I am not aware of the situation for each individual council.
- (5) No. The levy is payable only to the waste avoidance and resource recovery account for waste that is deposited at licensed landfills. The levy is collected at the end of each quarter at the rate that applies at the time. It is not connected to how and when councils might retrieve these costs from ratepayers.
- (6) Councils are responsible for managing their own budgets, including any extra moneys they may have collected.
- (7) No. See the answer to (5).
- (8) See the answer to (6).