

NEDLANDS FORESHORE — CHIPCO SPEARHEAD HERBICIDE

1213. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:

I refer the minister to her response to question without notice 1194.

- (1) Will the minister instruct the Swan River Trust to confirm the claim by the City of Nedlands that the contractor is currently applying the herbicide according to label instructions and best-practice procedures, and ascertain whether there have been any occasions during the past 18 months when these procedures have been breached?
- (2) What measures do the City of Nedlands and the contractor take to stop any run-off or spray drift from entering the marine environment when Chipco Spearhead is used on the Swan River foreshore?
- (3) What is the definition used by the Swan River Trust of “the marine environment”?
- (4) Can the minister confirm that the contract for the spraying of broadleaf weed within the City of Nedlands has been held by the company Turfmaster and that this is the same company that —
 - (a) received a letter in 2003 from lawyers acting for Bayer Crop Science ordering Turfmaster to stop making, supplying and using a herbicide composition involving Chipco Spearhead; and
 - (b) was the subject of a statement made by the South Perth Mayor, James Best, in 2008 saying, “The City of South Perth terminated its contract with Turfmaster in January 2004 due to a contract dispute regarding the type of herbicide being used?”

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) I am advised that the Swan River Trust has already contacted the City of Nedlands, which has confirmed that the contractor is applying the herbicide in accordance with label instructions and best-practice procedures. This includes spraying only when the wind is less than eight kilometres an hour, a non-spray zone near the water’s edge, recording and reporting all volumes of material applied and having a council officer observing at all times. The herbicide is applied once a year and, as I said in my answer yesterday, that has been over the previous four years. I am advised that the city uses only a licensed operator appointed by tender. I understand that the city has advised the Swan River Trust verbally that there have been no breaches resulting from herbicide applications during the past four years. It is my expectation that, should pesticides and herbicides be used in foreshore areas along the waterways by local government authorities, they will ensure that these products are applied in accordance with relevant regulations, guidelines and manufacturers’ specifications to ensure the environment is protected.
- (2) See the answer to (1) above.
- (3) The “marine environment” is a term used by the herbicide manufacturers. The issue is whether the use of herbicides or pesticides by anyone in the river catchment operates in a way that can harm the river. Manufacturers’ instructions and guidelines and laws exist to prevent contamination of the environment, be it terrestrial, river or marine.
- (4) This is a matter for the City of Nedlands and the City of South Perth.