

ESPERANCE LEAD POLLUTION

1035. Hon ANTHONY FELS to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the third round of blood lead level tests that revealed blood lead levels in seven Esperance children have increased since July.

- (1) Has the Department of Environment and Conservation identified all sources of lead contamination in Esperance?
- (2) What steps are being taken by the department to identify any new or alternative contamination sources?
- (3) What action has been undertaken by the department recently to remove the risk of further contamination to the children of Esperance?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

I thank Hon Anthony Fels for some notice of this question. The Minister for the Environment has provided the following information -

- (1) The Department of Environment and Conservation, in conjunction with the Department of Health, has undertaken extensive testing in Esperance to identify lead levels. Isotope analysis of lead samples has identified the majority of lead is from Magellan Metals that was exported through the port.
- (2) The minister has been informed by DEC that the Department of Health has undertaken further investigations into those individuals whose blood lead levels are in excess of relevant health standards.
- (3) DEC issued an environmental protection notice on 9 October 2007 requiring the Esperance Port Authority to prepare and implement a comprehensive sampling, clean-up and validation plan to ensure that the port does not contribute any further lead emissions into the environment. DEC issued another environmental protection notice on 25 October 2007 requiring the Esperance Port Authority to engage an expert consultant to review all available air quality data and report the findings to DEC. The notice also required the preparation of a comprehensive air quality monitoring plan to significantly improve both short and long-term air quality monitoring within the town of Esperance. In August 2007, DEC appointed independent consultants to carry out a health and ecological risk assessment of the town of Esperance. This assessment will either confirm that current initiatives are appropriate, or will identify additional actions to reduce the risk and protect the community for the future.