

AIR QUALITY BRANCH OF DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

2712. Dr J.M. Woollard to the Minister for the Environment

- (1) What is the minimum level of staffing required in the Air Quality Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation?
- (2) How many staff have resigned from the Air Quality Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation in the last two years?
- (3) What is the current level of staffing in the Air Quality Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation?
- (4) The Air Quality Branch was formerly in the Department of Environment (as a regulator) and the Forest Operations Branch was in CALM (as an operator), and I ask the Minister why is the Air Quality Branch and the Forest Operations Group now placed within the same department?
- (5) Is the Minister concerned about a serious conflict of interest existing between the Air Quality Branch (as a regulator) and the Forest Operations Branch (as an operator) now that they are both in the same department?

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:

- (1) The Air Quality Management Branch has 34 permanent full time positions and 15 contract/temporary staff. This is adequate to meet current departmental business objectives for the Branch. Contract and temporary staff are employed on a project basis, to provide flexibility and efficient use of government resources.
- (2) Seven permanent employees have resigned within the past two years.
- (3) The Air Quality Management Branch currently has 29 permanent full time employees. Recruitment to fill the five vacant permanent positions will commence shortly following resolution of accommodation issues.
- (4) The former Department of Conservation and Land Management did not have a branch called Forest Operations Branch, but did have a Forest Management Branch. Notwithstanding the above, it is assumed from the nature of the question that it refers to the Fire Management Services Branch.  
  
The Fire Management Services Branch and the Air Quality Management Branch were incorporated within the Department of Environment and Conservation as a consequence of the amalgamation of the former Department of Environment and CALM on 1 July 2006.
- (5) No, there is no conflict of interest with incorporating both branches within a single department. The current organisational arrangement provides the opportunity for improved coordination and delivery of air quality management and forest management.