

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION - MONITORING OF LICENCE  
COMPLIANCE

**460. Mr T.R. SPRIGG to the Minister for the Environment:**

I refer to the findings of the parliamentary inquiry into the cause and extent of lead pollution in the Esperance area.

- (1) Why is it that the government allowed a situation to develop whereby the Department of Environment and Conservation has repeatedly failed to monitor compliance with licence conditions - for example, as reported yesterday on the clearing of native vegetation and today with the lead pollution in Esperance - resulting in just 28 per cent of the annual inspection target being met?
- (2) Given this failure, is it possible that other potentially dangerous breaches of licence conditions have been missed by the department?
- (3) Does the minister accept, as outlined in recommendations 142 and 151 of the report, that this failure is due to the under-resourcing of the department by the Carpenter Labor government?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN replied:**

I thank the member for Murdoch for the question.

Several members interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The minister had only just risen to his feet when there was a cacophony of sound. If members wish to emulate spectators at a football match, they should please do so at the weekend, not during my time and on my watch. I will call them to order if they do it again.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for Murdoch for his question.

- (1)-(3) A clear statement has been made in the committee recommendations and, indeed, through the concise nature of the report that was presented this morning that there have been clear failures by a variety of agencies, including the Department of Environment and Conservation. It is my responsibility to ensure that those failures are addressed so that what happened in Esperance does not occur again. I am absolutely committed to that. There were recommendations in the report on compliance and monitoring. Those issues are one of the reasons why the inquiry was supported by the government in the first place.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** You opposed it.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We did not oppose it. The government actually supported the inquiry and suggested assistance in the terms of reference. The member for Cottesloe forgets these important matters. Clearly, issuing of licences and monitoring of conditions of licences are important elements of the department's work. As to the information and recommendations from the report, I will be looking at that area very closely to ensure it is improved. I have already mentioned that. With regard to recommendations 151 and 142, as I have mentioned previously, it is absolutely my commitment to ensure that the government and the agency that I am responsible for responds quickly and effectively to the recommendations that were presented to this house earlier this morning. The opposition has my commitment on that, and that is what I will do.

**Mr T. Buswell** interjected.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Vasse to order for the second time.