

SHIP-BLASTING PROPOSALS, ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

119. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
- (1) What industrial containment systems are currently required to protect the environment when high pressure abrasive blasting of ships is carried out along the coast or at Garden Island?
 - (2) Have any proposals been lodged with the DEP/EPA to carry out abrasive high pressure blasting of ships at Garden Island or Fremantle Port?
 - (3) If yes, will the Minister detail those ship-blasting proposals?
 - (4) Is the Minister aware of any proposals to carry out abrasive high pressure blasting of ships at Garden Island or Fremantle Port?
 - (5) If yes, will the Minister detail those ship-blasting proposals?
 - (6) For each ship-blasting proposal will the Minister indicate what blasting process the proponent intends to use?
 - (7) If any of the ship-blasting proposals involve water blasting with the use of rust inhibitors, what potential environmental impacts are there on the -
 - (a) marine environment; and
 - (b) fish and molluscs?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has been advised by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that:

- 1) The DEP does not specify the type of industrial containment system that should be used to protect the environment when high pressure abrasive blasting of ships is carried out along the coast or at Garden Island. However, any person conducting abrasive blasting operation of ships in Western Australia, must comply with the Environmental Protection (Abrasive Blasting) Regulations 1998 while any person conducting High Pressure Water Blasting operation of ships, not using an abrasive material, are required to comply with the Environmental Protection Act (1986). Any system used by an industry performing such work must prevent contaminated material from entering the marine environment.
- 2) A search of the DEP records for the last 6 months did not locate any proposals to carry out abrasive high pressure blasting of ships at Garden Island or Fremantle. Under the legislation quoted in the previous answer persons conducting such operations are not required to notify the Department.
- 3) Not Applicable.
- 4) The DEP has advised it is aware of a high pressure blasting operation taking place on a ship east of Garden Island.
- 5) US Naval Ship Watson is a supply ship anchored in Cockburn Sound off the eastern coast of Garden Island. The DEP has been advised that 2500 tie-down points located below the ships decking are being prepared for painting and that the old paint and rust is being removed using high pressure water without the use of rust inhibitor. The DEP has also been advised that strainers are in place to capture any waste material that may fall on the deck, which is then recovered using a vacuum system. The new paint will be applied by hand using brush and roller.
- 6) Not applicable.
- 7) a - b) Depending on the type of inhibitor used, if recovery of waste was insufficient, rust inhibitors may potentially impact on the marine environment, including fish and molluscs, by increasing the concentration of heavy metals in the water column and in the sediments.