

LEFROY BROOK, CONTAMINATION PREVENTION

764. Hon JIM SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage:

I refer to the former Bunnings and State Government timber mill and wood treatment site in Pemberton contaminated with arsenic and pentachlorophenol.

- (1) What action has been taken by the Department of Environment and Water Catchment Protection to prevent this highly toxic material from entering the Lefroy Brook?
- (2) When is it anticipated that the remediation of the site will commence?
- (3) What action has been taken by DEWCP to warn the public about contact hazard associated with the contamination of Lefroy Brook?
- (4) What action has been taken by DEWCP to prevent the public from consuming contaminated marron, fish or other biota from Lefroy Brook?
- (5) How many other timber mills and wood treatment sites previously owned by Bunnings and the State Government are known by DEWCP to have been identified as contaminated by arsenic and PCP?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the rather lengthy answer to this five-part question from the member and I table the document.

[Leave granted.]

The following material was incorporated -

- (1) The pentachlorophenol is contained within a waste residue in ponds on the "Thompsons Paddock" site and has not been shown to have dispersed across the paddock or be in the Lefroy Brook.

The arsenic contamination in soils is currently not prevented from entering Lefroy Brook. Engineering works undertaken in 1991 diverted stormwater away from the most contaminated areas to minimise any impact on the brook. Sampling activities conducted since 1989 have indicated minimal impact on Lefroy Brook, with the latest round indicating only one location out of 12 having arsenic contamination above sediment trigger levels for further investigation. Leachate testing of this sample indicated the bioavailability of arsenic is limited.
- (2) Sotico Pty Ltd is currently trialing bioremediation technologies to manage the pentachlorophenol and furnace oil waste in the residue ponds. Remediation of the waste in the residue ponds is scheduled to commence in spring-summer 2003, due to the limitations of remediating in winter.

The Department of Environmental Protection, on behalf of the State, is in the process of drafting tender documents to complete ecological and health risk assessments for the arsenic contamination. Once these are completed, the most appropriate remediation method can be determined and implemented. This site will be included on the list of sites that the State Government will remediate. The timing of its remediation will be based on its priority in that list. Priorities will be made based on risks to the environment and human health.
- (3) Results of work undertaken have shown a relatively low risk of any contamination of Lefroy Brook. The DEP does not consider that notifications beyond those that have been provided are required at this time.
- (4) Results obtained to date do not indicate that the aquatic life of the Lefroy Brook will be significantly impacted. However, as a precautionary measure, the aquatic science branch of the Water and Rivers Commission will shortly commence an ecological risk assessment to determine any impact on biota in Lefroy Brook. Advice on the results will be sought from the Department of Fisheries and the Department of Health.
- (5) None at this time.