

DIVISION 40: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION -

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 657 - What project, services, activities, research or other aspects of Department of Environmental Protection functions were cut or reduced as a result of funding being reduced from the 2001/02 Budget figure of \$36.709 million down to the Estimated Actual figure for 2001/02 of \$30.736 million?

Answer: The two figures referred to in the question are those of the Total Cost of Outputs, rather than as is suggested, a reference to funding to the Agency.

The variation in the Total Cost of Outputs, is mainly due to the deferral of expenditure associated with the remediation of the Morangup and Vela Luka Park sites into 2002/2003, a reduction in the size of the planned waste disposal operation at Mount Walton and lower than anticipated funding from external sources.

The 2002/03 budget estimate contained a provision for a Waste Disposal operation at Mount Walton valued at \$2.4 million. The scale of this operation is now substantially smaller than anticipated and the estimated actual for 2001/02 has been revised.

Expenditure associated with the remediation of the Vela Luka Park and Morangup contaminated sites and the implementation of the Air Quality Management Plan was deferred into 2002/2003. The effect of these deferrals is to reduce the estimated actual expenditure for 2001/2002.

Finally, the 2001/2002 budget estimated operating revenues of \$11.142 million, whereas the estimated actual for 2001/02 was \$8.822 million. The revised estimate is as a result of a reduction in funding from external sources.

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 657 - What project, services, activities, research or other aspects of Department of Environmental Protection functions were cut or reduced as a result of funding being reduced from the 2001/02 Estimated Actual figure for 2001/02 of \$30.736 million down to \$29.130 million for the 2002/03 Budget Estimate?

Answer: The two figures referred to in the question are those of the Total Cost of Outputs, rather than as is suggested, a reference to funding to the Agency.

The variation in the Total Cost of Outputs, is mainly due to the fact that external funding associated with the Air Toxics program ceased in 2002/03 and related expenditure also reduced. The allocation for the Air Quality Management Plan reduced from \$1.4 million to \$1.08 million translating into lower than budgeted expenditure.

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 656 - What policy initiatives are proposed for the 2002/03 year in the area of waste management and at what cost?

Answer: I now table the information (Attachment 1) on proposed policy initiatives for 2002/03 in response to this question.

The total cost for the proposed initiatives in the 2002/03 budget is \$6,049,000.

The focus of these initiatives is toward sustainable waste management practices, preventing waste generation and reducing risk. The costs include both Consolidated Funds and Waste Management and Recycle Funds.

ATTACHMENT 1

Initiative	Description	Total Estimated Cost
Community Waste Forum	To encourage wide stakeholder and community involvement in determining sustainable strategies for: Management of hazardous waste; and Emerging technologies for secondary treatment of municipal solid waste.	240,000
Used Tyres	To facilitate the changes across industry sectors to better manage used tyres from motor vehicles in WA. The aim is stop landfilling this waste stream.	59,000
Construction and Demolition Waste	Identified as a key industry sector in the WASTE 2020 planning process. To facilitate implementation of key industry initiatives to reduce waste to landfill from this sector.	51,000
National Packaging Covenant	Implement all of Government commitments and new legislation to support this National Initiative to manage used packaging materials. This includes the implementation of a strategic grants program to	1,600,000

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	encourage resource recovery and recycling of packaging materials. The grant program will have a regional focus in WA.	
Eco-Efficiency/Business Sustainability	Working with existing networks to support and influence the delivery of sustainability actions within government and small to medium enterprises. Includes support to the Centre for Cleaner Production.	325,000
Landfill levy and waste management grants program	To fulfil a regulatory requirement under section 110J of the <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> . Results may involve a restructure of existing grants programs to support the strategic direction of the Waste Management Board. Any changes will require implementation of new administrative procedures.	3, 400, 000
Communication strategy to support activities of the Waste Management Board	To ensure the activities of the Board are open and accountable to the broader community. Provide opportunities for key stakeholders to input into policy directions. This includes initiatives for community education in waste management.	290,000
Whole of Government Waste Contracts	Provide input to government purchasing policy. Management of the waste consultancy panel contracts including the Waste Paper contract to allow systems to be developed to report on the level of waste recycling by agencies.	27,000
Establishment of a Waste Management Bill	Finalise drafting of the Bill and further consultation with Stakeholders.	57,000
TOTAL		6,049,000

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 659 - On what basis is the suggestion made that there will be a reduction in contentious issues, such that the timeliness of meeting ministerial time lines will increase from 65% to 85% in the 2002/03 year

Answer: There was a significant increase in ministerial correspondence in 2001/2 resulting from an unusually high number of correspondence across all outputs of the Department of Environmental Protection. Examples are Waste Control, Alcoa Wagerup Alumina Refinery, Brookdale Liquid Waste Treatment Plant and several environmental impact assessments. The reductions is based on the assumption that the number of issues will return to normal.

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 662 - Please provide details of the reduction in the total amount of emissions made from prescribed premises to the environment, using 1999-2000 as the base figure, to a low of 91.5 estimated for the 2001/02 year?

Answer: The most recent estimate (early June 2002) has shown that, while there are expected to be some minor reductions in emissions from oil and gas facilities in the North-west shelf area, overall 2001/02 emissions are likely to be similar those for 2000/01.

Question: Hon Bill Stretch asked: Page 666 - Is the government satisfied that all chemicals to be collected under the ChemCollect program have in fact been collected, such that the program can be closed?

Answer: Every effort has been made to collect all unwanted agricultural and veterinary (Agvet) chemicals in the State, other than directly from the inner Perth Metropolitan Area, through the ChemCollect program. The program has been offered to all in the rural, regional and outer metropolitan areas. Where Local Government Areas did not participate residents of those areas were able to attend collection points in adjoining areas.

Requests received by the Controlled Waste Section for advice on the removal of Agvet chemicals from Local Government Areas where the ChemCollect program has being implemented indicate that the majority of unwanted or unregistered Agvet chemicals have been collected. Some future collection may still be required but on a much reduced scale.

The ChemCollect program is a joint initiative of the State and Commonwealth Governments. Under this arrangement the finalisation of the program is dependent on Commonwealth funding which ceases in September 2002.

Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked: Page 668 - With regard to Division 40 Environmental Protection of the 2002-03 State Budget, under Capital Works Program, has a line item for computer hardware and software for an estimated expenditure of \$230,000 for 2002-03. What is to be purchased under this appropriation and why?

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Answer: The Department has a capital replacement schedule for computing equipment, noise and air monitoring equipment. The replacement program aims to replace equipment at three year intervals. The line item for \$230,000 for computer hardware and software represents those items scheduled for replacement from within the replacement schedule.

Question: Hon Robin Chapple asked: Is funding for the assessment work of the Environmental Impact Assessment Division of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) sourced from the DEP budget or from the EPA's budget? Given the \$6-7 billion of development proposals on the Burrup Peninsula, all requiring extensive environmental impact assessment, please show how the Environmental Impact Assessment Division's budget has been increased (proportionate to the scale of development proposals) to enable the increased level of development in the State to be adequately assessed through the environmental impact assessment process. Relative to the last two previous financial years how many additional FTEs are working in the Environmental Impact Assessment Division's Industrial Branch? The Chairman of the EPA has announced that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process will ensure EIA meets Government policy (announcement made in a letter to the President of the Environmental Consultants Association), especially in relation to: reform of the EIA process to ensure cumulative and regional impacts are given due consideration; and to incorporate the principles of sustainability into the EIA process. In view of these improvements to EIA and the Government's commitments what additional staffing and training have been budgeted for to ensure that the Environmental Impact Assessment Division of the DEP is capable of fulfilling the Government's policies and commitments?

Answer: Funding for the assessment work of the Environmental Impact Assessment Division is sourced from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) budget. The Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is currently assessing four industrial projects on the Burrup Peninsula:

Methanex Australia Pty Ltd Methanol Complex.
Plenty River Corporation Pty Ltd Ammonia/Urea Plant.
Japan DME Ltd Dimethyl Ether Project.
GTL Resources PLC Methanol Plant.

Given that the EPA typically has about 60 active assessments at any time, the four projects on the Burrup Peninsula do not represent a major increase in workload. In addition, the assessments for each of these projects are proceeding at different paces; for example the EPA does not expect to receive the proponent's environmental review document for the Japan DME Dimethyl Ether project until later this year.

The number of FTEs working in the Environmental Impact Assessment Division's Industrial Branch will be similar next year to the last two financial years - ie 36 FTEs.

It should be recognised that the EIA division draws on other parts of the Department and reports prepared by proponents.

In addition the inter-relationship of the EPA and DEP has been improved with clarified and more effective management arrangements.

In accordance with the Government's commitments to reform the EIA process to ensure cumulative and regional impacts are given due consideration and to incorporate the principles of sustainability into the EIA process, the EPA has recently gazetted revised Administrative Procedures to require proponents of major developments to address these matters in their Environmental Review documents as appropriate. This will mean some additional work for the proponents and is consistent with sound environmental impact assessment practices. As the work will be largely undertaken by proponents, the changes will not add substantially to the EPA's or Department of Environmental Protection's workload.

Question: Hon Robin Chapple asked: I refer to the waste disposal site operated by Tox Free Solutions at Wedgefield in Port Hedland, and ask:

- (1) Is this facility still operational?*
- (2) If no to (1), when did the facility cease operations?*
- (3) What was or is the main role of the facility, and from where is the waste mainly sourced?*
- (4) What forms of waste are or were stored at this site?*

Answer:

- (1) Yes.*
- (2) Not Applicable.*

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- (3) The main role of the facility is recycling waste lubricating oil for use as a diesel extender (blended and utilised by Western Power as a fuel source). Oil Energy also has a role in destruction of hydrocarbon waste including grease and contaminated soil. The wastes are sourced from mining, oil and gas industries in the Pilbara.
- (4) Most of the stored waste comprises non chlorinated hydrocarbon materials including lubrication oil and grease. Some paints and solvents are also stored at the site.

Question: Hon Robin Chapple asked: I refer to the 'Rock Quarry' waste dump operated by BHPB on the Newman access line not far from Port Hedland, and ask:

- (1) *Has this dump been licensed by the DEP?*
- (2) *If no to 1), does the DEP intend to licence this dump?*
- (3) *If no to 2), why not?*
- (4) *Is the DEP aware of the nature of the materials being dumped and burned off at this site?*

Answer: I would ask the Hon Member to note that the Department of Environment, Water and Catchment Protection is yet to be formally established, however, the DEP has advised: The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following response:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) BHPB applied for a licence for the site (identified by BHPB as Landfill Quarry No. 1) in October 2001 and was subsequently asked by the DEP to first change specified management practices. However, BHPB then elected to close that pit and is currently disposing of waste at the Port Hedland Landfill. BHPB has advised it is currently assessing a number of pit closure options.
- (4) Material disposed of in the pit by BHPB (identified as Landfill Quarry No. 1) included timber (some treated) and conveyor belting. BHPB has advised that subsequent to a DEP inspection last year, the pit has been secured and no dumping or fires have occurred since then.

Question: Hon Louise Pratt asked: I refer to the major achievements listed at page 664. A response was required to some major pollution incidents including the Whaleback Lake Oil spill and the Malaga fuel tanker spill. What was the outcome of those clean-up operations on the environment?

Answer: The Whaleback Lake spill resulted in the deaths of 15 water birds, and was successfully cleaned up over a period of about a week. Evidence was collected and a brief is being prepared for consideration by the Crown Solicitors' Office.

The Malaga fuel tanker spill threatened a local wetland, but the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has advised that the fuel was prevented from causing any significant damage to the environment through bunding and earthworks at the time. DEP pollution response officers used gas detectors to trace the fuel through the drains to guide the clean up operation. The site was cleaned up to the satisfaction of the DEP, local government and the local friends of the wetland group.

Supplementary Information No 93

Question: Hon J.A. Scott asked: My next question follows that which was said by Hon Paddy Embry. The budget has been slashed from \$26.181 million to \$21.612 million, with a \$4.596 million reduction in waste management, and \$375 000 in pollution control, or \$1.576 million from the actual spent on pollution regulation. It also shows that \$2.916 million of the budgeted amount for waste management was not used in 2001-02. How can this reduced budget, and the failure to use the budgeted amount for waste management, be justified? Despite the high percentage points for output performance, these areas are clearly in disarray. Failures in regulation have required things like waste control to occur. I imagine we are about to see further problems at Brookdale, Cardup and other places. How can reducing the budget in these area be justified at this time? Is this not a false economy, or more accurately, budgetary negligence on the part of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Government?

Answer: The budget was not slashed from \$26.181m as the figure quoted is the estimated outturn for 2001/02. The \$4.596m and \$375,000 referred to as a reduction in budget is not a reduction, but the difference between budget 2001/02 and estimated expenditure 2001/02 for the Waste Management and Pollution Regulation outputs respectively. The \$1.576m compares 2000/01(\$7.380m) and 2001/02 (\$5.804m) actual expenditure for Pollution Regulation. This was largely to do with Waste Control Fire expenditure occurring in 2000/01.

The reduced budget for Waste Management in 2002/2003 is primarily due to the following adjustments:

No provision for a waste disposal operation in 2002/03 - \$2.4m
Possible transfer of WasteTrack in 2002/03 - \$900k
No Vela Luka Funding in 2002/03 - \$450k
No Morangup funding in 2002/03 - \$850k

As for the failure to use the budgeted amount in 2001/02, this was largely due to Mt Walton (which relies on external funds not Consolidated Funding) disposal not happening, and delayed expenditure with respect to Vela Luka, ChemCollect and Morangup.

High percentage points for performance refer to quality and timeliness, and do not necessarily link to the specific problem areas referred to. The reduction in budget referred to mainly relates to specific projects (Mt Walton, Vela Luka and Morangup) and not base line funding for this output.

Supplementary Information No 94

Question: Hon J.A. Scott asked: I also asked about the cost of clean-ups. What is the final cost for the clean-ups at the Minim Cove and Omex sites, and what is the estimated cost for the clean-up at the Waste Control site?

Answer: The Omex remediation cost \$7.37 million. The Minim Cove clean-up was handled by LandCorp, and the Department of Environmental Protection does not know the final cost. The estimated cost of clean-up at the Waste Control site is currently estimated to be approximately \$5.6 million. However, this figure may increase once the results of the detailed investigation delineating the contamination is finished - expected to be September/October 2002.

Supplementary Information No 95

Question: Hon J.A. Scott asked: I have some questions on behalf of Hon Dee Margetts. I refer to the explosion involving a truck and motor vehicle on the Brand Highway near Cataby on 1 May 2002. Where was the truck taken for disposal and was it buried or otherwise disposed of in the vicinity; and, if so, where and how? What are the risks of contamination to the soil and ground water from the disposal or burial of the truck and other potentially contaminated material? Who was consulted and how was that decision made? Were any other vehicles or equipment, including vehicles brought in to assist at the accident site, considered to be contaminated as a result of the incident and how were they handled? Is there any process for consultation or reimbursement for any vehicles or equipment that may have been contaminated in this incident?

Answer: The truck was decontaminated on site and validation samples were taken prior to transport to temporary storage at Red hill landfill site (a site nominated for this purpose under Westplan Hazmat), where it remained until 21 May 2002 under the control of the clean up contractor and insurance companies. The sample results indicated that decontamination had been successful, and the prime mover and trailers were not buried, but sent for scrap.

There is no risk of contamination to soil and groundwater from the disposal of the truck. The contaminated soils from the accident site were excavated and encased in concrete for disposal at landfill. There are no significant risks to soil or groundwater from this process.

The local governments in the area of the incident were consulted and requested to assist with the emergency including waste disposal issues, insurance companies, the chemical companies involved, as well as the Fire and Emergency Services Authority, Department of Health, and the HEAT Team. Much effort was put into consulting local residents in the vicinity of the site about the incident, and they all received personal visits and contacts from Fire and Rescue Service, as well as Department of Health personnel. Sampling of surrounding properties was carried out by the Chemistry Centre of WA, under the guidance of the Department of Health to ensure that environmental health issues were adequately dealt with.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has no knowledge of other vehicles or equipment being contaminated as a result of the incident. The site was under the control of the Fire and Rescue Service, which has strict decontamination procedures for such incidents. Fire and Rescue Service equipment, and other recovery equipment, were decontaminated on site, and the wash down liquid recovered for disposal after testing.

The process for consultation is difficult during emergency incidents. DEP staff are usually fully committed to resolving immediate hazards to the environment, and are usually limited to the representative authorities such as the local governments. As the DEP is a support agency for Fire and Rescue Services in hazardous materials incidents, most of the communication and consultation is undertaken by Fire and Rescue Services. Efforts are made where possible to advise local catchment groups, but this is not always possible at the time.

There is no Government process for reimbursement. This is usually left to claims against the companies or individuals involved and their insurers. There are requirements under the Dangerous Goods legislation that require transporters to have adequate insurance to cover such incidents.

Supplementary Information No 96

Question: Hon J.A. Scott asked: I have another question from Hon Dee Margetts. In regard to the disposal of waste within the Shire of Kojonup, can the minister advise whether drums of chemicals have been buried over time at the Kojonup shire waste disposal site and, if so, what is the nature of the chemicals that have been buried and by what process has the shire identified to the State what has been disposed of in this way? Have any tests of the soil and ground water been undertaken at this site and, if so, what are the results of those test? Finally, what is the correct process for rural shires to deal with potentially hazardous chemicals that require safe disposal?

Answer: There is likely to have been disposal of chemical drums in the past. However, it is assumed the question relates to approximately 7000 farm chemical drums collected by the local APEX Club a number of years ago as part of a program to assist farmers and provide income for community projects. These drums were empty, and were chipped and bailed as part of a Drummuster collection organised by the Shire of Kojonup. The drums had previously contained farm herbicide and pesticide containers. There is no process as such. The Drummuster program is usually run through local Governments. There is no requirement to notify the State on the number of drums collected (or refused).

No test were undertaken at this site. The drums were empty when the Shire arranged the collection with Drummuster.

The process for dealing with potentially hazardous chemicals that require safe disposal is the rural shires advises the proponents of the need to dispose of chemicals to a licensed liquid waste facility (facilities licensed to accept chemical wastes in WA are located in Perth). Triple rinsed farm chemical containers are usually stored at landfill sites for collection under the industry run Drummuster program.

The State is assessing options for these types of wastes in rural areas to prevent illegal dumping in bush, streams or to rural landfills.