

ENVIRONMENT - CLEARING PERMITS - LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ON WAITING LIST

3750. Hon Murray Criddle to the Minister for Education and Training representing the Minister for the Environment

I refer to clearance permits, in particular C2 five year purpose permits under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. Can you please advise -

How many local governments are on the waiting list for C2 five year purpose permits, which ones are they and how long have they each been waiting?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

As of 11 September 2006, there were a total of 23 local governments which had applied to the Department of Environment and Conservation for purpose permits under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 for which no decision had yet been made. Refer to the following table which outlines the local governments which have lodged an application, the time in days since the application entered the clearing permit system and the anticipated timeframe for a decision: [See paper 1869.]

A total of 37 local governments have applied previously for purpose permits, which have been resolved by the granting of 36 clearing permits, or by withdrawing of 21 applications not required as a result of exemptions set out in legislation.

The department acknowledges that the time taken to process clearing permit applications has been excessive in a number of cases. To deal with this situation a special project has been established to manage local government permit applications. This project has resulted in the resolution of 26 local government purpose permit applications in the last month. The remainder of the outstanding applications are substantially progressed. It is expected that decisions will be made on the majority of these within one or two weeks, with the most recent applications finalised within four to six weeks.

The department has been having ongoing regular meetings with the WA Local Government Association (WALGA) to discuss management of local government clearing permit applications. These meetings will continue until all local government purpose permits are resolved. The department is working cooperatively with WALGA and local governments to ensure that urgent works are given the highest priority.