

COCKBURN SOUND, DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION POLICY

536. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

- (1) At what stage of development is the draft Environmental Protection Policy for Cockburn Sound?
- (2) When does the Minister intend to finalise and implement this Policy?
- (3) Why has it taken so long to reach this stage?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that the Kwinana Industries Council is planning to cut back its monitoring of the environmental health of Cockburn Sound?
- (5) What does the Minister plan to do to replace this regular monitoring of Cockburn Sound?
- (6) Why has the budget for the Cockburn Sound Management Council been cut over the past two years?
- (7) Is the Minister planning further cuts for the next financial year?
- (8) Is the Government still committed to putting an environmental management plan in place for Cockburn Sound?
- (9) If yes, by what date?
- (10) If not, why not?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has provided the following response.

- (1) The Minister for the Environment and Heritage has asked Parliamentary Counsel to prepare a legal version of the Environmental Protection (Cockburn Sound) Policy and Regulations after announcing in Parliament in December 2002 that once the legal drafting is completed she will commence her consultation phase in accordance with Section 30 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986.
- (2) Once the Office of Parliamentary Counsel has completed the drafting of the policy and regulations, the Minister will commence the Ministerial Consultation phase which will be for a period of eight weeks. The development of the draft policy is well advanced, however, drafting of the regulations is a difficult task due to their complexity and will take longer to complete. After any revisions that may result from consultations, the policy can be approved but it is subject to disallowance by the Parliament.
- (3) Environmental Protection Policies are statutory instruments and are developed through extensive community consultation. In the case of the Cockburn Sound EPP there are many groups and individuals who have been keen to be involved in its development.
- (4) Kwinana Industries Council (KIC) is one of nine different organisations undertaking ambient monitoring in Cockburn Sound. The Cockburn Sound Management Council (CSMC) recognises the significant contribution that KIC contributes to the monitoring program and at its meeting in March 2003 received correspondence from KIC bringing this matter to their attention. The Council is in the process of developing a strategy to better co-ordinate ambient monitoring of Cockburn Sound.
- (5) Co-ordinating ambient monitoring of marine waters in Cockburn Sound is considered a role for the CSMC. The CSMC is in the process of exploring options for the regular monitoring of Cockburn Sound. The Minister expects the CSMC to provide her with advice on these options by the middle of this year.
- (6) Cabinet approved and set a budget for the CSMC in February 2000. This budget was higher in the first three years to recognise the set up costs of establishing the CMSC and the need for significant resourcing to develop the Environmental Management Plan (EMP). Now that the EMP has been completed the CMSC is evaluating its role in co-ordination and implementation of the EMP. It is expected that, by the middle of this year, the Council will be advising the Minister regarding how it sees its future role.
- (7) There have been no cuts to the CSMCs agreed budget and there are no plans for any reduction to the approved budget for the next financial year.
- (8) Yes.
- (9) The Minister provided endorsement of the Interim Environmental Management Plan for Cockburn Sound and its Catchment in December 2002. The Plan is Interim since Section 1 directly relates to the implementation of the draft EPP. It therefore cannot be finalised until the EPP itself is finalised. The remaining sections of the Plan relate to the Council's broader responsibilities. The Plan provides

guidance for the future management of Cockburn Sound now. The only amendments likely at the time of finalising the EPP will be to ensure it is consistent with the final EPP.

- (10) Not applicable.