

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT, INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS

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

Further to question on notice No. 518 of March 20 2002 -

- (1) When will the proposed amendments to the *Environmental Protection Act* needed to implement the State Groundwater Policy be introduced into Parliament?
- (2) In view of the State's serious water crisis why has the Government taken so long to finalise the protection of our essential groundwater resources?
- (3) Why has the Minister permitted work on this important policy to be suspended for so long?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

- (1) It is anticipated that the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill 2002 will be introduced into the Legislative Assembly late this session or early next session. Policies for the management of ground and surface water are also implemented through the existing Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914.
- (2) Essential groundwater resources can be protected through a range of statutory and non-statutory mechanisms under the existing Rights in Water and Irrigation Act 1914, in addition to the Environmental Protection Act and its amendments. The current water supply situation is the result of an extraordinarily dry climatic sequence and requires resolution through a mix of policy, source development and water conservation.
- (3) Resources have been dedicated to preparing the Environmental Protection Amendment Bill 2002 for introduction into Parliament.