

BROOKDALE LIQUID WASTE TREATMENT PLANT, TOXIC WASTE

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

Further to question without notice 656 of March 12 2003, and I ask -

Can the Minister for Environment and Heritage inform the House -

- (1) When the first of the individual loads containing hazardous wastes were allowed to be accepted by the Brookdale LWTF outside licence approvals?
- (2) Was the Department of Health or the DEP the proponent of the Brookdale LWTF when unapproved toxic waste was first allowed to be handled and did the DEP continue to allow unapproved waste to be handled when it became the proponent?
- (3) Were either or both the Health Department and/or the DEP informed of toxic waste being handled at Brookdale?
- (4) Did either or both of these Departments accede to this unapproved waste being accepted and who was ultimately responsible for this decision?
- (5) Will the Minister provide this House with documentation relating to the above questions as soon as she is able?
- (6) If not, why not?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

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

1. The Minister has been advised by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that individual loads containing hazardous wastes were first allowed to be accepted to the Brookdale Liquid Waste Treatment Facility (LWTF) outside licence approvals in August 1991.
2. Waste outside environmental approvals was accepted at the Brookdale LWTF when the Department of Health was the proponent. This continued when responsibility for managing the facility was transferred to the DEP in May 1994. Acceptance of waste outside of licence approvals was allowed because of the community need, however, steps were put into place to change the approvals for the facility through the initiation of a Section 46 review in 1994 and a Consultative Environmental Review (CER) process in 1996.
3. It appears that officers of both the Department of Health and the DEP were aware that waste outside licence approvals was being accepted at the facility.
4. Yes. The Minister has been advised that both the Department of Health and the DEP were aware that waste was being accepted at the Brookdale LWTF outside licence approvals. Approvals were on an individual basis for individual loads of waste.  
  
Files relating to the management of the facility have been reviewed and there is no evidence to suggest that the decision to allow wastes to be accepted outside licence approvals was made at a single point in time.
5. Documentation detailing when individual loads were accepted outside licence approvals does not exist, except on one occasion when approval was given in August 1991 for a limited quantity of chemicals to be collected from schools and stored at the Brookdale LWTF. I now table the documentation relevant to that decision in August 1991. [See paper No 965.]
6. Not applicable.