KALGOORLIE NICKEL SMELTER, SULFUR DIOXIDE EMISSION LEVELS

782. Hon JIM SCOTT to the minister representing the Minister for the Environment:

(1) What levels of sulfur dioxide emissions are allowed from the Kalgoorlie nickel smelter?

(2) Have these limits been exceeded in the past 12 months; and, if so, will the minister please give details?

(3) Are the total sulfur dioxide emissions from all sources in and around Kalgoorlie being measured?

(4) Have these exceeded the allowable limit in the past 12 months; and, if so, will the minister please give details?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. I provide the following response on behalf of the Minister for the Environment -

(1) The Kalgoorlie nickel smelter, in addition to the Gidji Roaster and Kanowna Belle Roaster, needs to meet ambient sulfur dioxide limits in accordance with the "Environmental Protection (Goldfields Residential Areas) (Sulfur Dioxide) Policy Order 2003" and the Environmental Protection (Goldfields Residential Areas) (Sulfur Dioxide) Regulations 2003 . This environmental protection policy establishes objectives for air quality over protected areas. The regulations prescribe the means by which these objectives are to be achieved and maintained. The policy specifies the maximum sulfur dioxide concentration permitted as 0.35 parts per million for 2003 and 0.30 parts per million for 2004. These limits are not to be exceeded over protected areas, including Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Coolgardie, Carine and Kambalda. A total of 10 monitoring stations exist in these areas.

(2) No.

(3) Sulfur dioxide is monitored at 10 stations, including seven in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area. These ambient monitoring stations measure sulfur dioxide in the ambient air independent of the source. The Department of Environment is currently assessing tenders to appoint a consultant to conduct a wider GAP emission study for the Kalgoorlie-Boulder, Coolgardie and Kambalda air sheds. It is envisaged that this study will examine the current state of knowledge of the air sheds and determine whether further monitoring and emission limits, including sulfur dioxide, are required. Stage 1 of the study is expected to be completed early 2005.

(4) No.