

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY — MINISTERIAL CONDITIONS

1179. Hon BEN DAWKINS to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to section 8 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the Environmental Protection Authority and the chairperson of the EPA are not subject to formal ministerial direction?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that section 8 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 does not preclude the EPA or the EPA chair being lobbied, pressured or influenced by government ministers?
- (3) If yes to (2), is the minister satisfied that the EPA is able to be sufficiently independent to make decisions to protect the environment?
- (4) Will the Cook Labor government propose changes to section 8 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 to ensure that government ministers cannot interfere with EPA assessments and advice in the future?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Environment, I provide the following answer.

- (1) The Environmental Protection Authority is independent of government, and government respects and values that independence. Board members, including the chair, are not subject to direction by the Minister for Environment or other ministers of cabinet.
- (2)–(4) Section 8 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 states that neither the chair nor the Environmental Protection Authority is subject to the direction of the minister. This clarity confirms the Environmental Protection Authority's independence from government and ensures that the Environmental Protection Authority can continue to make robust recommendations regarding the protection of the Western Australian environment.