

SKELETON WEED LEVY, DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

446. Hon Murray Criddle to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

As there has been a significant rise in the predicted grain harvest will the Minister give an assurance that the monies raised from the skeleton weed levy will be distributed in accordance with the *Plant Pest and Diseases (Eradication Funds) Act 1974*?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

Future use of Skeleton Weed Trust Fund monies will be determined by the Agriculture Protection Board, within the requirements of the Plant Pests and Diseases (Eradication Funds) Act 1974, and in full consultation with grain grower organisations.

The revenue raised from the skeleton weed rate charged on the 2001 grain crop is expected to be approximately \$3.85 million, assuming that 11 million tonnes of grain is received from growers. Revenue collected from the grower contribution is credited to the Skeleton Weed Eradication Trust Fund, which is administered by the Agriculture Protection Board. The operational budget for the skeleton weed program is set each year in consultation with grain industry representatives. The expenditure for the current year's program is projected to reach \$3.45 million.

Apart from a limited reserve of \$20,000 for the control of significant outbreaks of phosphine resistant grain insects, revenue raised from the skeleton weed rate is employed exclusively in the campaign to eradicate skeleton weed.