

COCKBURN SOUND, AMMONIA DISCHARGE

127. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Housing and Works representing the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
- (1) Does Wesfarmers CSBP Ammonia Plant in Kwinana have a licence to discharge ammonia into Cockburn Sound?
  - (2) If yes, what is the discharge level of the license?
  - (3) Why does this discharge licence not appear in Question on Notice No. 34 of the May 23 2001 under the 'Ammonia Discharge' column?
  - (4) How much ammonia does the Wesfarmers Ammonia plant actually discharge into Cockburn Sound per annum?
  - (5) Is ammonia leaching into Cockburn Sound through groundwater from the Wesfarmers CSBP plant?
  - (6) If yes, how much per annum?
  - (7) What action is the DEP taking to control this discharge?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

- (1) A licence limit is set for Total Nitrogen from the Wesfarmers CSBP premises. Ammonia nitrogen is represented within this Total Nitrogen limit. The Ammonia plant and other CSBP operations at the Kwinana plant are subject to this Total Nitrogen licence limit.
- (2) The licence limit for Total Nitrogen is 200 kilograms per day averaged over a three month rolling period and a never to be exceeded limit of 750 kilograms per day is also set. A monthly report of discharge levels is required.
- (3) See question 1 above.
- (4) Based on monthly data reports prepared by Wesfarmers CSBP, approximately 37 tonnes of Total Nitrogen was discharged from the CSBP premises to Cockburn Sound from July 2000 to June 2001. Of this amount, Ammonia Nitrogen is estimated at 27 tonnes.
- (5) Yes, the Wesfarmers CSBP Remediation Action Plan for Arsenic in groundwater also discusses ammonia nitrogen. That report advises that ammonia nitrogen is likely to be discharging to Cockburn Sound.
- (6) The Wesfarmers CSBP Remediation Action Plan estimates that ammonia discharge in groundwater to Cockburn Sound is likely to be occurring at rates up to 60 tonnes per annum.
- (7) The Department endorses action by Wesfarmers CSBP to address the arsenic contamination under its premises and reduce nitrogen discharges from its onsite operating facilities. Nonetheless, the Department has sought further advice on the nutrient plume under the CSBP site. The CSBP report identifies that ongoing monitoring has shown a reduction in nutrient loads to Cockburn Sound and that some nutrient will be removed from the groundwater as a consequence of the arsenic remediation action plan. It should also be recognised that work in progress for the Cockburn Sound Environmental Protection Policy and Environmental Management Plan is considering how to deal with nutrient issues in Cockburn Sound. Both end of pipe and diffuse sources of contaminants will be considered in this work.