

ACID SULFATE SOILS, FUNDING

2349. Hon Jim Scott to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development representing the Minister for the Environment
- (1) How much funding has been allocated to the issue of acid sulphate soils in Western Australia for each of the last five years?
 - (2) How many full-time officer positions have been allocated to the acid sulphate issue for each of the last five years?
 - (3) How many full-time officer positions are currently working on the acid sulphate issue in Western Australia?
 - (4) What strategies are currently in place to deal with the growing acid sulphate problem?
 - (5) Has a Ministerial Advisory Committee been established for acid sulphate soils?
 - (6) If yes to (5), who is on the committee and what organisation do they represent?
 - (7) Has DoE completed detailed mapping of acid sulfate soil areas in Western Australia?
 - (8) Does the DoE or Government intend to wind back research and resources into acid sulphate soils?

Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:

The Minister for the Environment has provided the following response:

1. The acid sulphate soil issue has only recently been identified as an issue in WA. The State Government has committed \$650,000 over two years (2003/04 and 2004/05) to the Department of Environment for the mapping of acid sulphate soil risk areas in coastal regions of the State. This mapping exercise involves the collection and analysis of soil samples and development of a map of risk areas.
2. Since the Stirling ground water issue a couple of years ago, three full-time professional staff and four technical staff at the DoE have been undertaking investigations, developing guidelines and providing advice on issues associated with acid sulphate soils.
3. As above.
4. The Proposed Framework for Managing Acid Sulphate Soils was released for public consultation in June 2004. This framework identifies a number of areas where further work is required in terms of identification and management of acid sulphate soil problems. In addition, the Department for Planning and Infrastructure is developing a Planning Policy in line with its Bulletin 64 on the identification and management of acid sulphate soils in the development process.
5. The DoE has established a committee, the Western Australian Acid Sulphate Soil Advisory Committee, to advise on the implementation of the State framework. Currently the committee is informal, and will be formally established following finalisation of the Proposed Framework for Managing Acid Sulphate Soils. The committee comprises representatives from:
 - Department of Environment;
 - Department for Planning and Infrastructure;
 - Urban Development Institute of WA (UDIA);
 - Conservation Council;
 - Community (Geoff Evans); and
 - Academic Institutions, e.g Curtin University.Representatives from AgWA and Western Australian Local Government Association have also attended meetings from time to time.
6. As above.
7. The mapping exercise is expected to be completed by mid 2005.
8. The Proposed Framework for Managing Acid Sulphate Soils was released for public consultation in June 2004. Following finalisation of this strategy, resource requirements can be identified.