



**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
 ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR 2009/10 ONGOING ESTIMATES HEARING
 WASTE AUTHORITY HEARING HELD ON
 MONDAY 29 JUNE 2009**

Monday, 29 June 2009

Waste Authority

Questions 1-6: Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich MLC asked –

(1) *The Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Account is a financial account established for holding revenue from the landfill levy. The funds held in the account are used for implementing initiatives related to the management, reduction, reuse, recycling, monitoring or measurement of waste.*

1.1 *Could you provide the Committee with the revenue and expenditure from that fund for each financial year since its inception?*

Answer:

(1.1) The WARR account was opened for operation on 1 July 2008. I have included figures for budget and expenditure to 30 June 2009.

Carry over cash at 1 July 2008	11,116,987
Revenue 2008-2009	<u>13,433,373</u>
Sub total	24,550,360
Expenditure 2008-2009	<u>8,612,000</u>
Cash as at 30 June 2009	<u>15,938,360</u>

(2) *Levy Category*

2.1 *One of the first acts of the Waste Authority in 2008 was regarding the levy. Category 64/65 (putrescible waste) was increased, while Category 63 (inert landfill) was frozen at \$3/cubic metre. It would appear that an increase in Category 63 was the one most likely to promote recycling, so why was it not increased?*

Answer:

(2.1) The former Waste Management Board, which was the forerunner to the Waste Authority, recommended to us that all levies be increased according to a previously announced schedule. The Authority accepted and implemented this advice. The Waste Management Board recommended however that there may be anomalies in the management of category 63 levies, and that further investigation may be warranted. The Authority hence deferred decisions on new levies for category 63 disposal, and made such investigation and recommended increases six months later, along with some basis for more sophisticated assessment.

(3) *Waste Authority Business Plan*

Minutes of the Waste Authority Meeting of March 2009 shows that there was a draft Skeleton Business Plan 2009/10.

3.1 *Where in the Waste Authority Business Plan for 2008/09 does that suggest that it has not been released?*

3.1.1 *If so, when will it be released?*

3.1.2 *Why the delay?*

Answer:

(3.1)-(3.12) The WARR Act requires the sequential development of a statewide Waste Strategy followed by a Business Plan to deliver on that Strategy. The Strategy is to be developed by a defined process that is in specific steps requiring public inputs etc. The draft of that Strategy is now with the Minister awaiting consideration for suitability for release for public input. There can not be a formal Business Plan until after the Strategy is completed and confirmed. In the meantime the Authority is operating and funding activities according to a work plan that is approved by the Minister, and is publicly available.

(4) *Draft State Waste Strategy*

4.1 *What is the State Waste Strategy and when was it completed?*

4.2 *What is the current status of the State Waste Strategy?*

4.3 *When did the Waste Authority provide a copy of the State Waste Strategy to the Minister?*

4.4 *Have you met with the Minister prior to the budget to discuss the State Waste Strategy?*

4.5 *Did you seek a meeting with the Minister prior to the budget to discuss the State Waste Strategy?*

4.6 *Has the State Waste Strategy been finalised and when will it be made public?*

Answer:

(4.1)-(4.2) See item 3 above.

(4.3) The draft Strategy was presented to the Minister in May 2009 for approval to release for public comment.

(4.4)-(4.5) Yes, but not in the context of the budget.

(4.6) A draft Waste Strategy is with the Minister for approval to release for public comment.

(5) *Strategic Investments*

5.1 *What are the key strategic investments that the Waste Authority seeks to make?*

5.2 *What are the costs and within what timeframe are these investments to be made?*

5.3 *Is the Waste Authority expecting to fund these from the 300% increase in the landfill levy?*

Answer:

(5.1) The Authority has not made firm decisions on extra strategic investments. It is progressing discussions with others that are intended to identify which aspects of the waste stream would best be assisted by timely investments. Items of current interest are the mechanisms for recycling to deal with the global financial problems, and the desirability of management systems for used oil, glass packaging, and electronic waste

(5.2) The timeframes for consideration of all of these is over the next six months, and action is possible within existing financial resources. There are no costings at this stage.

(5.3) Discussions on these commenced before consideration of a 300% increase in the levy, and the potential increase is not factored into considerations of extra income.

(6) *Waste Authority Staffing*

6.1 *Have you publicly expressed your concern about the lack of staff at the Waste Authority?*

6.2 *How many FTE do you have?*

6.3 *How many FTE do you need to fulfil the agencies function under the Act?*

6.4 *Have you discussed the issue of staffing with the Minister or the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation?*

6.4.1 *If so, what was their response?*

Answer:

(6.1) Yes.

(6.2) The Waste Management Branch of the Department of Environment and Conservation has approval for up to 25 FTE from the Authority. In addition the Minister has directed that the Authority is to have about 5 FTE as 'Officers of the Waste Authority' to provide representation and presence for the Authority.

(6.3) The Authority has agreed with DEC that 25 FTE is appropriate for program delivery in 2009/10. This will be adjusted should implementation of the Waste Strategy require resources in addition to those currently envisaged.

(6.4) Yes.

(6.4.1) The Minister has directed that the staffing as above be implemented.