

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT REGULATION —  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND COMPLIANCE AUDITS

**798. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Environment:**

I refer the Minister for Environment to revelations in the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations hearings that he is allowing the Treasurer to use his Department of Environment Regulation as a cash cow to prop up his shaky budget.

- (1) Is it true the minister has a budget black hole of almost \$4 million this year because he has booked the revenue from introducing fees for environmental impact assessments and compliance audits, but has not made the legislative arrangements to collect the revenue?
- (2) Who made the decision to divert the landfill levy and introduce fees for environmental assessments and audits—the minister or the Treasurer?

**Mr A.P. JACOB replied:**

(1)–(2) I think the member for Gosnells is drawing a connection between two rather separate incidents. I think the member is referring to the upper house estimates hearings, which were explored recently —

**Mr C.J. Tallentire:** It's in here —

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** That hearing dealt more specifically with the waste levy hypothecation, and that has been legislated for a long time. A percentage of that waste levy is specifically targeted towards waste.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** I am trying to orient myself, because the member raised two disparate points. The issues that came up in the Legislative Council's estimates committee hearings dealt specifically with the waste levy. It has been the practice for a long time that a certain legislated leftover amount of the waste levy is hypothecated back into consolidated revenue. That has been in place for a long time. The environmental impact assessment process and the cost recovery process of the Environmental Protection Authority is not a new thing; in fact, it was in the budget in the previous year. It has been explored and there is ongoing work. We explored that to a very large degree —

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** — in the committee hearing, and there will be ongoing work on that.