

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AUTHORITY — EXPENSES

1858. Mr C.J. Tallentire to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA) and ask:

- (a) why have the total expenses of the OEPA increased from \$13.991 million in 2012 to \$17.513 million in 2013;
- (b) why was there a variance of \$812,313 in the budget estimate for 2013 to the budget actual in 2013 for the total cost of the OEPA;
- (c) why did the costs of environmental assessments on average increase by \$3,652 in 2012–2013; and
- (d) when is the OEPA going to become a fee for service agency?

Mr A.P. Jacob replied:

- (a) The increase in total ‘Cost of Services’ for the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority is attributable to implementation of initiatives associated with approval processes reforms.
- (b) The variance in the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority’s budget estimate and actual expenditure for total cost of services for 2013 was \$1 048 002 (\$812 213 for Service 1 — Environmental Impact Assessment and Policies and \$235 689 for Service 2 — Environmental Compliance Audits). The variance was due to expenditures associated with the department implementing initiatives associated with approvals processes reforms.
- (c) The average cost of environmental impact assessments varies from year to year depending on complexity of projects assessed. A number of complex projects were assessed in 2013.
- (d) The State Government is still considering the matter of fees for some services of the OEPA.