

WASTE TO ENERGY — RESIDUAL WASTE

1089. Hon SIMON O'BRIEN to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Environmental Protection Authority recommendations for changes to the ministerial conditions pertaining to the four waste-to-energy plants approved in Western Australia and in particular the recommended change of definition of residual waste in these approvals to refer to waste remaining after “best practice” source separation.

- (1) Is the government intending to set a discriminatory, higher standard than is required for disposal to landfill; and, if so, why?
- (2) Is the government intending to set a higher standard than is set in the current draft “Waste Strategy”, which defines “residual waste” as waste remaining after “better practice” source separation; and, if so, why?
- (3) Has the minister contemplated that application of such imprecise and changeable definitions creates a lack of certainty for all stakeholders in the waste sector as to what standards will be required in the future; and, if so, has such a factor had any bearing on his considerations?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The objects of the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007 set out that waste management options be considered against a waste hierarchy whereby resource recovery, including energy recovery, is preferred to disposal. Although recovery options are preferred over landfill disposal, energy recovery is the least preferred recovery option.
- (2)–(3) The Environmental Protection Authority has recommended a definition of “residual waste” and proposed conditions to provide clarity for implementation of waste-to-energy proposals. The draft “Waste Strategy 2030” is consistent with the EPA’s recommended definition. The draft strategy is intended to give effect to the WARR Act requirement to set out strategies for the continuous improvement of waste services. I will consider both the EPA’s advice and the feedback on the draft strategy from people and entities who have made a submission on the review of the waste strategy before making a decision on the appropriate approach to residual waste.