

## **Question on Notice**

**No. 1551**

**Asked on 30 November 2006**

MR WELLS asked the Premier and Minister for Trade (MR BEATTIE)—

### **QUESTION:**

With reference to the interdepartmental process he put in place to address the concerns of residents who live near the Narangba Industrial Estate—

What progress has been made towards implementing the program he outlined in August?

### **ANSWER:**

The Government acted immediately to address issues relating to the Binary Industries fire at the Narangba Industrial Estate on 25 August 2005, including cleanup of the area, treatment of water and prevention of further contamination of the area.

The Government continues to evaluate the estate in response to community concerns following the fire, and concerns generally with issues such as odours coming from some activities on the estate.

Reports have been released which relate to the chemical testing carried out on the night of the fire (by Emergency Services' CHEM Unit) and Queensland Health's response to that report. The essence of the reports is that there was no appreciable health risk to the community from the fire.

On 18 December 2006, an assessment of the sample results by EPA scientists and by two independent environmental toxicologists found the dioxin levels in and around Narangba to be similar to background levels found in urban and industrial areas throughout Queensland.

Officers from the Department of State Development, Trade and Innovation, The Coordinator-General, Queensland Health, Department of Emergency Services, Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Natural Resources, Mines and Water have met with local community and industry representatives in relation to these reports.

The Government is conducting a four point Health Action Plan to address community health concerns associated with the Binary Industries fire and the ongoing operation of the estate. Input to the Health Action Plan is being undertaken through a community reference group which includes representation of the breadth of community values and interests. Studies commissioned by the community reference

group will be designed using scientific techniques subject to peer review which will ensure a rigorous approach to the sampling and analysis of data sufficient to deliver evidence-based recommendations to Government.

The community reference group has 27 representatives from industry, government, residents, commerce and community groups. Representation on the reference group includes:

- State Government, Pine Rivers Shire Council and Caboolture Shire Council;
- Narangba Industrial Estate Industry Representative Group and employees;
- Community representative groups (Representative General Practitioner, Deception Bay Community Council, Moreton Downs P&C Council, Chamber of Commerce and Stocklands Developer);
- Residents effected by Binary Fire; and
- Residents generally effected by the Narangba Industrial Estate.

The four stages of the action plan are:

- (1) Obtain and analyse preliminary information – this has commenced;
- (2) Design a full Health Impact Assessment in consultation with the community, industry and other stakeholders - the assessment is currently being developed and will study health issues in the local area to determine if there has been any appreciable impact on health caused by the emissions produced during the Binary Industries fire. In addition, ongoing monitoring of emissions will be undertaken in the local area to detect if there is anything coming from the estate that may have an adverse impact on health. This stage is expected to take three months;
- (3) Implement Health Impact Assessment projects – September 2006 to April 2007; and
- (4) Disseminate findings and response – April 2007.

In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency is finalising the evaluation of tenders for the removal of about 5000 tonnes of contaminated soil from land owned by the Queensland Government and Caboolture Shire Council adjacent to the Binary Industries site at Narangba.

Work will start as soon as the contract has been awarded and measures will be put in place to monitor and minimise dust, odour and noise coming from the clean-up activities.

Contaminated water captured in containment ponds on the night of the Binary Industries fire has been progressively transferred to a purpose built treatment pond next to the Binary Industries factory site for treatment and safe disposal through Caboolture Shire Council's sewage treatment system.

About 5.5 megalitres of water have treated and released through the sewage system, in addition to 2 megalitres disposed of earlier this year at a slow rate through the sewage treatment system. The Environmental Protection Agency designed treatment plant has allowed the treatment of contaminated water at a fraction of the cost of a commercial operation.

Now the water has been removed from the containment ponds, the affected soil can be removed to an approved facility for bioremediation. It will be replaced by clean fill and the area will be revegetated. The remediation works are progressing as quickly and as safely as possible.

The Government understands the economic role of industries within the estate and the employment they provide, and will be acting fairly by conducting comprehensive consultation with industry representatives to resolve any issues. An industry reference group has been established to engage local businesses on the estate.

Government agencies (Environmental Protection Agency, Workplace Health and Safety, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Department of Emergency Services and Caboolture Shire Council) undertook an inspection program of 17 high impact businesses on the industrial estate, to assist continuous rectification of any identified fire risks and to ensure compliance with statutory obligations. This program will also assist businesses to operate on the basis of best practice in recognition that their close location to a residential area requires them to be vigilant in minimising any off-site impact of their operations.

The Government will work with industry and community representatives to identify long term planning solutions to the problems now experienced when residential and industrial areas exist side by side, by ensuring that hazardous industries that impact off-site will be appropriately monitored and located where their impact is minimised.