

**Question on Notice
No. 876
Asked on 25 May 2006**

QUESTION:

MS NOLAN asked the Minister for Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

What progress has been made in the last five years on cleaning up the Bremer River?

ANSWER:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to strive for improved water quality in the Bremer River by promoting best practice environmental management for the industries it regulates in the Catchment. However, the problems associated with poor in-stream water quality in the Bremer River are due not only to point source pollution, but also to diffuse sources of pollution, riparian vegetation, erosion, environmental flows and in-stream water quality.

The EPA in conjunction with the Healthy Waterways Partnership and other government, industry and community stakeholders is a member of the Bremer River Steering Committee. The Committee is charged with developing water quality improvement initiatives and management goals to further improve water quality in the Bremer catchment.

The Committee is currently finalising the Bremer River Action Plan. The Plan's objective is to provide for the protection and rehabilitation of the environmental values of the Bremer River by managing point source and diffuse sources of pollution, riparian vegetation, erosion, environmental flows and in-stream water quality.

Examples of management actions to improve in-stream water quality include restoration of riparian vegetation in priority areas, adoption of water sensitive urban design in developing areas, and promotion of 100% reuse of treated wastewater in the catchment. Other management actions include best practice treatment technologies and the development and implementation of a water resources plan for the Bremer River that addresses environmental flows.

There is a strong co-operative approach regarding improving in-stream water quality in the Bremer River with State and Local Governments, industries and community groups committing to undertake management actions.

In 2002 and 2003, the EPA completed inspections of a range of licensed activities in the Bremer Catchment. Since the commencement of that audit program there have been improvements in the discharges from a number of industries. However, other industries have failed to make improvements to their treatment methods.

Industries that are worthy of specific mention are the Tivoli wastewater treatment plant and Australian Meat Holdings. The Tivoli discharges have been diverted to the upgraded Bundamba plant where a higher level of treatment occurs, and Australian Meat Holdings has upgraded its treatment plant, both resulting in fewer emissions to the Bremer.