

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 699

asked on Thursday, 12 May 2011

MS O'NEILL ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (MS JONES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise what programs the department provides to maintain healthy waterways in this state and in particular what is done for the North Pine River?

ANSWER:

Over the past few years, the Bligh Government and the Department of Environment and Resource Management have strengthened the policy and planning frameworks for healthy waterways. State wide initiatives include the remaking of the *Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 1997 now 2009* and the new State Planning Policy 4/10 Healthy Waters.

The South East Queensland Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program includes the Pine (North and South Rivers) Catchment. The 2010 Report Card found the Pine Catchment and estuary to be in a fair condition. Further information about the Ecosystem Health Monitoring Program and the Report card 2010 may be obtained from the Healthy Waterways web site: <http://www.healthywaterways.org/home1.aspx>

Environmental values and water quality objectives for the Pine rivers including all tributaries of the North and South Pine rivers were established in July 2010 and are included in Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009*. Documentation for Pine Rivers environmental values and water quality objectives may be accessed on the department's web site at: http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/environmental_management/water/environmental_values_environmental_protection_water_policy/pdf/ev_docs/pine-rivers-ev-2010.pdf

Environmental values for a water body are the particular values or uses that are conducive to a healthy ecosystem or for a public amenity, safety or health and that require protection from the effects of habitat alteration, waste releases, contaminated runoff and changed flows. Several values may be attributed to a particular water body such as the North Pine River.

Having identified those values it is then necessary to establish water quality objectives for the water that will protect the environmental values identified. These are the physico-chemical, biological or other properties present in the water which may impact one of more of the established environmental values of that water. Water quality objectives may be different for example, a) in the recreational use of water where there may be full body contact, or b) boating and fishing or c) for visual recreational use where there is no human contact.

The environmental values and water quality objectives must be considered when making decisions under *Environmental Protection Act 1994* about an environmental authority application, particular development applications or changing authority conditions. This ensures that the environmental values for the particular water will be protected, enhanced or maintained as required.

The State Planning Policy for Healthy Waters will influence land use planning and development decisions that may individually or collectively affect environmental values for a water body. The intended outcome is that development is planned, designed, constructed and operated to manage stormwater and waste water in ways that help to protect the environmental values specified in the *Environmental Protection (Water) Policy 2009*.

These initiatives will support the planning and regulation of developments in the Pine River catchment.