

Question on Notice

No. 799

Asked on Thursday, 31 October 2013

MRS CUNNINGHAM asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR EMERSON) —

QUESTION:

With reference to oil spills in Gladstone Harbour (approximately 34 spills in the last two and a half years including lesser spills)—

Has Corexit 9527 or Corexit 9500 ever been used in the Gladstone Harbour?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Gladstone for the question.

Maritime Safety Queensland, a branch of the Department of Transport and Main Roads, is the combat agency for response to oil spills from ships that impact or are likely to impact Queensland Coastal Waters. This includes the waters of Gladstone Harbour where Maritime Safety Queensland has an agreement with the Port Authority who provide the initial response to an oil spill.

Maritime Safety Queensland has never used Corexit oil spill dispersants in Gladstone Harbour and is unaware of anyone else using it on oil spills in Gladstone Harbour.

However, Maritime Safety Queensland is aware that a study was conducted by scientists from the Australian Institute of Marine Science in Gladstone Harbour between 1995 and 1998 into the use of dispersant as a means of reducing the impacts of oil on mangroves and that less than 200 litres of Corexit 9527 was used in a study. The study was carried out in mangroves that have since been cleared for development of the Queensland Cement and Lime facility at Fishermans Landing.

Most of the spills that have occurred in Gladstone Harbour in recent years have been small spills of biodegradable hydraulic oils that disperse and break down naturally. Where a response to these spills has been necessary the oil has been recovered by crews using oil absorbent materials.