

Question on Notice

No. 675

Asked on Thursday, 17 May 2018

MR C BOYCE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the return of CSG water to the environment under Environmental Authorities (EA's) issued to companies in the Callide Electorate—

Will the Minister advise (a) what monitoring and compliance regime is in place regarding water return to the environment, (b) what actual inspections and tests have occurred in the past year for each CSG EA in the Callide Electorate in relation to salinity and (c) whether the Minister is aware of concerns about overly-saline water being returned to the land and damaging the environment?

ANSWER:

I thank the Honourable Member for the question.

Under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994* (EP Act), environmental authorities (EAs) are issued by the Department of Environment and Science (the department) to license the operation of coal seam gas (CSG) activities, in order to protect Queensland's environment while allowing for ecologically sustainable development. In accordance with the requirements of the EP Act, contaminants cannot be released to the environment unless authorised by specific conditions in an EA.

The conditions of the EA are monitored and enforced as part of the department's Regulatory Strategy which incorporates a combination of inspections, audits and compliance responses. The department conducts regular inspections of all CSG project areas. Concurrently, EA holders are responsible for monitoring their performance, responding to risks, and notifying the department of serious incidents.

Between April 2017 and April 2018, the department undertook 45 site inspections of the EAs in the Callide electorate.

The department is working with industry and other key stakeholders to identify solutions for the long-term management of CSG saline waste.