

Question on Notice

No. 1153

Asked on 10 October 2023

MR S MINNIKIN ASKED MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND MINISTER FOR DIGITAL SERVICES (HON M BAILEY)—

QUESTION:

With reference to reportable environmental incidents for the Port of Gladstone in 2022–23—

Will the Minister advise (a) details including date, location, nature of incident and environmental impact of each of the 11 incidents, (b) the reason for the significant increase from two incidents in the previous financial year and (c) what action the Minister is taking to address this significant increase in the number of reportable incidents?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Chatsworth for the question.

(a) A total of 11 incidents were reported for the Port of Gladstone during the 2022–23 period. Of those 11 incidents, seven resulted in no environmental impacts and four with minimal and/or minor environmental impacts. The details including date, location, nature of incident of each of the 11 incidents for the Port of Gladstone in 2022–23 are as follows.

- 1 August 2022 - one incident where less than 10 litres of contaminant (acid) released to land (road base material – no impact) at the RG Tanna Coal Terminal (RGTCT), with the environmental impact being a near miss (contained and cleaned up).
- 23 October 2022 - one incident where less than 100 millilitres of contaminant (oil) released to land at the RGTCT, with the environmental impact being minor.
- 28 November 2022 - one incident where procedural error resulted in deficient monitoring to verify compliance with stormwater release parameters. Field samples supported release, but laboratory analysis was not completed to verify all monitoring requirements at the Barney Point Multi-commodity Bulk Material Handling Facility, with no environmental impact.
- 29 November and 15 December 2022 - two incidents where contaminant (coal) was released to water at the RGTCT. A visual coal plume in harbour, with the environmental impact being minimal.
- 20 February 2023 - one incident where equipment damage (public interference) resulted in deficient administrative monitoring to verify compliance with air indicator release limits at the RGTCT, with no environmental impact.
- 16 March 2023 - one incident where an administrative procedural error resulted in deficient monitoring to verify compliance with air indicator release limits. Sample exposure was insufficient at the RGTCT, with no environmental impact.
- 16 March 2023 - one incident where elevated coal dust (approximately 0.2g/m² above threshold) in compliance monitoring site, which is a nuisance indicator for the community, with minor environmental impact. Further, equipment damage (public interference) resulted in deficient administrative monitoring to verify compliance with air indicator release limits at the RGTCT, with no environmental impact.
- 6 May 2023 - one incident where contaminant (oil) was released to water totalling less than 140 litres over a three-month period at the RGTCT, with minimal environmental impact.

- 16 May 2023 - one incident where procedural error resulted in deficient monitoring to verify compliance with air indicator release limits. This is a nuisance indicator for the community at the RGTCT, with no environmental impact.
 - 21 June 2023 - one incident where blasting was conducted 24 minutes outside permitted blasting hours for safety reasons at the Ticor Quarry, with no environmental impact.
- (b) Gladstone Ports Corporation (GPC) advises the primary reason behind the increase in reported incidents is a result of changes to environmental licence conditions. In July 2022, the licence for RGTCT and Barney Point Terminal (BPT) was amended by agreement with the Department of Environment and Science (DES). The new conditions require GPC to report all contraventions of the relevant Environment Authority (EA) condition to DES within 24 hours of GPC becoming aware of the breach.

The revised EA conditions resulted in increased reporting requirements associated with any release of contaminants into the environment. Previously, GPC notifications to DES were only required if there was potential for environmental harm. Only three incidents would need to have been reported in 2022–23 if the environmental licence conditions were not changed.

- (c) GPC has worked with DES to refine the reporting requirements under the licence conditions for RGTCT and BPT, to assist in reducing reporting of incidents to DES that do not present a risk of environmental impact.

GPC has addressed the administrative-related incidents through contractor training and management processes, including providing GPC oversight into the process to prevent re-occurrences, and erecting fencing to restrict the public from accessing monitoring stations.