

Rural & Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Committee Question Number: 162

Departmental Question Number: SQ17-000188

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Executive

Topic: Sewerage and stormwater in Launceston, Tasmania

Proof Hansard Page: 71 (22 May 2017)

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: Going to TasWater and sewerage issues, I noted that there were issues surrounding these questions in the February estimates and that questions on notice were answered by the water division with a response from Treasury. I want to ask them here in the first instance because they relate to Infrastructure Australia's work priority projects list, so I will kick off and—

Mr Mrdak: We need to take them on notice. Infrastructure Australia has left for the day. We can take on notice questions for you.

Senator URQUHART: All right, I will go through the questions because I thought this would have been under the investment—

Mr Mrdak: No, Infrastructure Australia was on this morning.

Senator URQUHART: Yes, I know that, but I thought these questions would have fitted under investment. Maybe if I ask them and, if you cannot answer them, we can get the answers from the others. I noted that on Infrastructure Australia's list of priority projects published in January this year it identifies, as a proposed initiative, the Tasmanian sewerage infrastructure upgrades. Has the minister or the department been contacted by TasWater or the Tasmanian government for Commonwealth funding for water and sewerage infrastructure in Tasmania?

Mr Mrdak: Not to this portfolio that I am aware of, but there may have been approaches to the water portfolio. I will take that on notice.

Answer:

As the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development does not have responsibility over this matter, we have sought input from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C). The following response was provided:

The Tasmanian and Commonwealth governments have discussed Tasmanian water and sewerage at meetings of the Joint Commonwealth and Tasmanian Economic Council. Outcomes of each meeting are published on the Commonwealth Treasury website at www.treasury.gov.au/Policy-Topics/PublicPolicyAndGovt/tas-eco-council.

Under the Launceston City Deal, the Commonwealth will assist the Tasmanian Government and the City of Launceston to explore financing options for upgrades to Launceston's combined sewerage and stormwater system.

Further questions regarding this matter should be directed to PM&C.

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Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Committee Question Number: 163

Departmental Question Number: SQ17-000196

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Executive

Topic: The cost of separating sewerage and stormwater in Launceston, Tasmania

Proof Hansard Page: 71 (22 May 2017)

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: I also note that the City of Launceston has a combined sewerage and stormwater system without separation of sewerage and stormwater outflows. Has any material been supplied to the federal government as to the likely cost of separating sewerage and stormwater within the City of Launceston?

Mr Mrdak: Again, I will take that on notice and seek advice from my colleagues in water and the Prime Minister's department.

Answer:

As the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development does not have responsibility over this matter, we have sought input from the Department of the Environment and Energy. The following response was provided:

The 'Launceston Combined Drainage System (CDS) Investigation - Interim Options and Strategy Report' (2016) prepared for TasWater (with funding provided by the Australian Government as part of the National Landcare Program - Tamar River Recovery Plan Stage 1) conservatively estimates that the cost of improving Launceston's combined sewerage and stormwater system could be between approximately \$16 million (screening of overflows) and \$440 million (full separation).

Further questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of the Environment and Energy.

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Committee Question Number: 164
Departmental Question Number: SQ17-000197

Program: n/a
Division/Agency: Executive
Topic: The effect of separating sewerage and stormwater in Launceston, Tasmania
Proof Hansard Page: 71 (22 May 2017)

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: Is there any material to suggest that separating sewerage and stormwater within the City of Launceston will have an effect upon the incidence of discharge of raw sewage in breach of environmental obligations?

Mr Mrdak: Again, I will take that on notice.

Answer:

As the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development does not have responsibility over this matter, we have sought input from the Department of the Environment and Energy. The following response was provided:

The 'Launceston Combined Drainage System (CDS) Investigation - Interim Options and Strategy Report' (2016) noted that removing stormwater entering the combined system through a partial separation option would reduce the volume of combined sewer overflow spills by 22% per annum, while a full separation would reduce the volume of spills by 65% per annum. The report notes however, that a review/refinement of the predictive model that underpins these figures is required, supported by additional monitoring, to define the confidence levels with these estimates.

Further questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of the Environment and Energy.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Infrastructure and Regional Development

Committee Question Number: 165

Departmental Question Number: SQ17-000198

Program: n/a

Division/Agency: Executive

Topic: Submissions for the increase in sewerage volume in Launceston, Tasmania

Proof Hansard Page: 71 (22 May 2017)

Senator Urquhart, Anne asked:

Senator URQUHART: Has the federal government received any submissions as to the likely increase in sewage volume to the system and the capacity for the Launceston sewerage system to cope with anticipated increases in volume?

Mr Mrdak: Again I will take that on notice with the water department.

Answer:

As the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development does not have responsibility over this matter, we have sought input from the Department of the Environment and Energy. The following response was provided:

The future capacity of Launceston's wastewater treatment facilities are the responsibility of TasWater. The Government is aware that modelling undertaken by TasWater as part of the Launceston Sewerage Improvement Project (that does not include the Combined Drainage System) anticipates an increase in sewage volume to wastewater treatment facilities from 24 megalitres (ML) per day in 2015 to 38 ML per day in 2060. TasWater are developing preferred infrastructure options for both the Combined Drainage System and separately, the broader wastewater treatment system.

Further questions regarding this matter should be directed to the Department of the Environment and Energy.