

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012, 21 October 2011

Question: E11-437

OUTCOME 1: Population Health

Topic: PETROL SNIFFING

Hansard Page: 45

Senator Siewert asked:

Opal fuel in Queensland

- a) I do have an interest in Cherbourg because I have travelled up there on several occasions and I have been advised that there have been some issues with petrol sniffing in that region. [Ms Anderson: Cherbourg, I understand, has not been specifically identified as a priority site. I will look into that, but it is not listed as one of the sites for immediate rollout.]

Cape York Region

- b) [A list of] The two current sites and the eight which are coming up for review, please? If you do not have them handy, we will put them on notice.

Answer:

- a) The Department of Health and Ageing has received reports of opportunistic sniffing in the community of Cherbourg from time to time.

The roll-out of low aromatic Opal fuel is targeted to areas of regional and remote Australia at risk of petrol sniffing. It is a supply reduction strategy therefore the scope of the Petrol Sniffing Prevention Program is limited to areas where the supply of regular unleaded petrol can be effectively limited or removed. Cherbourg Community is outside of the scope of the Program given its close proximity to regional centres and metropolitan Brisbane where regular unleaded fuel is widely available. A roll-out of Opal fuel to these larger areas could not be implemented at this stage due to the great volumes of Opal fuel required.

The Department has worked with key stakeholders in the Cherbourg Community including the local health service to develop prevention and diversion strategies to address opportunistic petrol sniffing. The community has also been very proactive in addressing petrol sniffing through prevention campaigns.

- b) This list of sites receiving low aromatic Opal fuel and targeted to receive low aromatic fuel is not made public because from time to time communities raise issues of sensitivity. It is therefore the Department's preference to not make this information public.