

Estimates Committee 2005 Questions Taken On Notice

(23/06/2005 to 01/10/2005)

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Subject: Environment Protection Services - Blackmore River East Aquaculture Project

From: Mr Gerry Wood to Honourable Marion SCRYMGOUR
Minister for the Environment and Heritage

9-6

Question: With regard to monitoring programs set up for the Blackmore River East Aquaculture Project, could you provide details of any nutrient discharge into the harbour detected as a result of the monitoring?

Answer:

Answered On: 29/07/2005

Answer:

A Waste Discharge Licence (#96) has been issued by the Office of Environment & Heritage to the Phelps Panizza Aquaculture operation on the Blackmore River. The licence sets out its principal purposes as follows:

- to ascertain and report the net annual load of specified parameters (total N, total P and suspended solids) from the aquaculture operation,
- to establish and report the scheduling of this load to the receiving environment by implementing appropriate and practicable time step monitoring of flow and water quality parameters,
- to monitor and report on the impact of the discharge on the receiving environment and
- to allow continuous discharge of pond effluent to the receiving environment and the timely assessment of impact of this practice.

A report was provided to OEH by the licensee in July 2004 and covered the start up by the farm in November 2003 through to the first crop harvest in May 2004. The monitoring data (from 2004) show no evidence of nutrient enrichment in the Blackmore estuary associated with prawn farm effluent.

Water quality data in Middle Creek (the creek into which farm discharge occurs) indicated some influence in the upper reaches from the farm discharge with slightly elevated chlorophyll 'a' levels and elevated nutrient concentrations (phosphorus). Conclusions about the environmental impact of these levels will be made as further data becomes available.

The licensee will continue to be required to monitor water quality and to report on the results.