



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE
CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY**

(Reference: [Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2020-2021](#))

Members:

**DR M PATERSON (Chair)
MS J CLAY (Deputy Chair)
MS L CASTLEY**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 3 MARCH 2022

**Acting secretary to the committee:
Dr F Scott (Ph: 620 75498)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

APPEARANCES

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	64
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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 4.31 pm.

Appearances:

Cheyne, Ms Tara, Assistant Minister for Economic Development, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Minister for Human Rights and Minister for Multicultural Affairs

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Dix, Mr Rodney, Acting Senior Director, Environment Protection Authority
Pryce, Mr David, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, and welcome to today's third and final public hearing of the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity inquiry into annual and financial reports for 2020-21. In the proceedings today we will be hearing from the Minister for Business and Better Regulation to discuss the Environment Protection Authority portfolio.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to acknowledge that we meet today on the land of the Ngunnawal people. We respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region. We would like to acknowledge and welcome other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be attending or are online today.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to welcome and thank Minister Cheyne and officials for appearing today. I understand that you have been forwarded a copy of the privilege statement. Could each of you confirm for the record that you have read and understand the implications of the statement?

Ms Cheyne: Yes.

Mr Dix: Yes.

Mr Pryce: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. If witnesses take a question on notice, could you please use the words, "I will take that as a question on notice," so that it is clear for the record. We will not invite an opening statement today; we will go straight to questions.

Minister, I received an email from a constituent describing it as the "wild west" out in Denman Prospect, with all of the building sites and in respect of the noise, obstructions and environmental damage occurring there on building sites and in the suburb. Can you speak about the work that the EPA does in Molonglo and these new suburbs that have a lot of construction going on?

Ms Cheyne: I again confirm that I have read and acknowledge the privilege statement. We partner with WorkSafe ACT, in addition to conducting our own inspections, both proactively and reactively. By reactively, I mean where there might be complaints or perhaps a pattern of behaviour that has been observed that might require a closer look.

I do have some detail for you about what has occurred in the Molonglo Valley generally, not just Denman Prospect. During the last financial year, EPA officers undertook 50 recorded inspections of building sites in that area. In addition to those specific or discrete inspections, there were proactive patrols of Molonglo Valley, where those building works are being carried out.

In general, where an officer observes that there are minor environmental matters—that takes us to questions about thresholds for risk of potential harm to the environment—the officers engage with builders to educate them on the appropriate controls or request that, for example, sediment be removed from roadways or footpaths. Once that request or engagement has occurred, it is then followed up with a specific inspection at a later date to ensure that those controls are installed.

I understand that, as a result of those inspections, last year there were six warnings and four infringement notices issued to builders. Again, EPA, as with all of Access Canberra, has a sliding scale in terms of its engage, educate and enforce approach. It works with builders or anyone undertaking an activity to bring them within compliance; if they do not, it might result in enforcement. Equally, if it is a particularly serious offence, it can go straight to enforcement. It really depends on the proportionate response to what is being observed. In the examples that I have just given, those six warnings and four infringement notices, the infringement notices specifically were for soil on the footpath and road, and sediment controls not being installed in accordance with an approved plan.

On noise—I will then hand over to officials who can talk through what it is like on the ground in terms of conducting those inspections—where building work is occurring in residential areas, there are restrictions on when that can occur, to keep noise within certain limits. Where it is short-term building work and it is to be completed within two weeks, it is between 7 am and 8 pm, Monday to Saturday, and 8 am to 8 pm on Sunday and public holidays. But when it is taking more than two weeks to complete, it is 7 am to 6 pm, Monday to Saturday. When it is a longer term project, it means that the limits on noise are for a shorter time period each day. I will hand over to Mr Dix.

Mr Dix: I have read and understand the privilege statement. With respect to building sites, the exemptions for building work, particularly in residential, are 7 am to 6 pm. That is just for the noise exemption. They can work 24 hours a day if they so wish, but outside those hours they have to comply with the noise standard. The noise standards in the ACT are closely linked to the Territory Plan. Every part of the ACT has a noise standard limit. When we talk about residential, that is 45 during the day and 35 at night. For industrial areas, it is 65 during the day and 55 at night.

When we get complaints, usually our first response is to go out and engage with the builders. We will go and talk to the builders, let them know what is permitted under legislation and find out what they are doing. If it relates to deliveries, we make sure that they do not open their gates before 7 o'clock. We also do periodic inspections where we will go out early in the morning, just to make sure that builders are complying with the requirements.

When we get a complaint and follow up, under the legislation we have to have an

affected person in an affected place. We have to take two measurements. We have to determine that the person is affected by the noise, and that the noise is above the noise standard where it occurs outside those restricted hours. We will then move to what is called a compliance point, which is any point as close as practicable, to get a second noise measurement. Those are generally the processes that we have to apply under the legislation.

With regard to sediment in Denman Prospect, back in about 2019 we made some amendments to the regulation to link back to approved plans, either through a certifier or through the development application. We say that if you do not have the controls installed as per a plan which has been previously approved by a certifier, it is an offence. We can go out and have a look at these sites and, where we do not see controls in place where they should have controls, and they are on the plans, it then becomes an offence. That gives us greater capability to go out and make sure these controls are installed before the pollution occurs.

THE CHAIR: Can you detail how the EPA works with WorkSafe and other agencies? The constituent noted that parking operations are good at coming out and enforcing at times when needed. How do the different agencies work together?

Mr Dix: Because these are more or less all co-located within Access Canberra, we work out of what is almost a task force. We will identify an area; then several entities will go out to those areas. We may look at three or four items for each agency. We can then work together, target and, hopefully, get those issues resolved.

Mr Pryce: The whole philosophy of Access Canberra, when it was first formed, was to bring all of those different parts together, in a regulatory sense, so that we could coordinate and focus our efforts and resources. The only difference is that WorkSafe have since separated from Access Canberra. Notwithstanding that, we still collaborate with them. A very good example was through COVID, where we conducted joint operations and made sure that our resources were spread to cover all of the risks. We were both attending the same location for a similar purpose, so we coordinated there.

Generally, we assess the risk of harm; we then work out what resources are needed. Sometimes we apply complementary efforts. Again, we might demonstrate that we are taking a focus on an area through parking ops and other things that demonstrates that government is watching them. We move it over time; it might be parking ops this week, building inspectors next week, then EPA, to try and maximise the focus, especially when we identify an area of risk or concern.

MS CASTLEY: You talked about the readings—45 for day, 35 at night. That is for construction; is that correct?

Mr Dix: No, it is not for construction. That is the general noise zone standard for residential areas. So it is any noise; that includes air conditioning noise and stereo noise.

MS CASTLEY: Road noise?

Mr Dix: No, not road noise. Traffic noise is exempted under the legislation, as is a

person using only his or her voice. If you are singing in the shower, there is nothing we can do about that. However, if you are playing a stereo loudly, that is something that is certainly regulated by the Environment Protection Act.

MS CASTLEY: You touched on Access Canberra and how all of that works together. When complaints come in, how do you make sure that all of that information goes smoothly through the EPA? It is good that no-one is doubling up now, with two lots of people heading to—

Mr Pryce: In Access Canberra we have what is called a complaints management team. It is centrally located within the agency. It deals with complaints as much as possible, gleaning information and working with the various regulatory areas, or even across government. Where it is a more complex or more detailed investigation, it is referred to the relevant regulatory area. For example, it might be the EPA, the rapid regulatory response team or the COVID compliance team; it depends on the issue. They are all centrally managed. That provides us as an agency with core intelligence. That is how we deconflict our resources and determine what priority we should give and where the best regulatory effort might be applied.

MS CLAY: You were talking before about noise and sediment; you started with sediment in development. The chair and I read the same thing in the annual report—12 infringement orders made, environmental protection orders made, and a lot of those were about erosion and sediment control. Is that because we are doing a lot of block scraping? Overall, what is the general thing that is happening there and how are we stopping that general practice happening?

Mr Dix: We work with land development. We look at, when they do estate developments, how we go about minimising erosion which may come off these estates, when they get to a point where the smaller builders are ready to come on. Historically, they used to put the topsoil on, which was then scraped when the builders came in. In working with the SLA and the developers, we say, “Don’t put the topsoil back on,” to reduce the sediment load that will come off these blocks.

With regard to the number of infringement notices that we have issued, that is because we have changed some of our processes for how we deal with complaints and regulatory action. It has allowed a more efficient process in order to get infringement notices out.

MS CLAY: They are scraping, SLA is letting them scrape, and you are saying, “Don’t put the topsoil on,” but we are not actually stopping them doing the block scraping. Is that the gist of it?

Mr Dix: No. When they go out to develop an estate, they tend to do a lot of land profiling—changing the land profile. In the first instance they take the topsoil off, stockpile it, and they do the land profiling as needed, to the level they want. They then bring back the topsoil and put the topsoil back onto the blocks. When the builder comes along, they need to cut the block to get it down to where they want it. It could be a basement car park or a sunken garage. All of that topsoil is loose and it can wash away. We are saying, “Don’t put the topsoil back on, where you can, to reduce the loose material that is sitting on top of the soil.”

MS CLAY: Minister, I would love to have a chat about drones. We understand that CASA—

Ms Cheyne: Ms Clay, this was covered extensively in the earlier hearing, where that was best suited. It does not fall under the EPA whatsoever. Ms Castley was there for that, and I am not sure that she wants to go through it again. It was a half-hour discussion. It may be best to read that transcript.

MS CLAY: I will review the transcript. If it is not EPA, is it Access Canberra?

Ms Cheyne: It is business and better regulation. It was the hearing from 12.30 to 2.30, the one that Ms Castley chairs.

MS CLAY: I will review that. Minister, we have just seen the Environmental Defenders Office report, *Implementing Effective Independent Environmental Protection Agencies in Australia*. They came up with nine key recommendations about implementation and reform. They looked at the environmental justice framework and First Nations cultural protocols. They have made a lot of quite substantive recommendations. Have you had a chance to review that, and will the ACT government be engaging with that and looking at implementing those recommendations?

Ms Cheyne: As you are aware, the responsibility for the Environment Protection Act, the policy settings, sits with Minister Vassarotti, whereas the operation of the act sits with me. We are tightly intertwined, but the policy decisions do come from Minister Vassarotti and EPSDD. I have not read the report yet, but Mr Pryce certainly has and can speak to that.

There is work between EPSDD and EPA, and Minister Vassarotti and I, about some reform options for the EPA more generally, both the act and the operations of the agency. It is early days at this stage, but work like this certainly feeds into that consideration.

Our starting point is that we have had the act for some time, and there has been some tinkering with it, but I feel that it is time—and I think Minister Vassarotti agrees—to have a further look at it, in terms of what is going on with the environment generally and where we are finding ourselves in Australia as a whole, to ensure that it is up to date and operating as effectively as possible, including responding to general feedback and that specific feedback from the Environmental Defenders Office. Mr Pryce, who has been apprised of the report, can probably speak to it from more of an operational perspective, from the agency.

Mr Pryce: Yes, we have read the report. I think it is a landmark report, and it provides some very good guiding principles that we need to consider here in the ACT. I know that Minister Cheyne and Minister Vassarotti are seeking some further advice, and we are working closely with EPSDD on that report as a result.

MS CLAY: It is a work in progress that you are considering at the moment, and perhaps next time I could ask you how you will implement it?

Mr Pryce: It is probably best to ask Minister Vassarotti, because they have the lead on the policy position. Depending on the policy position, we follow from an implementation and operationalising point of view.

Ms Cheyne: Ms Clay, you are certainly welcome to ask next time about any direction we might have taken in that time. It is early days for these conversations; certainly, it is something that Minister Vassarotti and I are keen to do.

MS CASTLEY: Minister, I would like to chat about the organisational structure. Can you outline what changes have occurred in the EPA since it was taken into Access Canberra?

Ms Cheyne: Given that these are decisions within the directorate, I will turn to officials, who will be able to provide a bit more of that granular detail.

Mr Pryce: The EPA sits as a team structure within Access Canberra. It sits within our construction, utilities and environment protection branch, which is led by an executive branch manager. The statutory authority role as the EPA under the act sits with the senior director; you heard from Mr Rodney Dix, who is currently performing that role at the EPA via delegation. It is one of our regulatory teams across our regulatory areas of Access Canberra.

At Access Canberra, the other structures support all of our regulatory teams. We have a centralised complaints management team and a centralised comms and engagement team. They all feed off each of the different regulatory areas and support them. We have a structure that provides that corporate back-end support, so that, again, we are maximising our resources, because we are a small agency. Rodney might want to describe the structure of the EPA team.

Mr Dix: There are 17 nominal positions within the EPA. Out of that 17, there are three teams. With the three teams, there is environment protection, and there are six people within environment protection; there is environmental quality, where there are seven; and within water regulation there are three staff. Out of those 17, there are four women and 13 men.

With the three units, environment protection is primarily looking at dealing with response to complaints. It deals with neighbourhood noise complaints and neighbourhood smoke complaints. It administers some of the authorisations and licences. Environment quality tends to deal with contaminated sites, air quality, waste movement and waste tracking. Water regulation deals with management of the water asset within the ACT.

MS CASTLEY: How much budgetary funding does the EPA receive? Can you let me know what it has been for the last five years?

Mr Pryce: We can probably take it on notice; that would be the easiest way to do that. The appropriation is given to Access Canberra as a whole, and we fund across the agency, as such. We would probably have to answer some of that on notice, Ms Castley.

Ms Cheyne: Ms Castley, I recall that this was an area of interest to you in the budget estimates hearings as well. In terms of appropriation and staffing, it has largely stayed consistent.

Mr Pryce: Correct.

Ms Cheyne: Mr Pryce has just confirmed that for me. We will try and answer that question on notice. It might not go back for five years, but if we have the data on what the teams looked like over that five-year period, year on year, we can provide that to you on notice.

MS CASTLEY: I am also keen to know the staff allocation over those five years, just to see whether it has increased at all and whether, Minister, you feel that you are sufficiently staffed to do the job of the EPA.

Ms Cheyne: Yes, Ms Castley. As we were touching on with Ms Clay before, it is an opportunity to review the policy settings and, having regard to what flows from the review of the policy settings, where we should be targeting our efforts. I think there has been quite a considerable change over decades, as well as in the last little while. We do have a very good regulatory function; we do have those quite strong environmental protection authorisations. What is being seen at a national and perhaps even international level is what I believe is called point source pollution—where something is coming out of a distinct or a discrete point, out of a sewer or a pipe somewhere. That has been maintained pretty well, but with respect to general behaviour, where we cannot identify where the particular point is, it might be a little bit different, or harder for us to identify, and it might be causing more of our environmental issues.

They are some of the things that we are alive to. Certainly, I understand that other jurisdictions are alive to that as well. Again, the policy settings are led by Minister Vassarotti. At the moment, regarding where we are at, the resourcing is functioning effectively, but if there is a flowthrough from that from any change to the policy settings, that would be an opportunity to review the resources.

MS LAWDER: My question is about compliance activities and compliance actions taken by the EPA in the 2020-21 year.

Ms Cheyne: I believe that is in the report. In terms of compliance actions, Mr Dix will be able to talk through this in more detail. Compliance action, broadly termed, Ms Lawder, is that engage, educate and enforce process. Compliance action can start with, quite simply, engaging with a respondent about what is going on, educating them about what their responsibilities are and bringing them into compliance, depending on the risk level or the severity of the harm presented to the environment.

There is that sliding scale, and there is a very good environmental compliance framework from which the EPA operates, and which we can provide to the committee, that demonstrates that. There is also a diagram that I think is quite helpful.

Enforcement actions are detailed on page 268 of volume 1. They include environment

protection orders and infringement notices, and can extend to prosecution. There were 12 infringement notices in the last financial year and eight environment protection orders.

MS LAWDER: Do these compliance actions only take place in response to a complaint being made or do the EPA have a proactive role when they are aware of some work going on? Do they go out of their own accord and look at what is going on and whether it meets either the environmental authorisation or the environmental management plan?

Ms Cheyne: That is a great question, Ms Lawder. The EPA does carry out both proactive and reactive activities, based on risk. The resources are allocated based on the level of risk posed to strategic objectives that are set out in the act. When the EPA identifies or becomes aware of a problem or risk, it will seek to resolve that problem before it leads to an adverse impact. There is also monitoring compliance and investigating of noncompliance as part of that framework.

There are a range of proactivities. It is fair to say that that is a core function of the EPA—monitoring, determining whether activities are being carried out in a manner that does not cause environmental harm or harm to a person; and, as we flagged, there are environmental agreements and environmental authorisations that are issued that are at a higher level for activity that has the potential to cause environmental harm. You could imagine that the EPA would actively monitor that an organisation or business is operating in accordance with what that agreement or authorisation sets out.

The reactive activities, as you rightly noted, rely on the community, business or industry reporting environmental concerns. There is prioritisation of this information, based on the level of risk or the harm that is being presented. Indeed, under the act, there are some responsibilities that organisations have if they do become aware that they have caused environmental harm. They need to self-report to the EPA, and the EPA can step in there.

A notable example was the Caltex fuel leak in Holt that occurred a year and a half or two years ago. They reported to the EPA; the EPA engaged with them and the enforceable undertaking resulted. I covered that extensively last year, so I will not repeat it, unless you are interested, in which case I am happy to go into it. The short answer, Ms Lawder, is: yes, there are proactive activities, core function and reactive activities as well.

MS LAWDER: With environmental authorisations, some of them have been in place for quite a number of years. If some of them no longer specify the current Australian guidelines, whose responsibility might it be to update them? Is it the EPA's responsibility to review, is it the applicant's responsibility to check, or does it remain the Australian guideline as at the time that the EA was lodged?

Ms Cheyne: That is a good question, Ms Lawder. I do not have that level of detail, but I suspect that Mr Dix will.

Mr Dix: With regard to the authorisation, we have to review every authorisation that is granted for an unlimited period at least once every five years. With respect to what

we have in place, we have a risk assessment that we undertake where we look at the size of the activity, the receiving environment and the environment performance of the authorisation holder. It may then be that we have to review every authorisation every 12 months.

As part of that review of the authorisation, we look to make sure that the conditions within the authorisation are appropriate to ensure that the impact on the environment can be managed or minimised. If the Australian standards are updated, we will update the authorisation to reflect the latest Australian standards that are required for that particular activity.

THE CHAIR: I have a question around contaminated land notifications. In the annual report it says there have been 129 notifications since the contaminated land provisions were enacted in 1999. This year there were 15 contaminated land notifications. That is 10 per cent of the entire 20 years of land notifications, just in the last year. Can you speak to what those notifications are and why there were so many this year?

Ms Cheyne: Yes, there were 15 in the last financial year. My understanding is that they are largely related to greenfield developments and the redevelopment of sites that have been potentially impacted by hydrocarbon or asbestos contamination. Given the amount of development that is occurring, that is what is reflected in those numbers. You will see that they are relatively the same figures, or about the same figures, over the last few financial years as well. We are not seeing a huge increase there. I think it is reflective of the development environment that we are in. I may be wrong, so I will check with Mr Dix to confirm that that is correct.

Mr Dix: Minister, yes, you are correct. It is because there has been an increase in development, particularly within the brownfield or the urban infill. As they do knockdown rebuilds, a lot of these knockdowns have historical contamination within them, and that is part of the management.

THE CHAIR: With the inspections, is that to inspect the remediation process? What are the inspections of these sites for?

Ms Cheyne: These inspections are for known or potentially contaminated sites, as I understand it—reviewing whether those activities had the appropriate approval for the works that were being undertaken and whether the redevelopment activities were underway or complete.

MS CLAY: Chair, I will observe that your questions and mine are very similar, which entertains me. Minister, we have heard a lot today about how increasing development is effectively increasing the burden on the EPA, obviously, as it increases the burden on our environment. We have population growth, too, and we are moving into an increasingly complex development environment, with more brownfields and less greenfields development. Is EPA's budget and FTE—you might take this on notice with Ms Castley's questions on notice—increasing at the same pace as our increasing population and development?

Ms Cheyne: It is a good question, Ms Clay. I would not necessarily say that there is the correlation that you would immediately think there might be, because we do have

those really effective controls in place from the beginning—an environmental authorisation or an environmental agreement—that set those standards for what we expect from a developer. It is very rare to have a brand-new developer. They are quite used to the expectations of them there. The EPA also do a very good job, as I said, in communicating their expectations and implementing that engage, educate and enforce framework.

Mr Lhuede, in particular, has a very good relationship with the sector. If there is something that we are seeing that is arising repeatedly, there would be communication with the sector at large and through the peak bodies about what we might be seeing there. It is not necessarily the case that we need to increase the budget to match the number of inspections. As you will see, inspections are down from the 2018-19 year for contaminated sites, for example. It is about front-loading our effort, ensuring that something does not result in harm or an adverse impact that we need to respond to later. I will see whether Mr Pryce has anything else to add.

Mr Pryce: We operate within the resources and budget allocated by the government. As the head of the agency, I would always welcome further investment and additional resources. When Access Canberra was brought together, that created some efficiencies and benefits to enable the technical and professional, and the environment protection office, to focus more on that, and enabled the other parts to be dealt with by, as I said, the complaints management team and our comms and engagement team. It removes those responsibilities so that we become more efficient.

Enhancing our focus on environmental protection matters is a priority for me, as the head of the agency. I am looking to see what opportunity it brings to give greater focus to it, because of, again, the continued development in our jurisdiction, as well as the greater focus more broadly on climate change and environmental factors.

MS CASTLEY: Did I hear someone say earlier that the EPA is definitely responsible for the testing of all waterways in the ACT?

Ms Cheyne: No.

MS CASTLEY: Okay; I will go to social media. Does the EPA have any social media accounts?

Mr Pryce: In and of itself, no. We are part of CMTEDD as a directorate, and the whole-of-government social media account. Anything that we want to do from a comms and engagement perspective is through those channels.

MS CASTLEY: How do you get in touch with community and business when issues come up?

Ms Cheyne: There are a range of ways, including through social media. There are those accounts that have a more whole-of-government focus. There is an ACT government Facebook account; there can be ways through that. There are industry forums, again, which Mr Lhuede very actively participates in, where issues can be discussed with peak bodies.

One notable example from before I became minister was a bit of a campaign, heading into the summer months, about noise in higher density areas. I particularly remember this because I live in a higher density area and there was a bit of an update to the Access Canberra website with a noise portal that details noise thresholds that you can expect and gives some real-life examples of what 60 decibels is. It is about the sound level of a vacuum cleaner, and so on. There are also examples of how to engage with your neighbours and how to make a report to the EPA.

As you have heard, the EPA also has a very strong, on-the-ground, face-to-face engagement approach. That is by way of its functions as a regulator and having to go out physically to sites to engage with people.

MS LAWDER: I want to ask about environmental management plans. Do they get lodged with the EPA, and what is the link between the EA and the EMP?

Mr Dix: With regard to environment management plans, we have environmental authorisations. Generally, a condition under most of the authorisations requires that the authorisation holder prepare an environment management plan which is acceptable to the authority. The environment management plan has to set out how they are going to undertake the activities, identifying the risks there may be to the environment, and what programs they will have in place to minimise that risk to the environment. Because the environment management plan is approved by the authority under the authorisation, it forms a condition of the authorisation.

MS LAWDER: The EA is overarching; is that correct?

Mr Dix: That is correct.

MS LAWDER: If an EA required three things, as an example, and they were not in the EMP, how would that work?

Mr Dix: The EMP sets out how the person will undertake the work, but if the authorisation required monitoring, there would still be an expectation that that monitoring would be undertaken while the EMP is also complied with. The EMP would not override an authorisation.

MS LAWDER: Who assesses those EMPs and decides whether they meet the EA or not?

Mr Dix: Officers within the EPA assess those EMPs. They are looking to see whether we consider that they have potentially addressed all of the concerns that we can identify, that we know of, and whether the strategies or the controls put in place appear to be reasonable and practical. The EMP is set up to help people to comply with their general environmental duty. Under section 22 of the act, everyone who undertakes any work at all or does anything has a general environmental duty to take all reasonable, practical steps to minimise environmental harm. The EMP is set up to help people to comply with their general environmental duty and comply with the authorisation conditions.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, we have run out of time. If you could put your questions

on notice, that would be great. On behalf of the ECCB committee, I would like to thank Minister Cheyne and officials for their attendance today. You will be sent a draft of the *Hansard* transcript, for correction of minor errors. Please get back to the committee secretary within five working days with any questions taken on notice. Members, lodge your questions on notice within five working days. The hearing is now adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 5.15 pm.