

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### Question On Notice

**Tuesday, 14 August 2018**

#### **1455. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Environment**

(1) In a Business Times article titled South-east Asia's plastic addiction is blighting the world's oceans, published on 6 June 2018, South-east Asia was called "home to four of the world's top marine plastic polluters". With the understanding that lots of our plastic waste from yellow-lid recycling bins is now being sent to countries on South-East Asia:

(a) what regulations are in place to ensure our waste does not contaminate a destination country's environment?

(2) In the documentary *Plastic China* (2017), plastic recycling is seen to be taking place in backyard operations and not in regulated recycling and waste management facilities:

(a) is the Government aware of the locations at which plastic waste is being sorted and recycled in South-East Asian countries;

(b) can the Government provide any additional information about the types of materials recycled at those locations;

(c) do these sites maintain adequate occupational health and safety regulations; and

(d) if no to (c), will the Government seek to amend this?

(3) According to private correspondence, the Western Metro Regional Council (WRMC) stated that if materials do reach recycling plants, "they will be baled up as the lowest grade plastic". They also acknowledged that "even high grade plastics have very low value":

(a) what value do South-East Asian facilities get from the materials sent there; and

(b) how much are these materials worth to destination countries?

#### **Answer**

(1)(a) The Basel Convention is designed to reduce the movements of hazardous and toxic wastes between nations. The Convention places a range of responsibilities on exporting countries.

The Convention, administered by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Energy is implemented in Australia under the *Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989*.

(2)(a)-(d) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation does not collect information relating to the location of facilities and type of materials recycled within South-East Asian countries or the occupational health and safety performance for facilities within these jurisdictions.

(3)(a) and (b) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation does not collect information on the value of materials collected for recycling that are subsequently exported.



Hon Stephen Dawson MLC  
**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT; DISABILITY SERVICES**