



STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS]

Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Chair), Michael Pettersson MLA (Deputy Chair),
Andrew Braddock MLA

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
22 February 2022

Asked by ELIZABETH KIKKERT MLA on 22 February 2022: RAY HEZKIAL took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 22 FEBRUARY 2022, Page 18]

In relation to:

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ray. Okay. We will go ahead straight to questions. I understand that there is a sewerage network in West Belconnen and residents have complained about the odour there because they are at least 100 metres away from the sewerage network, and when they first purchased the properties they were told that the vent will be raised higher and so therefore it will prevent the odour smell. That has been raised, however, it has not solved the issue. They still have bad odour across the neighbourhood. So my question is, can the vent be raised even higher or can it be removed further down the network so residents are not having to address every single day with a bad odour in front of their yards?

Mr Hezkial: Thank you for the question. I think the Belconnen trunk sewer project aims to resolve those issues. The Belconnen trunk sewer project is a critical piece of infrastructure, particularly for the northern suburbs of Canberra, so Belconnen and Gungahlin. What we are really talking about here is something that involves a 2.4 kilometre length of main and has four odour control units attached to it as well. So that work is really important for being able to service into the future, particularly with population growth, and will also address those odour issues.

THE CHAIR: Okay. And so has there been an investigation about the issue?

Mr Hezkial: Well, the Belconnen trunk sewer project is quite a large project. There has been a very detailed environmental impact statement associated with that project, and of course the odour control units are there to address those particular issues.

THE CHAIR: So is that a yes or a no? Have they addressed the issue particularly within the West Belconnen, West MacGregor residence?

Mr Hezkial: West MacGregor. Well, I understand that we investigate those issues as they arise. I do not have the details specifically on the West MacGregor odour control unit, but we can certainly come back with that. But these odour control units are dispersed across the ACT, they are not uncommon, and in effect they basically work in a very passive way. So they are designed to eliminate and reduce those odours.

ANDREW BARR MLA: I have sought advice from Icon Water and their answer to the Member's question is as follows:-

The location of the West Macgregor Odour Control Units (OCUs) are set by the ventilation requirements, physical layout of the sewerage network and required performance to prevent nuisance odour to residents. The West Macgregor OCU's are located at critical junctions of the sewerage network and have vent outlet monitoring systems that aid Icon Water in managing the facilities in-line with the performance requirements set out by the ACT Environment Protection Authority and outlined in the Sewerage Network Environmental Management Plan. There are no proposed plans to relocate any structures.

The height of the stacks was determined through a detailed investigation and design process to meet the performance requirements of the facility. There are no proposed alterations to the height of the stack as the current facility is meeting performance requirements. Any change in the physical layout of the vent would require more detailed modelling and would not necessarily result in any change to the performance of the facility.

With regard to whether Icon Water has addressed any odour issues at West Macgregor, we can advise that an investigation was conducted upon receipt of Ms Kikkert's letter in July 2020. Data was monitored to identify if there were any trends occurring at the West Macgregor site. To enhance this monitoring, loggers were installed at the facility. It was determined that the *media* required renewal and was replaced in November 2020 (media refers to the carbon filter which removes odour). Further monitoring following the replacement of the media showed that this issue had been resolved and we have not received any odour complaints concerning the facility post these works and Ms Kikkert's original correspondence. The media was renewed again in November 2021 in accordance with our monitoring process and manufacturer's recommendations for end life of media

The details of the constituent/s who raised odour concerns were not provided to Icon Water, which has resulted in Icon Water being unable to speak directly to them or inform them of the outcome of the investigation and the follow-up maintenance activity.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts

Signature: 

Date: 3.3.22

By the Treasurer, Andrew Barr MLA.