



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2023-2024

Mr Mark Parton MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair),
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS

Asked by Mr Peter Cain MLA on 18 July 2023: Mr Bruce Fitzgerald took on notice the following question(s):

Ref: Uncorrected Proof Transcript 18 July 2023 - Pages 104-105

In relation to:

MR CAIN: Minister, the incorrect disposal of batteries was found to have caused the fire which destroyed Canberra's recycling plant on Boxing Day last year. Were the October 2022, a review was undertaken into safety procedures. Minister, was the disposal of batteries looked at during the October 2022 review, and if not, why not?

Mr Fitzgerald: The potential risks, particularly in the material recovery facility, had come from a range of places. Batteries, of course, we know, and the prevalence of fires has been—the prevalence has increased over the last few years. It certainly formed part of our assessment. It more broadly looked at how best we could manage safety on site. It did not necessarily look at specific risks, but more broadly looked at the risks that should be—the mitigations that could be undertaken in the event of an event like a fire.

MR CAIN: When you say specific risks were not looked at, how then is that a risk assessment?

Mr Fitzgerald: When I mentioned specific risks, I think that the source of combustion when you have multiple inputs into a facility. We recover facilities from a range of different regions across the Canberra region. So we look at what the different sorting mechanisms could be to reduce the risk at options for segregation if trucks had delivered with hot loads. There were a range of different risks that were looked at. The source of ignition, I think, uniquely I do not think was investigated, but I am happy to take that on notice.

CHRIS STEEL MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows: –

As part of ACT NoWaste's asset management program planning and risk management it commissioned a high-level review Building Code of Australia (BCA) fire safety review. The report was reviewed and considered by an internal working group and a series of actions developed included commissioning a BCA gap analysis and reviewing the MRF operator's safety management.

TCCS Safety and Wellbeing Branch carried out a workplace safety compliance review in accordance with its standard methodology that is applies across TCCS business units. A safety system compliance audit of this nature does not include within its scope a risk assessment of specific risk factors such as feedstock contamination received at the MRF.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2023-2024

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Chris Steel', written over a horizontal line.

Date:

26/7/23

By the Minister for Transport and City Services, Chris Steel MLA