



Chris Steel MLA

Minister for Transport and City Services

Minister for Skills

Special Minister of State

Member for Murrumbidgee

RESPONSE TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Question Time

Friday 23 April 2021

Asked by Ms Lawder MLA –

Environment - Dredging

MS LAWDER: My question is to the Minister for Transport and City Services. I understand that TCCS is planning to dredge parts of the Fadden Hills pond to remove some of the accumulated sediments as well as some of the reeds. This has an added benefit of further isolating the existing island in the middle of the pond while keeping wildlife on the island safe from predators. The original proposal was to leave the sediment to dry around the pond before transporting it to the tip. This plan has now changed to using an educator truck to suck up the sediment as this will be much less damaging to the pond and the surrounding area, as well as not reducing the effectiveness of the water quality treatment of the pond, not to mention not leaving a bad smell for several weeks for nearby residents. Minister, what is the government's policy on using educator trucks versus other ways of removing the sediment?

MR STEEL: I thank the member for her question. I will take that on notice and come back to the Assembly.

MS LAWDER: Minister, where else around Canberra's waterways has dredged sediment been left to dry around ponds and lakes?

MR STEEL: I thank the member her question. Again, I will take that on notice.

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

TCCS is the custodian of, and responsible for, the maintenance of stormwater and waterways infrastructure in the ACT. TCCS works closely with environmental protection agencies to ensure the best environmental outcomes, including for water quality, environment protection, aquatic and riparian outcomes. Measures such as Environmental Management Plans and cross agency collaboration are implemented to ensure that maintenance works will generate the least disturbance to the environment and at the same time, improve water quality outcomes for the Territory.

The Fadden Pond is an important part of the stormwater infrastructure. It collects stormwater from the drainage channel upstream of Fadden, captures sediment and then, through other channels, feeds to Isabella Pond and others in the area which are part of the Healthy Waterways system. The method of removal of sediment from the Fadden Pond has been extensively consulted with environment protection agency subject matter experts and the outcomes of these consultations have been approved in the form of an Environmental Management Plan.

The removal of the sediment will be completed using a long reach excavator. This method is preferred by the environmental protection agencies to dredging and use of the eductor truck. It is also a more efficient and cost-effective method. The pond will not be emptied completely during the dredging process. Rather, the water level will be lowered to allow removal of the debris, service the overflow inlet and remove the excess sediment with a lesser disturbance to the wildlife.

The sediment material will be stored on a drying pad consisting of temporary fence panels and geotextile fabric around the perimeter to allow for the water to flow down, back to the pond. This method has been approved by the environmental protection agency as the movement of wet sediment pollutes roads during transportation. The scheduling of works during a dry weather spell will ensure the shortest drying time. The impact on residents should be minimal as the drying pad is located in an open space and behind a buffer of trees.

Leaving of sediment around the stormwater infrastructure is standard and is the preferred method as it minimises pollution during transportation and drying of a sediment in a new location. The sediment is left for drying at all Gross Pollutant Traps (GPTs) and trash racks as well as in sediment ponds, including those cleaned during last two months at Nicholls, Bowen Park in Kingston Foreshore, Curtin and Conder.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Chris Steel MLA
Minister for Transport and City Services

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