

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Inquiry into waste reduction and recycling policies
Question No: IQ24-000102
Hearing Date: 08 May 2024
Division/Agency: Circular Economy Division
Topic: Batteries classification
Hansard Page: 67
Question Date: 08 May 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

CHAIR: We'll put some more detailed questions on notice. As a point of interest, has there ever been any thought given to batteries being declared a hazardous waste under federal law, the hazardous waste stream or a change in classification?

Ms Lynch: We may need to take that on notice to give you a proper answer. Internationally, the movement of batteries is effectively regulated under the Basel convention already. Rather than giving you any mixed-reading answers now, perhaps that's one we can take on notice.

Answer:

- Management of battery waste in Australia is the primary responsibility of states and territories. Batteries are generally classified as dangerous goods under relevant state and territory legislation.
- The Commonwealth has responsibility for the international movements of hazardous waste and administers the *Hazardous Waste (Hazardous Waste (Regulation of Exports and Imports) Act 1989*. This Act implements the requirements of the Basel Convention, the aim of which is to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of these wastes.
 - Hazardous Waste legislation has a broad scope and includes any waste battery that has a hazardous characteristic – such as it being explosive, flammable, toxic or ecotoxic.
 - Common batteries considered hazardous under the Basel Convention include batteries containing lead (e.g. car batteries), cadmium (e.g. NiCad rechargeable batteries) or mercury (e.g. some button cell batteries).
 - Lithium batteries have a range of chemistries with varying characteristics. These batteries can be controlled due to their organic constituents if they are explosive or produce leachate that is hazardous to human health and the environment.

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Inquiry into waste reduction and recycling policies
Question No: IQ24-000097
Hearing Date: 08 May 2024
Division/Agency: Circular Economy Division
Topic: Cost-recovery modelling
Hansard Page: 60
Question Date: 08 May 2024
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Cadell asked:

Senator CADELL: On a cost-recovery basis, you have modelled, for the average inquiry, \$13,400. What was the modelled response time that gets you to \$13,400 in cost recovery?

Ms Lynch: We may need to take that on notice. It would have been the calculations that were done by the department. I don't have that information in front of me. It would be based on the average assessment time that was considered at the time.

Senator CADELL: If you could take on notice the average work power time going into it and the average overall time to respond that has been modelled, that would be helpful, thank you.

Ms Lynch: Yes, I can do that.

Answer:

Cost recovery charges for the Waste Exports regulations were established using actual costs incurred between 1 January 2021 to 31 January 2022 from administering the program across glass, plastic and tyre waste streams.

The average number of hours spent assessing a licence variation and providing a recommendation to the delegate was 38 hours, based on 16 variations undertaken over this 12 month period. The time spent by the decision maker to consider whether to approve the application was not included in this figure.

This modelling focused on the number of hours dedicated to the assessment and did not capture the overall timeframe from the receipt of an application to when the licence variation was issued.