

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2010-11
31 May 2010

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION

TOPIC: Phoslock

REFERENCE: Written Question –Senator Eggleston

QUESTION No.: BI-50

Has Phoslock been regarded as a successful product in blocking algal blooms? Can this be used for other incidents of water pollution? Are any other states/territories/countries examining the product? (*Land and Water News* on 3/3/2010)

ANSWER

Phoslock™ is a water remediation product which provides a rapid and lasting method to remove dissolved phosphorus from water thereby reducing the likelihood of algal blooms occurring. The global right to manufacture and sell Phoslock have been licensed to IMT Holdings.

The primary function of Phoslock is, as its name suggests, to bind or lock up phosphorus in the sediments of waterways to reduce the potential for harmful algal growth. This is the specific purpose for which it was developed, patented and commercialised by CSIRO. For further information please refer to: www.phoslock.com.au.

Phoslock has been demonstrated in CSIRO and WA Department of Water trials to be effective in reducing phosphorus concentrations in the Canning River in Western Australia. A consequence of this is a likely reduction in algal biomass (the total amount of algae) and a shift in algal bloom composition (algal species) away from potentially toxic blue-green algal blooms to less toxic or benign species. This is the intended outcome of a Phoslock application.

Phoslock has been trialled in a number of states in Australia and in approximately 25 other countries.