

**Paper 4(a): THE ROLE OF THE SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT  
COORDINATOR TO THE VICTORIAN STATE  
PLAN TO COMBAT POLLUTION OF  
SEA BY OIL: Don Palmer,  
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**1. The Role of the S.S.C.**

The Scientific Support Co-ordinator to the Victorian State Co-ordinating Committee is appointed by the committee and serves as a one-member subcommittee responsible for scientific support co-ordination in the case of an oil spill event, and at other times to provide advice on a demand basis and upon request of the chairman of the State Co-ordinating Committee on scientific and environmental matters **relating** to oil pollution.

**2. Response Planning Responsibilities  
(pre-incident)**

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- a. Scientific assessment and advice on matters concerning oil pollution control.
  - b. Be available to address any scientific question raised by the State Co-ordinating Committee.
  - c. To keep the State Co-ordinating Committee aware of new scientific developments in the control of oil pollution.
  - d. To provide scientific talks and papers as required by the State Co-ordinating Committee.
  - e. Updating of relevant publications.
  - ~~f. Assist in the development of those parts of the contingency plans requiring specialised~~  
scientific understanding, including the constant reappraisal of the list of nominated disposal sites for contaminated oils and **oiled** debris.
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**3. Incident Response**

- a. To be available to advise the State Co-ordinating Committee and through it the On Scene Operations Co-ordinator in the event of a significant oil spill on scientific and environmental concerns relating to that spill and its cleanup.

**4. Post Incident Responsibilities**

- a. Evaluate the need for post-spill research and *or* monitoring of the spill site and surrounding area.
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- b. Advise and assist local authorities in the planning of appropriate monitoring strategies.

## 5. Costing and Resources Involved in Meeting Identified Responsibilities

- a. Invocation of National Plan
  - 1. Fund release from state treasury
- b. Departmental contingency fund
- c. Percentage of time committed to role
- d. The main components of the costing are:
  - a. **Salary**
  - b. Travel expenses (air travel/vehicle hire)
  - c. Incidental expenses (goods/material/service)
  - d. Personal Expenses (meals/lodging)

## 6. Implementation of the Role to Date

- a. Response Planning

During the course of 'evolution' of the Scientific Support Co-ordinator, it has metamorphosed from the original single individual member requested from the Victorian EPA through several multi-member groups and committees back to being an individual member. The successes achieved during this process were considerable, and were only accomplished through the efforts of a large number of highly qualified people from a wide variety of disciplines.

Some of the large projects have produced:

- 1. The Atlas of Biological and Recreational Resources of the Victorian Coast.
- 2. Guidelines for the Control of Oil Spills.
- 3. Oil Spills on the Victorian **Coast**: Advice on the use or non-use of Oil Dispersants.

- b. The Response

The Portland Oil Spill Incident of 29 July 1988.

- 1. The main events
- 2. **The** response
- 3. The cleanup

4. Communication
5. Discussion of problem areas, difficulties encountered

c. Post-Incident

1. Monitoring **Programmes**
2. Communication, debriefings

7. **Future Directions and Priority Needs**

- a. Communication
- b. The role of science