

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Wednesday, 12 June 2013

109. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment.

I refer to the release of the W13-20 acreage, adjacent to the Abrolhos Islands, for oil and gas exploration, and I ask:

- (a) was the Minister or his department consulted by either the Department of Mines and Petroleum or State Development, or by the Federal Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism prior to the release of the W13-20 or W13-19 acreage;
- (b) if yes to (a), when, by whom and what was the Minister's or his department's response;
- (c) if no to (a), is there a requirement for the Federal Government to consult with the relevant state departments prior to the release of acreage;
- (d) does the Minister consider that oil and gas exploration poses a significant threat to the environment of the Abrolhos Islands A class nature reserve and nearby western rock lobster fishery;
- (e) if yes to (d), what are those threats;
- (f) if no to (d), why not;
- (g) if yes to (d), has the Minister or his department conveyed those concerns to the Federal Minister or the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism;
- (h) if yes to (g), what were the Minister or his department's concerns or comments; and
- (i) if yes to (g), will the Minister table the correspondence to that effect?

Answer

The Minister for Environment has provided the following response.

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The former Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) received a letter from the Department of Mines and Petroleum on 13 November 2012 seeking any comments 23 November 2012. No comments were provided by DEC.
- (c) Not applicable.
- (d) The land and waters of the Abrolhos Islands support significant biodiversity and fisheries values. Petroleum exploration in Commonwealth waters adjacent to the Abrolhos Islands may impact these values, depending on the activity being undertaken (e.g. seismic survey, drilling/exploration) and measures taken to avoid or manage impacts and risks. The Commonwealth Government offshore petroleum industry regulator agencies are responsible for ensuring that potential impacts and risks of offshore petroleum industry activities and developments are appropriately managed.



(e) Please see response to (d).

(f) Not applicable.

(g) No.

(h)–(i) Not applicable.