

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**Question On Notice****Thursday, 24 August 2017****315. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum**

I refer to the June/July 2017 edition of the *National Mining Chronicle* article titled, "State of Affairs", and the Exploration Incentive Scheme (EIS) co-funded drilling program:

- (a) is it correct that the Minister told a mining club conference that the Labor Government was fully committed to the retention of the EIS scheme to promote jobs and employment within Western Australia;
- (b) if no to (a), what is specifically correct in terms of the statements and commitments made by the Minister concerning the EIS when he attended the mining club conference;
- (c) can the Minister explain what is the specific importance as to why all the drilling assay results from mining companies and prospectors under the EIS scheme are released and made publicly available six months after the drilling programs have been completed as opposed to being kept confidential and not made public;
- (d) if no to (c), why not;
- (e) can the Minister explain how making the drill assay results under the EIS from mining companies and prospectors publically available helps the mining industry, Government, potential investors and the regional communities within Western Australia where the drilling is undertaken;
- (f) if no to (e), why not;
- (g) can the Minister explain why the timeframe of six months has been chosen before the public release of all drill assay results and data under the EIS;
- (h) if no to (g), why not;
- (i) can the Minister explain why he regards the Port Hedland channel as being the single most important piece of infrastructure for Western Australia; and
- (j) if no to (i), why not?

Answer

- (a) At the Mining Club on 30 March the Minister stated "we are committed to retaining the flagship geoscience initiative, the Exploration Incentive Scheme." Which was recommitted to in this year's state budget.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) The Co-funded Drilling is a discretionary program offering Government money. The supply and early release of information from the drilling programs is considered an appropriate return to the State for this financial support. Applications for this highly competitive program are evaluated on a number of criteria including information generated. Successful applicants who wish to accept co-funding sign an Agreement which includes the early release (as opposed to the normal five year confidentiality) of data promised in the application.
- (d) Not applicable.

- (e) Early release of data reduces technical and financial risks for other explorers and increases geological understanding of WA. This reduced risk and information sharing has strongly contributed to WA's rise in the Fraser Institute ranking for Investment Attractiveness since 2009, coinciding with the commencement of the EIS which includes the Co-funded Drilling program, encouraging investment in exploration in WA and employment in regional communities. The first major discovery, which is now a mine (Nova Nickel), has created over 350 direct jobs and opened up the region to more explorers.
- (f) Not applicable.
- (g) The time frame of six months is based on similar programs previously run in other States and was ratified by the Co-funded Drilling Committee which consists of representatives of all the peak industry bodies including the Amalgamated Prospectors and Leaseholders Association.
- (h) Not applicable.
- (i) The Port Hedland Port is the world's largest bulk export port, exporting iron ore to the value of approximately 2 per cent of Australia's total GDP.

A comparison of Australian Ports shows that Port Hedland Port exports the greatest tonnage of all ports at more than two and half times the next busiest port. It exports approximately 56 per cent of Australia's iron ore, making it one of Australia's most significant pieces of infrastructure.

- (j) Not applicable.



MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM