

GORGON GAS PROJECT — BARROW ISLAND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

1422. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment

I refer to the recently fully approved Gorgon Gas proposal for Barrow Island, and ask —

- (1) What, in brief, is the current status of each of the listed rare flora or listed specially protected fauna that are indigenous only to Barrow Island?
- (2) For each of the taxa in (1), what monitoring has been done on Barrow since the presence of oil producers on the island, or since the particular taxon was first described, whichever is the earlier?
- (3) For each outline of monitoring in (2), which company or Government agency, or both, carried out the monitoring described?
- (4) For each outline of monitoring in (2), has there or will there ever be any independent auditing of those studies?
- (5) Briefly, what has or what will be the role, if any, of the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), or its earlier equivalents in such auditing?
- (6) For each outline of monitoring in (2), how, if at all, will the public be able to access the unedited results of those studies?
- (7) For each of the taxa in (1), what monitoring is planned for the future, and over what timeframes?
- (8) For each outline of monitoring in (7), which company or Government agency, or both, will carry out the monitoring described?
- (9) For each outline of monitoring in (7), will there ever be any independent auditing of those studies?
- (10) Briefly, what role, if any, will the DEC have in such auditing?
- (11) Briefly, what role, if any, will the EPA have in such auditing?
- (12) For each outline of monitoring in (7), how if at all, will the public be able to access the unedited results of those studies?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

- (1) There are no listed rare flora found on Barrow Island. The current status of listed specially protected fauna that are indigenous only to Barrow Island is as follows:
 - (a) *Isoodon auratus barrowensis* Barrow Island Golden Bandicoot — Vulnerable
 - (b) *Bettongia lesueur* ssp (WAM M10733) Boodie (Barrow Island) — Vulnerable
 - (c) *Lagorchestes conspicillatus conspicillatus* Barrow Island Spectacled Hare-wallaby — Vulnerable
 - (d) *Macropus robustus isabellinus* Barrow Island Euro — Vulnerable
 - (e) *Speleostrophus nesiotus* Barrow Island Millipede — Vulnerable
 - (f) *Draculoides bramstokeri* Barrow Island *Draculoides* — Vulnerable
 - (g) *Bogidomma australis* Barrow Island *Bogidomma* Amphipod — Vulnerable
 - (h) *Liagoceradocus subthalassicus* Barrow Island *Liagoceradocus* Amphipod — Vulnerable
- (2) For the four vertebrate taxa listed at 1(a) to 1(d), annual abundance estimates have been obtained between 1998 and 2008 through a joint Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM, now Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC)) and Chevron fauna monitoring program. The distribution and abundance of the taxa listed at 1(c) and 1(d) have also been estimated in the publication by Short, J and Turner, B (1991) *Wildlife Research* 18:421-429.

For the invertebrate species listed at 1(e) to 1(h), most knowledge of their presence on Barrow Island has only been obtained in the last five to 10 years since survey work has been undertaken as part of the Environmental Review and Management Plan for the Gorgon gas project. For the stygofauna listed at 1(g) and 1(h), monitoring of groundwater quality is undertaken as a surrogate for monitoring the fauna themselves, as part of the Gorgon Terrestrial and Subterranean Environment Monitoring Program, which is required under Condition 8 of Ministerial Statement 800 relating to the Gorgon gas plant development.

- (3) For the taxa listed at 1(a) to 1(d), CALM undertook the monitoring in partnership with Chevron until 2008. Since that time, Chevron has expanded the terrestrial fauna monitoring program as part of the Gorgon gas plant development and now carries out the program using biological survey contractors. For the species listed at 1(e) to 1(h), Chevron carries out the survey and monitoring program using biological survey contractors.
- (4)-(5) There has not been any independent auditing of monitoring results to date. DEC liaises directly with Chevron in terms of monitoring results and would follow up if any specific results indicated concern or required review.
- (6) The public has access to all of the Gorgon management plans required under Ministerial Statement 800 including the Gorgon Terrestrial and Subterranean Baseline State and Environmental Impact Report which provides some detail regarding the results of monitoring and survey work undertaken as part of the Gorgon project. The Environmental Review and Management Program for the original Gorgon project and the Public Environmental Review for the revised and expanded Gorgon project also contain monitoring and survey results. This information is available on the Chevron Australia website. Detailed information on the environmental assessment of the project is also available on the Environmental Protection Authority website.
- (7) For the taxa listed at 1(a) to 1(d), annual monitoring of relative abundance will be undertaken by Chevron contractors as part of the Gorgon Terrestrial and Subterranean Environment Monitoring Program for the period of construction and the life of the operations of the Gorgon gas plant on Barrow Island.
- For the stygofauna species listed at 1(g) and 1(h), groundwater quality will be monitored by Chevron contractors as a surrogate for stygofauna sampling to indicate the potential impact on the stygofauna community as a whole. The individual species listed will not be targeted by sampling and therefore specific detail on their existence or abundance is not planned to be collected.
- No monitoring is planned for the millipede species listed at 1(e) or the draculoides listed at 1(f).
- (8) See the answer to (7). DEC will monitor the overall status of flora and fauna consistent with its responsibilities for wildlife conservation and for management of the Barrow Island Nature Reserve. The Office of the Environmental Protection Authority (OEPA) will monitor compliance with the conditions of the Ministerial Statement.
- (9) Independent auditing of these programs is not planned at this stage. If I consider that the Gorgon project management plans may not be meeting the objectives of the Ministerial Statement, I can request the review and resubmission of the plans. An independent audit may be undertaken if warranted when determining if any improvements are required for a management plan to meet the conditions of the Ministerial Statement. Additionally, compliance with the conditions of the Ministerial Statement will be monitored by the OEPA.
- (10) The OEPA would be expected to request advice from DEC when undertaking its compliance monitoring role for the Gorgon project. See also the answer to (8) in respect of DEC's responsibilities.
- (11) The OEPA will monitor compliance with the requirements of the Ministerial Statement, including compliance with the Terrestrial and Subterranean Environment Monitoring Program.
- (12) Ministerial Statement 800 requires that monitoring results of the terrestrial and subterranean environment state are reported annually in an Environmental Performance Report. This report is required to be made publicly available.