

MT PERCY OPERATIONS — MYSTERY, UNION CLUB AND SIR JOHN OPEN PITS

3238. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

I refer to Mystery, Union Club and Sir John Open Pits owned by Barrick Gold and Newmont mining, operated and managed by Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines Pty Ltd (KCGM) in close proximity to Kalgoorlie-Boulder known as the Mt Percy operations, and ask —

- (1) Can the Minister provide the exact date on which the above referred to Mystery open pit mine was last mined and mining operations ceased in and around the pit?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) Can the Minister quote the specific text of what specific sections/regulations of the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994, Regulations 1995, Mining Act 1978 and Regulations 1981 are applicable for the provision of abandonment bunds around the Mystery and Union Club open pits?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) Can the Minister provide the exact date on which the above referred to Union Club open pit was last mined and mining operations ceased in and around the pit?
- (6) If no to (5), why not?
- (7) Does the DMP consider that the geotechnical instability leading to collapse or slumping of the pit walls from the Mystery or Union Club pits is a serious risk to the public water supply tank in the area?
- (8) If no to (7), why not?
- (9) In the life of mining operations for the Mystery, Union Club and Sir John open pits did any pit wall failures occur at the above referred to mining operations?
- (10) If yes to (9), in what specific years and how many tonnes of material was involved for each pit wall failure at each respective pit?
- (11) Does the DMP consider that the geotechnical instability leading to the collapse or slumping of the pit walls from the Mystery or Union Club pits is a serious risk to the railway line?
- (12) If no to (11), why not?
- (13) Can the Minister indicate the exact distances in metres from the edge of the Mt Percy public water tank to the edge of the Mystery and Union Club open pits?
- (14) If no to (13), why not?
- (15) Can the Minister indicate the exact distances in metres from the edge of the Mystery and Union Club open pits to the railway line?
- (16) Can the Minister state how many years the Mystery and Union Club open pits have been without abandonment bunding surrounding the entire pits?
- (17) Will the Minister or the DMP instruct or direct KCGM to immediately install abandonment bunding surrounding the entire Mystery and Union Club Open Pits?
- (18) If no to (17), why not?

Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:

- (1) This open pit was last mined in 1992. The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) has been unable to ascertain the exact date when the open pit was last mined. Between 1997 and 2001 rehabilitation of waste dumps and other surface work was carried out. Since 2001 resource definition work has been conducted and this site is considered 'active' and under the control of KCGM.
- (2) See answer to question (1)
- (3) No
- (4) As the Mystery and Union Club open pits are considered 'active' and under the control of KCGM, no specific sections/regulations of the Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994, Regulations 1995, Mining Act 1978 and Regulations 1981 are currently applicable to the provision of abandonment bunds at those pits.
- (5) This open pit was last mined in mid 1997. The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) has been unable to ascertain the exact date when mining ceased in and around the pit.

- (6) See answer to question (5)
- (7) No
- (8) Inspectors from DMP have recently conducted an inspection of these open pits and I am advised that there is no sign of any critical deterioration in the walls of the excavations. KCGM has advised that the upper batters in the western wall of the Mystery Pit have been heavily reinforced with cable bolts and mesh, and a significant quantity of backfill is in place to within 50 metres of the pit crest adding a buttress to the pit wall.
- (9) Yes
- (10) KCGM has informed DMP that some minor and one major wall failure occurred during mining operations. DMP does not have detailed records of this nature. Representation has been made to KCGM on this matter and due to the recent ownership history of these sites, it is not possible to provide accurate data on this subject.
- (11) No
- (12) Inspectors from DMP have recently conducted an inspection of these open pits and I am advised that there is no sign of any critical deterioration in the walls of the excavations. There is therefore no appreciable risk to the railway line.
- (13) The distance between the Mystery Pit which is the excavation nearest to the public water supply tank is approximately 76 metres. The Union Club Pit is further away from the tank. DMP does not have the exact distances.
- (14) See answer to question (13)
- (15) The distances from the excavations to the railway are approximately 30 metres to the Union Club Pit and 47 metres to the Mystery Pit. DMP does not have the exact distances.
- (16) It is approximately 13 years since these open pits have been in operation. A solid fence was erected at the time of operation and is still in place to prevent inadvertent access to the workings.
- (17) No
- (18) The company has advised that these pits have not been abandoned and they are part of future mine plans.