

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question on notice

- 9 AUG 2011

Tuesday, 21 June 2011

4238. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Health.

With reference to the year ended 31 December 2010 Radiological Council Annual Report -

(1) Does the Radiological Council monitor and survey, inspect and do audits on all uranium exploration projects in Western Australia?

(2) If no to (1), why not?

(3) Is yes to (1), are reports kept in respect of monitoring, surveying, inspections and audits by the Radiological Council?

(4) If yes to (3), will the Minister table those records?

(5) If no to (1), whose responsibility is it to monitor radiation health amongst workers during uranium exploration?

(6) If no to (1), is the Radiological Council expected to fulfil this role in the case of a uranium mine being approved?

(7) Does the Radiological Council monitor and record the doses received by uranium exploration workers in Western Australia?

(8) If no to (7), why not?

(9) If yes to (7), will this be provided to the National Doses Register?

(10) If no to (7), who will monitor and record the doses received by uranium exploration workers in Western Australia?

(11) If no authority is undertaking the work referred to at (10), why not?

(12) If an authority is undertaking the work referred to in question (10), will these records be provided to the National Does Register?

(13) Is there a known or estimated date that the National Dose Register will come online?

(14) Have any of the members of the Radiological Council visited any of the uranium exploration sites in Western Australia?

(15) If yes to (14), did they compile any reports on any site visits?

- (16) If yes to (15), will the Minister table those reports?
- (17) Of the industrial incidents recorded in the Radiological Council's Annual report what was the mechanism for that reporting?
- (18) Were the industrial incidents volunteered by the corporations involved or was it through a Radiological Council investigation that the incident was revealed?
- (19) Is the Radiological Council confident that all incidents involving unusual dose levels are reported to them by the relevant companies or authorities?
- (20) If yes to (19), what checks and balances are available to the Radiological Council to ensure this is the case?
- (21) Does the Radiological Council have scope to monitor and conduct base line studies on ground water quality and levels of radiation to measure for any increases in radiation, where there is a known uranium deposit and exploration activity?
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Answer

- (1) No. However, officers of the Radiological Council have visited some of the exploration sites that are captured under the Radiation Safety Act.
- (2) Many of the sites are in the very early stages of exploration. Inspection visits will be undertaken at a frequency that is commensurate with the level of operational activity at the site.
- (3 - 4) Not applicable.
- (5) The radiation aspects associated with exploration of mining are regulated under both the Radiation Safety Act and the Mines Safety and Inspection Act. Both sets of legislation require adherence to dose limits and dose optimisation.
- (6) An operating uranium mine will fall under the jurisdiction of the Radiation Safety Act and Mines Safety and Inspection Act and their subsidiary legislation. Authorised officers under these Acts will be conducting audits and surveys, and monitoring the operations at the site.
- (7) Yes.
- (8) Not applicable.
- (9) The Australian National Radiation Dose Register has initially only been set up to accept dose reports from operating uranium mines. It is anticipated that this database may be extended to include other occupations at a later stage.
- (10 - 11) Not applicable.

(12) The companies are responsible for submitting the doses to the Australian National Radiation Dose Register.

(13) The Australian National Radiation Dose Register was officially launched in June 2011.

(14) No.

(15 - 16) Not applicable.

(17) Reports were submitted by the Registrant and/or Radiation Safety Officer of the site or institution.

(18) Refer to question 17.

(19) Yes.

(20) Regulation 15 of the Radiation Safety (General) Regulations dictates the requirements for reporting of doses. Personal radiation monitoring providers are also required to comply with this regulation and provide dose reports directly to the Radiological Council.

(21) Under both the Radiation Safety Act and the Mines Safety and Inspection Act, baseline studies on groundwater and levels of radiation are required.