

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

### Question on notice

16 OCT 2012

Tuesday, 18 September 2012

6049. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

In relation to mining activities on Christmas Island, which are administered by the Western Australian Department of Mines and Petroleum in accordance with a Commonwealth/Western Australian Service Delivery Agreement, in particular, the island contains tenements EC1 70/2 and EC1 70/3, I ask --

- (1) What are the rehabilitation obligations which apply to mining activities on Christmas Island, and in particular to the company Christmas Island Phosphates (CIP)?
- (2) Given that the phosphate resource is nearing exhaustion, has CIP submitted a mine closure plan?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?
- (4) Is the company (CIP) subject to the Western Australian Mining Rehabilitation Fund levy?
- (5) If no to (4), why not?
- (6) Can the Minister provide details of any rehabilitation work undertaken so far by CIP?

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### Answer

- (1) The rehabilitation obligations for areas mined for phosphate by Christmas Island Phosphates is to make the area safe, stable and non-polluting. This includes:
  - making mined areas safe to traverse by fauna and humans;
  - ensuring no steep pit edges remain;
  - loosening compacted areas to increase infiltration;
  - re-profiling mined areas to ensure surface water does not transport excessive sediment off site; and
  - managing weeds within the mined area.
- (2) The Annual Environmental Report from Christmas Island Phosphates submitted in April 2012 states that the life of the mine is to 2029. Christmas Island Phosphates has not submitted a Mine Closure Plan to the Department of Mines and Petroleum.

- (3) The decision for when Christmas Island Phosphates need to submit a Mine Closure Plan rests with the Australian Government. The Department of Mines and Petroleum has advised the Federal Department of Regional Australia, Local Government, Arts and Sport (DRALGAS) that the *Mining Act 1978* was amended in 2010 and that all mine sites in Western Australia are required to lodge a Mine Closure Plan. It was recommended to DRALGAS that Christmas Island Phosphate submit a Mine Closure Plan between 2012 and 2014 given that all mines in Western Australia will need a Mine Closure Plan by the end of 2014. DRALGAS is yet to confirm when a Mine Closure Plan is required.
- (4) No.
- (5) The phosphate mine on Christmas Island is not covered by the Mining Rehabilitation Fund Bill 2012. However, under agreement with the Australian Government, Christmas Island Phosphates pays a Conservation Levy that is currently \$2.2732 per dry metric tonne of rock phosphate exported from Christmas Island. The company has paid approximately \$14.5 million into the levy fund. The fund is used by the Australian Government to further rehabilitate mined areas.
- (6) Christmas Island Phosphates has undertaken 296.8 ha of rehabilitation on Mining Lease MCI 70/1 according to its obligations, however, it has also undertaken additional trial revegetation work that commenced in 2001 involving:
- earthworks to ensure rainfall is retained and compacted areas loosened;
  - spread soil for planting;
  - planting vegetation (both from seed and tube stock);
  - controlling weeds; and
  - fertilising and monitoring the areas.

An independent audit to evaluate the progress and success of the voluntary rehabilitation strategy found that the trials were effective in establishing vigorous, species-diverse native vegetation.



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**MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM**