

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
(Of which some notice has been given)

Wednesday 27th November 2013

Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

With regard to the heavy mineral sands explorer Sheffield Resources I ask:

1. Is the Minister aware of the company's recent drilling activity at the Thunderbird deposit, located near Derby in the Canning Basin region of WA, over an area of around 7 kilometres by 4 kilometres?
2. Does the company have the necessary approvals from the Environmental Protection Authority and other agencies to conduct its exploration activity, which includes substantial land clearing and the drilling of more than 280 holes to collect samples?
3. Have any environmental surveys been conducted in the area and will the Minister table all available baseline environmental data to show no harm is being caused?
4. If not, why not?
5. Does the Minister support the water intensive strip mining practices that would inevitably follow if approvals for mineral sand extraction were granted?

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

The Department of Mines and Petroleum advises:

1. Yes. The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) has approved exploration activity by Sheffield Resources Limited through two Programmes of Work (Registration ID's 33715 and 39294) on two Exploration Licences (E04/2083 and E04/2159).
2. DMP has approved exploration proposed by Sheffield Resources Limited on the basis that the proposed activity was not environmentally significant, as detailed above, however any questions regarding approvals issued by other agencies should be directed to the relevant Minister.

- 3 - 4. Baseline surveys were not required to be submitted to DMP prior to the exploration activities proposed by Sheffield Resources Limited. DMP would require baseline surveys in instances where there is intensive exploration or development, or where the area is environmentally sensitive.

5. Prior to any mining being conducted on tenure granted under the *Mining Act 1978*, a mining proposal is required to be submitted to DMP and approved by the Executive Director of the Environment Division. Each mining proposal must detail how environmental impacts of the proposal will be minimised and managed and is assessed on an individual basis. Mining proposals will also be referred by DMP to the Environmental Protection Authority if the proposal triggers criteria for referral listed in the Memorandum of Understanding between these two agencies.

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