

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**Question on notice**

**Thursday, 20 February 2014**

760. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

With regard to the Buru Energy Limited wells at Yulleroo 3 and 4 and with reference to photographs of these wells, being IMG\_0797.JPG, IMG\_0794.JPG, IMG\_0823.JPG and IMG\_0827.JPG of Yulleroo 3 and IMG\_0814.JPG, IMG\_0809.JPG, IMG\_0804.JPG, IMG\_0805.JPG and IMG\_0808.JPG of Yulleroo 4 that were taken on 12/02/2014, which are located at <http://www.robinchapple.com/qdata>, I ask:

(a) at Yulleroo 4, why is there a difference in water height between the water levels in the two dams;

(b) at Yulleroo 4, what is the material floating on the surface of the water in IMG\_0804.JPG and IMG\_0805.JPG;

(c) at Yulleroo 4 in IMG\_0804.JPG and IMG\_0805.JPG there is evidence of water having escaped from the lined dam, as shown by the riling on the flank of the pond that is closest to the camera. Is this permissible:

(i) if yes to (c), why;

(ii) if yes to (c), what processes are available to ensure that dams used to contain chemical fluids used in the process of fracking will not be similarly dispersed into the environment in times of seasonal flooding;

(iii) if no to (c), what action will the Minister take;

(iv) if no to (c), was the department advised of this event and when; and

(v) if no to (c)(iv), why not;

(d) what were the contents of the dams at the Yulleroo 4 site;

(e) were the contents of the large dam depicted in IMG\_0809.JPG and IMG\_1808.JPG drained, siphoned or pumped out via the pipe that is seen leading to a large body of water outside the boundary of the pad in the top right hand corner of the photos:

(i) if yes to (e), is this activity permitted and on what grounds;

(ii) if yes to (e), was the department advised of this activity;

(iii) if yes to (e)(i), what processes are available to ensure that dams used to contain chemical fluids associated with the process of fracking will not be similarly dispersed into the environment in times of seasonal flooding; and

(iv) if no to (e)(i), what action will the Minister take;

(f) At Yulleroo 4 in photos IMG\_0809.JPG and IMG\_0808.JPG there is evidence of the contents of this lined dam having overtopped to the left-hand bottom corner of the pictures. Is this permissible:

- (i) if yes to (f) why; and
- (ii) if no to (f) what action will the Minister take;

(g) at Yulleroo 3, why is there a difference in the water height between the water levels in the three dams;

(h) at Yulleroo 3, what is the purpose of the pipe that is submerged and leading from the dam to a large body of water at the other end of the pipe shown in IMG\_0827.JPG; and

(i) if the purpose of this pipe was to drain the three dams shown in IMG\_0827.JPG, is this activity permitted:

- (i) if yes to (i), was the department advised of the activity;
- (ii) if yes to (i), on what grounds is the draining of these dams permitted; and
- (iii) if no to (i), what action will the Minister take?

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**Answer**

The Department of Mines and Petroleum advises:

(a)

The difference in water height in the two ponds relates to the time the fluids have had to evaporate and the evaporation rate based on the surface area and design of the ponds.

(b) The material is drill cuttings and cement.

(c) No

(i) Not applicable

(ii) Not applicable

(iii) Buru made modifications to ensure that there will be no further overflow from the retention pond and have been conducting weekly inspections of the site since May 2013.

(iv) Yes, in April 2013.

(v) Not applicable

(d) One pond contains drill cuttings, drill fluid, cement and collected rain water. The fluids in this pond were being left to evaporate in the dry season. The other pond was used to hold bore water for drilling operations however now contains collected rainwater.

(e) Yes

- (i) Yes. Buru's approved Environment Plan allowed for the discharge of this water to the well site firebreak providing the water was tested for constituents of potential concern and determined to pose no risk to the environment.
  - (ii) Yes
  - (iii) Buru are required to maintain sufficient freeboard in all retention ponds holding flowback water and have a contingency plan in place should there be potential for the maximum capacity of ponds to be exceeded.
  - (iv) Not applicable
- (f) No. All retention ponds, including ponds containing only rainwater, should be maintained to ensure there are no uncontrolled discharges.
- (i) Not applicable
  - (ii) The overflow was caused by a storm event. Buru was advised that there should be no overflow of retention ponds at their well sites at any time and have made modifications to ensure that there will be no further overflow from the retention ponds.
- (g) At Yulleroo 3 there is one retention pond containing drill fluids and drill cuttings, the other ponds contain collected rainwater. The difference in water height in the ponds relates to the time the fluids have had to evaporate and the evaporation rate based on the surface area and design of the ponds.
- (h) To drain excess water in the water retention pond.
- (i) Yes
    - (i) Yes
    - (ii) Buru's approved Environment Plan allowed for the discharge of water to the well site firebreak providing the water was tested for constituents of potential concern and determined to pose no risk to the environment.
    - (iii) Not applicable

