

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Tuesday, 6 May 2014

1109. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

With regard to the Mt Gibson Iron Limited operations on Koolan Island, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware that there have been numerous problems relating to the company's operations on Koolan Island in recent months;
- (b) what action is the company and its sub-contractor(s) required to take to clean up the oil leaks and spills from the mobile crushing unit(s) on site;
- (c) what is the company doing to manage the infestation of weeds on the island, particularly the wild passion vine *passiflora foetida*;
- (d) what action is the company taking to prevent further overtopping of the main pit, which is below sea level, as occurred during the recent wet season months:
 - (i) what was the impact on the nearby marine ecosystem of this event;
 - (ii) what did the company do to clean up after this event;
 - (iii) has the clean-up effort been monitored, and by whom;
 - (iv) if no to (iii), why not;
 - (v) has the company been fined for allowing the overtopping to occur;
 - (vi) if no to (v), why not; and
 - (vii) if yes to (v), what was the fine and when was it issued; and
- (e) what method is currently in place to secure the sheer, sloping rock face located on the island side of the main pit:
 - (i) what is the angle of the slope;
 - (ii) why are there no benches built into it;
 - (iii) does the Minister believe this is a safe way to operate; and
 - (iv) if no to (iii), why not?

Answer

The Department of Mines and Petroleum advises:

- (a) The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) has not been made aware of any significant concerns relating to the Koolan Island Mt Gibson Iron Limited operations in recent months.
- (b) The remediation of oil leaks and spills is regulated under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* by the Department of Environment and Regulation. This query should be directed to the Minister for Environment.

- (c) DMP encourages proactive weed management at all mines sites, however there is no requirement for Mt Gibson Iron Limited to inform DMP of specific weed control programmes. DMP notes, however, that Koolan Island is subject to a Ministerial Statement under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. A condition of this Statement requires a Quarantine Management Plan which is to include detail of how Mt Gibson Iron Limited will identify and control weed species and hence this query should be directed to the Minister for Environment.
- (d) No overtopping of the seawall into the pit has been reported to DMP. During the recent inspection by DMP there was no evidence to suggest the seawall was overtopped. The seawall has been designed and built to prevent overtopping, and its performance is regularly monitored.
- (i) - (vii)
Not applicable
- (e) The Koolan Island pit walls are designed to meet the industry accepted leading practice.
- (i) The angle of the slope varies from 45 to 50 degrees and follows the natural angle of the rock beds and layers.
- (ii) The entire wall is reinforced with cable bolts. Additionally, weaker rock zones are stabilised with shotcrete. A rock fall protection system (continuous draping mesh) is placed along the slope from top to bottom, hence no benches are required.
- (iii) Yes. The pit walls are designed, constructed and monitored to meet the required safety standards.
- (iv) Not applicable

