

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Tuesday, 10 March 2015

2852. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment.

I refer to the appeal lodged to the Contaminated Sites Committee on 15 December 2014, regarding the Basic Summary of Records released by the Department of Environment Regulation of the synthetic rutile plant on Lot 151 at 24 Goulds Road, Namgulu, published on 16 May 2013, classifying the site as 'Contaminated - remediation required', and ask:

- (a) has a determination been made regarding this appeal;
- (b) if yes to (a), what is the determination;
- (c) if no to (a), why not;
- (d) what other actions, if any, have been undertaken to remediate this area;
- (e) regarding (d), if no action has been undertaken, given the length of time since the classification, why not;
- (f) have local residents been made aware of the soil and groundwater contamination;
- (g) if yes to (f), how were they notified;
- (h) if no to (f), given the potentially radioactive nature of the contamination, why not;
- (i) if no to (f), will the Government take immediate action to alert residents of the contamination;
- (j) if no to (i), why not;
- (k) if yes to (f), have residents been offered any assurances and timeframes for the contamination to be remediated;
- (l) if no to (k), why not; and
- (m) if yes to (l), how?

Answer

The Minister for Environment has provided the following response.

- (a) The application received by the Contaminated Sites Committee (Committee) on 15 December 2014 was not an appeal against classification, but rather a request for a decision on the responsibility for remediation made under section 36(2)(a) of the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*. No determination of the matter has yet been made.
- (b) Not applicable
- (c) The Committee's investigations regarding this matter are still at the earliest stage, with the applicant being asked to provide relevant supporting information.

- (d) An accredited contaminated sites auditor has been appointed to review site investigations and remediation plans. In April 2014, the Department of Environment Regulation (DER) received a Mandatory Auditor's Report reviewing a site management plan that involved progressive capping of the tailings storage facility. The auditor concluded that the plan provides an appropriate remedial strategy to address groundwater contamination issues at the site. DER concurs with the auditors conclusions. However, DER understands that further approvals may be required from other regulatory bodies before this plan can be implemented.
- (e) Not applicable
- (f) No
- (g) Not applicable
- (h) The nearest residence is located 1.4 kilometres from the synthetic rutile plant. Groundwater contamination present beneath the synthetic rutile plant, and/or near the site boundaries, does not pose any risk to local residents.
- (i) No
- (j) Information on the nature and extent of the contamination at the site, including actions required to address contamination and statements relating to potential risk, is made available to the public through the Contaminated Sites Database on DER's website.
- (k)-(m) Not applicable

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