

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Tuesday, 5 May 2015

2999. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

I refer to previous rainfall events that filled the salina systems of Lake Way and Lake Maitland associated with the Wiluna uranium proposal, and ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of the flooding of Lake Way where the Wiluna uranium site is proposed;
- (b) is the Minister aware that the proponent, Toro Energy, plans to store radioactive mine waste tailings in an area that was inundated with water;
- (c) given that the company completed a test pit at the Centipede site in 2011, has or will the Minister require a review of the site to assess if damage was done, or if radiation was released into the environment post flooding; and
- (d) given that a motion through Parliament was supported to effectively isolate uranium tailings from the environment for no less than 10,000 years, does the Minister consider tailings in a lake under water can meet this requirement?

Answer

The Department of Mines and Petroleum advises:

- (a) Yes
- (b) The Minister considers that there will be adequate regulatory controls in place to assess and manage the tailings storage facility for the Wiluna uranium project, including flood containment.
- (c) Officers from the Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Department of Environment Regulation are scheduled to jointly inspect the Centipede site area in June 2015.
- (d) The proposed approach to isolating tailings from the environment, presented prior to environmental approval by both the Western Australian and Commonwealth Governments, will be further refined through the Mining Proposal assessment process.

