

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

Thursday, 14 May 2015

3171. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister representing the Minister for Planning.

Professor Michael Buxton heads a research team of researchers and scholars at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University carrying out extensive research into peri-urban regions which form belts of non-urban land fringing metropolitan centres. These peri-urban regions typically contain important natural resources, intensive agricultural enterprises, remnant biodiversity and significant landscapes. These areas are increasingly under threat from development and overuse. The Queensland Liberal National Party government introduced the Regional Planning Interests Act in 2014. The Hon Jeff Seeney MP, former Minister for State Development, described the legislation as delivering on the then Queensland Government's commitment to protect prime agricultural land and resolve land use conflict where it occurs. He also said that the assessment process established by the Act restored the balance of power between rural producers and resource companies. In Western Australia, tension between forms of land use is evident in many peri-urban areas, and I ask:

(a) does the Minister have any plans to protect highly productive land in peri-urban regions close to the Perth metropolitan area, like that introduced by the former Queensland Liberal National Party;

(b) if yes to (a), will the Minister please provide details;

(c) is the Minister aware of a proposal by Bauxite Alumina Joint Venture (BAJV) to develop a bauxite mine in the peri-urban areas of the Avon Valley in the Shires of Toodyay, Mundaring and Northam that are primarily used for goat, alpaca and sheep farming, cattle grazing, horse studs, vineyards, olive groves, organic farming, canola, serial grain growing and hay production; and

(d) if yes to (c), does the Minister support the development of open cut strip mining by BAJV and associated Bauxite Resource Limited (BRL) given the effects it is likely to have on productive agricultural land in a reliable rain fall area, where there is much local enterprise and more than 900 people live in close proximity of the proposed mine?

Answer

(a-b) Yes. *State Planning Policy 2.5 - Land Use Planning in Rural Areas* (SPP 2.5) protects rural land generally and priority agricultural land in particular, which is important for food production and the State's economy. The policy applies throughout Western Australia and is the principal statutory planning mechanism for protecting the State's rural and agricultural interests. Each local government planning scheme is required to be consistent with SPP 2.5.

(c) Yes. I am advised that Bauxite Resources Ltd, in a joint venture with Yankuang Resources (BAJV) has been considering the feasibility of the Felicitas and Fortuna bauxite deposits located on mainly rural land in the Shires of Toodyay, Northam and Mundaring for a number of years.

(d) Any request for the Felicitas and Fortuna projects would be considered under the *Mining Act 1978* and the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*. If and when the BAJV proposal is considered the impacts on surrounding agricultural uses and residents would form part of the deliberations.

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