

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question Without Notice

Thursday, 25 February 2016

C122. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment

- (1) What was the environmental assessment and approval process for the extension to “Sal Salis” in the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area?
- (2) Has this development been referred under the EPBC Act?
- (3) As turtles nest at this site what is the shortest distance between the development and the area used by marine turtles for nesting?
- (4) What guidelines from the WA EPA “Environmental Assessment Guidelines protecting marine turtles from light impacts” have been implemented to ensure this development does not adversely impact on World Heritage Values?
- (5) Why was the Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Committee not consulted for advice on environmental impacts?

Answer

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

The Minister for Environment has provided the following response.

- (1) The extension to Sal Salis required the proposal to be consistent with the approved management plan for Cape Range National Park and the environmental performance criteria attached to the lease. The Conservation Commission of Western Australia considered the matter at its December 2015 meeting and supported the proposal.
- (2) No. The need for the Department of Parks and Wildlife to refer matters to the Commonwealth under the EPBC Act arises when an action might be determined as having, or likely to have, a significant impact on the World Heritage values of a declared World Heritage area. The extension to Sal Salis comprised an increase from 9 tents to 16 tents. The lease area was expanded by less than one hectare (from 5.73-6.37 hectares of the 604,500 hectares of the World Heritage property which stretches over 300km).
- (3) Fifty metres
- (4) Environmental performance conditions are attached to the lease, and independently audited. The lease for Sal Salis contains the following provisions to protect turtles from light impacts and the areas World Heritage Values:

The Lessee will, except in an emergency or with the approval of the Lessor:

- (i) Not use floodlights in the Operations;
- (ii) Provide a lighting plan to ensure natural ambient light conditions prevail 50 metres outside the Leased Premises; and
- (iii) Minimise outdoor light provision, whilst still ensuring safe Operations, by:
 - (a) Using bright lights only within closed structures;
 - (b) Using lighting under roofing or encased within a spill mantle in the dining room;

- (c) Using path lighting low to the ground and within a spill mantle; and
- (d) Ensuring that all vehicle lights are dipped when arriving in the car park adjacent to the site.

Nothing contained or implied in this Lease is to be taken as exempting, relieving or releasing the Lessee from or limiting the obligation of the Lessee to comply with any law relating to the protection of the environment.

- (5) The scale and significance of the extension of the lease was not considered to warrant consideration by the Committee.

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