

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice

Thursday, 13 June 2019

C648. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

I refer to the Question Without Notice asked on Tuesday, 11 June 2019 in relation to Tailings Storage Facilities (TSF's) and ask:

1. Of the tailing facilities outlined by BHP, Rio and Glencore how many are in WA and where are they?
2. When did those companies advise the department of the risk posed by those TSF's?
3. Has the department visited those TSF's and if so when?
4. What engineering is being carried out to ensure stability on these sites?
5. What is the nature of the risks posed by those TSF's and what safety management is in place to ensure no risk to the humans or environment?

Answer

I thank the Hon. Member for the question. The following information has been provided to me by the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

1. BHP: Newman, Leinster, Mt Keith, Kambalda and Beenup (closed)
Rio: Paraburdoo, Tom Price, Yandi and Robe River
Glencore: Murrin Murrin
2. The Department regularly assesses and monitors the risks posed by all TSFs in Western Australia.
3. Yes;
BHP: Newman (Mar 2018), Leinster (Oct 2018), Mt Keith (Nov 2018), Kambalda (Jan 2018)
Rio: Argyle (May 2019), Paraburdoo (Oct 2017), Tom Price (Mar 2018), Yandi (Jul 2018), Robe River (Sep 2017)
Glencore: Murrin Murrin (2017)
4. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) ensures that:
 - TSFs are designed by suitably qualified and experienced engineers;
 - Experienced engineers supervise the construction and certify that construction complies with the approved design;

- Experienced engineers and technicians undertake quality control testing and quality assurance work;
- TSFs are audited and stability reviewed by qualified and experienced engineers on an annual basis.

5. TSFs, if they fail, might, depending upon the particular circumstances of their locations, pose safety, health and environment hazards to land immediately downstream. Mining companies are also concerned about operational risks to plant and equipment should TSFs fail.

Mining operations are required to have a management plan for TSFs. These plans include that each TSF is inspected by mine site personnel at least twice a day to ensure that all its components are operating within the design limits. In particular, no excess water is stored on TSFs. The water levels on TSFs are maintained at minimum possible. Adequate freeboard is always maintained to safely accommodate water from extreme rainfall events, as recommended in the DMIRS publications (Code of Practice and Guidelines) on TSF operation.

Audits and stability reviews are carried out by qualified and experienced engineers on an annual basis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S. J. O.' or similar, written in a cursive style.

13/6/19