

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice



Wednesday, 18 September 2019

C1154. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Regional Development representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum

I refer to Question Without Notice No. 873, asked in the Legislative Council on 20 August 2019, and the article to which it refers.

1. Given that the contamination in the Balla Balla River system is mostly heavy metal species, does the Minister consider it likely that these contaminants are the result of industrial process at Whim Creek?
2. If the site contamination was known when VentureX bought the Whim Creek mine in 2009, what conditions, if any, were put in place to address this?
3. Is the Minister familiar with the events surrounding the 2009 Lady Annie mine spill in Queensland?
4. Does the Minister consider the sale and decommission of the Whim Creek site to have been environmentally sound?
5. Does the Minister consider the '100-year-event' rationale to offer sufficient environmental protection to be used in future industrial projects?

Answer

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

1. The Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety (DMIRS) consider that the elevated concentrations of heavy metals are likely to be the result of activities at the Whim Creek mine site.
 2. The enforcement of remediation obligations have applied through the provisions of the *Mining Act 1978*, and have not required additional conditions to be imposed on the tenements.
 3. No
 4. An assessment of environmental performance is not undertaken at the time of tenement transfers, as the rights and obligations for environmental performance are transferred with the tenement. The Whim Creek mine site has not been decommissioned as ore processing is ongoing on the site.
 5. The appropriate recurrence rainfall event interval used at any one site is determined based upon the physical and environmental factors existing at the site. A one in 100 year annual recurrence interval may be appropriate in certain circumstances.
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