

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question On Notice

Thursday, 21 May 2020

2963. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment

I refer to Barrow Island, Chevron's 'Gorgon' project, and conservation efforts on the Island, and I ask:

(a) how many staff members from the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (the Department) are presently employed on Barrow Island for the purposes of independent audit and monitoring;

(b) can independent scientists gain access to Barrow Island for research and/or data collection:

(i) if yes to (b), which entity can grant authority to access the Island;

(ii) if no to (b), why not; and

(iii) if no to (b), how does the Government reconcile Barrow Island being the site of the largest single resource project in Australia's history with its designation as a Class A nature reserve, while denying access to independent reviewers;

(c) noting the answers supplied to question without notice 1189, asked 17 October 2019, have the Gorgon joint venture partners upheld their continuing responsibilities as per Ministerial Statement 800:

(i) if no to (c), can the Minister provide the relevant details; and

(ii) if no to (c), does the Department have the power to litigate against the proponent(s);

(d) has the Department continued the register of non-conformance started by the Department of Parks and Wildlife:

(i) if yes to (d), would the Minister please table this register;

(ii) if no to (d), why not; and

(iii) is the information referred to at (d), still provided by the proponent(s):

(A) if yes to (d)(iii), how does the Department ensure the data is accurate and comprehensive;

(e) given the Hon Ken Baston stated there were "localised pollution incidents on Barrow Island" in his reply to question on notice 2857 (23/04/2015), can the Minister advise whether those sites on the island have since been rehabilitated:

(i) if yes to (e), was this rehabilitation carried out by the proponent(s) or the Department;

(ii) if yes to (e), was this rehabilitation funded by the Department or the proponent(s); and

(iii) if no to (e), why not;

(f) is Barrow Island still classified as 'contaminated, remediation required' under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*:

(i) if no to (f), could the Minister advise on Barrow Island's current classification in this regard; and

(ii) if yes to (f), could the Minister please state the source of the pollution;

(g) listed by species, how many sick diseased, injured, or abandoned fauna were removed from Barrow Island for treatment and rehabilitation on the mainland in:

(i) 2015;

(ii) 2016;

(iii) 2017;

(iv) 2018;

(v) 2019; and

- (vi) 2020; from 1 January to 20 May 2020;
- (h) for each of the years in (g), would the Minister advise on how many individuals of a species:
- (i) died or were euthanised while in care;
 - (ii) were subsequently released on the mainland post-treatment; and
 - (iii) were kept post-treatment pursuant to a licence (please specify licence purpose e.g. educational purposes, scientific purposes); and
- (i) listed by species, how many sick diseased, injured, or abandoned fauna were treated on Barrow Island in the years referred to in (g)(i)-(vi)?

Answer

(a) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) employs four officers to perform this function on Barrow Island. These staff operate on a paired two weeks on, two weeks off, fly in, fly out roster.

(b) Yes, depending on the nature of the research and data collection.

(b)(i-iii) DBCA can issue lawful authority to access the nature reserve to conduct certain research activities. The Barrow Island Joint Venture, and the Gorgon Joint Venture (GJV) can grant authority to access parts of the island covered by permits, licences and leases created under petroleum legislation and the *Land Administration Act 1997*.

(c) The proponent for Ministerial Statement 800 is Chevron Australia Pty Ltd (Chevron) who has submitted its Compliance Assessment Report in November 2019 stating its compliance with the Ministerial Statement. Chevron is also required, under Ministerial Statement 800, to advise the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation of any non-compliances. To date there have been no non-compliances advised since the response to question without notice 1189 was asked on 17 October 2019.

(i) – (ii) Not applicable.

(d) (i-iii) The quarantine non-conformance register was discontinued in 2017 to avoid duplication with the GJV Quarantine Management System (QMS). The QMS contains provisions around reporting of detections of non-indigenous species on Barrow Island and marine pests in waters surrounding marine infrastructure on Barrow Island. The GJV (through Chevron Australia) currently provides DBCA with quarantine event and incident data on a regular basis. These reports include records of all event types and all incident levels for the entire duration of the Gorgon project.

(d)(iii)(A) The DBCA Reserves Officers based on Barrow Island utilise a range of strategies to ensure that quarantine incident matters and data is accurate and reported adequately, including:

- observing and conducting inspections on vessels and premises;
- working closely with quarantine and biosecurity personnel on quarantine matters;
- developing and maintaining information networks with island workers to gather additional information on incidents and quarantine matters;
- attendance of formal and informal meetings on quarantine matters;
- interrogation of data provided in QMS reports; and

- providing advice to and requesting further information regarding quarantine issues from Chevron.

(e) Areas of contamination resulting from localised pollution incidents on Barrow Island are subject to investigation, remediation, monitoring and/or ongoing management under the *Contaminated Sites Act 2003*. This has been, and continues to be, undertaken and funded by the proponent.

(f) Yes.

(i) Not applicable.

(ii) The contamination on Barrow Island originated from spills and leaks, including from well heads, flow lines and storage tanks, at Chevron's WA Oil operations since the 1960s, as well as historical waste disposal practices.

(g)- (i) See tabled paper no #.



Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT;
DISABILITY SERVICES; ELECTORAL AFFAIRS**

Table 1: Fauna Events on Barrow Island (BWI) 2015-2020 as provided by Chevron Australia

Species	2015						2016					
	Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI			Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI		
	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence
Brahminy Kite	1											
BWI Golden Bandicoot		1					1					
Chestnut Mouse	1											
Northern Brush-tailed Possum							1					
TOTAL	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Species	2017						2018					
	Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI			Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI		
	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence
Australian Hobby							1					
Wedge-Tailed Shearwater	1											
TOTAL	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Species	2019							2020					
	Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI				Cared for on BWI			Cared for off BWI		
	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Release status unknown	Released on BWI	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence	Released on mainland	Died/ Euthanased	Kept under licence
Black Shouldered Kite		1					2 [#]						
Nankeen Kestrel												1	
Pied Cormorant				1									
Wedge-Tailed Shearwater	3												
TOTAL	3	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0

Please note:

Data for events not included in Table 1 include:

- fauna held temporarily, but not believed to be sick, diseased, injured or abandoned. For example:
 - fatigued fauna (e.g. storm blown seabirds)
 - fauna captured for relocation and held temporarily until dusk or dawn for release
 - fauna injured and immediately euthanased (not cared for for any period of time)
 - fledging birds (not sick, injured, diseased or abandoned) brought in for care and subsequent release.

All fauna removed from Barrow Island by Chevron Australia were sent to wildlife rehabilitators on the mainland.

[#] Both Black Shouldered Kites were treated at vet facilities in Perth, survived treatment and were transferred to raptor rehabilitators. Release status is unknown.