

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice**

Tuesday, 8 September 2020

C898. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Environment

I refer to the issue of the dust pollution at the West End of Port Hedland, the Port Hedland Industries Council (PHIC), and specifically to the data that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulations (DWER; the Department) has received from PHIC in 2020, and I ask:

1. Given that the Taplin Street monitor was shown to be defective, and that now the Taplin St monitor results have been wholly expunged for 2018/19, does the Minister understand stakeholder concerns that this monitor is referenced in BHP's license conditions?
2. How regularly has PHIC delivered data to the Department; whether voluntarily or requested?
3. Given the Taplin St monitor results have been wholly expunged for 2018/19, how is the Department assessing BHP's latest 40mtpa increase amendment approval?
4. Is the Minister still confident in the ability of PHIC to monitor and collect data; and why?
5. Can the Minister confirm that DWER does **not** plan to return the residential areas of Port Hedland to under DWER's and DOH's adopted HRA 70 level?

Answer

1. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER) has advised me that the Taplin Street monitoring data is not the only source of information available to analyse the level of impact on the community and potential dust sources.

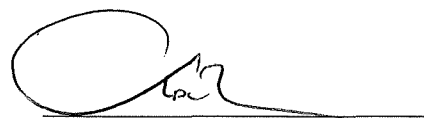
The BHP licence includes a range of conditions relating to the mitigation, monitoring and reporting of dust. This includes the requirement for BHP to monitor dust levels at the boundary and undertake specific management actions in the event of criteria being exceeded.

2. There is no statutory requirement for the Port Hedland Industries Council (PHIC) to provide data to DWER on a regular basis. DWER does from time to time request data from PHIC for a range of reasons. These have included to inform assessment of applications, review of annual reports and for the investigation into the faulty Taplin Street monitor.

3. The Department is undertaking its assessment of BHP's licence amendment applications in accordance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and its regulatory guidelines. DWER's assessment is informed by a wide range of information such as air quality modelling from emission sources, results of boundary monitoring, and ambient dust level from the entire air quality monitoring network, not just the Taplin Street monitor.

4. I am advised that PHIC replaced the faulty monitor on 15 January 2020 and has advised the Department that the new monitor is delivering consistent datasets. DWER is progressing the transfer of the air quality monitoring network from PHIC as soon as possible.

5. The Government is implementing the endorsed recommendations from the Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce. In order to address the DWER related recommendations, the Department is establishing a regulatory strategy with medium and long term objectives. In the short term DWER is ensuring dust emissions from major sources are not increased. In the longer term, the objective is to ensure that dust impacts are reduced to the lowest practicable level across the whole Port Hedland peninsula.



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