

RED HILL QUARRY - COMPLIANCE WITH DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL CONDITIONS

4768. Hon Helen Morton to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

Red Hill Quarry is located on the Darling Escarpment, the most prominent natural landform in the Perth area. The quarry abuts a national park. Hanson, previously Pioneer, was granted approval on 4 December 1991 to develop a quarry at Red Hill, subject to various undertakings. Those undertakings included, but were not limited to, the quarry development would necessitate the disturbance of up to 40 hectares of native vegetation over the expected 100 year life of the quarry; and the quarry would not be visible outside Hanson's own property at ground level. As pertains to the Red Hill Quarry Development by Hanson, I ask -

- (1) Can the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) dispute that Hanson has disturbed to date approximately 80 hectares of native vegetation, contrary to the undertaking of 1991?
- (2) Upon what documents or reports does DEC rely to confirm or dispute the exact acreage of disturbed native vegetation to date?
- (3) Has DEC performed a comprehensive on-site review of the quarry to verify the amount of disturbed native acreage?
- (4) If yes to (3), when and specifically where was the actual on-site inspection performed, and by whom?
- (5) If the area of disturbed native vegetation exceeds the undertaking, what action has the DEC taken against Hanson for non-compliance?
- (6) Can DEC confirm that Hanson is now proposing to further enlarge the quarry by up to an additional 140 hectares?
- (7) Can DEC verify that the independent assessment performed by consultant Ian Pound in 2003, was restricted to an 'in office' assessment of the February 1999 Thompson Palmer report, with no actual physical on-site visual assessment?
- (8) Can DEC provide any evidence of an actual on-site visual inspection of the Hanson quarry at Red Hill to ensure compliance with the undertakings?
- (9) If yes to (8), when and specifically where was the actual on-site inspection(s) performed, and by whom?
- (10) Can the DEC provide any evidence of an actual on-site visual inspection of the Hanson quarry at Red Hill to ensure compliance with the various rehabilitation plans submitted by Hanson?
- (11) If yes to (10), when and specifically where was the actual on-site inspection(s) performed, and by whom?
- (12) Can DEC verify that an on-site assessment for compliance with visual impact undertakings or location of the quarry were ever performed?
- (13) If yes to (12), when and where was the actual on-site inspection(s) performed, and by whom?
- (14) Will the Minister instruct the DEC to use the Thompson Palmer February 1999 plan in their possession as a basis upon which to conduct an on-site visit to visually affected private land to the northeast, specifically Teewana, to determine compliance with and effectiveness of that plan?
- (15) Will the Minister agree to report the findings of DEC inspection to Parliament in the next 30 days?
- (16) What efforts, if any, have been made by DEC to ensure compliance by Hanson with undertakings, rehabilitation plans, and ministerial requirements as they pertain to the Hanson quarry at Red Hill?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

The Department of Environment and Conservation has advised that the Ombudsman is currently investigating a complaint about the Department's handling of the Red Hill Quarry and that most of its files are currently with the Ombudsman. This limits the extent to which some of the questions can be answered, particularly where evidence has been requested.

- (1) There has been a considerable history regarding the exact location and extent of the quarry approved in 1991, and the current area of disturbance. This was addressed in the Environmental Protection Authority's bulletin number 1152 released in November 2004 and approvals granted by the Minister for the Environment under section 45c of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 in January 2006 and September 2006. DEC has advised that the current area of disturbance is considered to be in accordance with the existing approvals.

- (2) The Department primarily uses Annual Environmental Reports submitted by Hanson as part of its environmental audit programme.
- (3) No, not since the latest approved changes to the project boundaries, which occurred on 22 September 2006.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) See the answer to (3).
- (6) Hanson is proposing to enlarge the disturbance area to a total of approximately 160 hectares; that is an increase of about 80 hectares from the existing project.
- (7) The files necessary to answer this are with the Ombudsman.
- (8) The files necessary to answer this are with the Ombudsman.
- (9) See the answer to (8).
- (10) The files necessary to answer this are with the Ombudsman.
- (11) See the answer to (10).
- (12) The files necessary to answer this are with the Ombudsman.
- (13) See the answer to (12).
- (14) No, compliance will be determined in relation to the current project description and the environmental conditions as amended on 21 December 2005.
- (15) See the answer to (14).
- (16) DEC has monitored the Red Hill Quarry by reviewing annual reports provided by the proponent and by carrying out site inspections. The details of the site inspections cannot be provided as the necessary files are with the Ombudsman.