

LAKE CLIFTON QUARRY EXTRACTION

221. Hon MATT BENSON-LIDHOLM to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the recent State Administrative Tribunal decision to approve quarry extraction in Lake Clifton close to the vulnerable stromatolites within Lake Clifton.

- (1) Did the Department of Environment and Conservation formally support the quarry extraction and indicate this to the State Administrative Tribunal; and if yes, on what scientific basis was the proposal supported?
- (2) If no, will the minister provide details of the department's comments on this proposal?
- (3) What impact will any water extraction at the quarry have on Lake Clifton and, more specifically, on the vulnerable stromatolites within the lake?
- (4) Given that this proposal was opposed by the City of Mandurah, numerous members of the local Lake Clifton community and key conservation groups, will the minister intervene in this process before final approval is given to ensure the vulnerable stromatolites in Lake Clifton are protected; and if not, why not?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Department of Environment and Conservation has provided the following advice in respect of lot 5, Old Coast Road, Heron —

- (1) DEC did not make a submission to the State Administrative Tribunal. The reference in the tribunal's decision to DEC correspondence is understood to refer to letters about the proposal that were sent to the City of Mandurah by the former Department of Conservation and Land Management on 26 June 2006 and by DEC on 23 April 2008. The applicant applied to the tribunal for a review of the council's decision to refuse planning consent.
- (2) I table the attached documents. [See paper 3203.]
- (3) DEC issued a clearing permit for the proposed quarry on 3 March 2011. In its clearing permit decision report, DEC stated that assuming the proposed activities do not encourage excessive evapoconcentration of salts, the proposed clearing and subsequent changes to groundwater flow into Lake Clifton is unlikely to adversely impact the Lake Clifton thrombolite threatened ecology community.

In issuing the clearing permit, DEC took into consideration the Environmental Protection Authority's 1998 guidance statement 28, "Guidance for the Assessment of Environmental Factors - Protection of the Lake Clifton Catchment" and concluded that the approved clearing was environmentally acceptable in relation to clearing assessment requirements.

- (4) The appeal period under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 in respect to DEC's clearing permit decision is not yet closed, and the minister, therefore, has no comment at this time.