

MESA "A" AND WARRAMBOO IRON ORE DEPOSITS IN THE PILBARA -
EPA RECOMMENDATION AGAINST MINING

4721. Hon Giz Watson to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

Regarding the Environmental Protection Authority's (EPA) summary for EPA Bulletin 1251 - Mesa A/Warrambo Iron Ore Project, and a newspaper article dated 30 March 2007 titled 'tiny, blind cannibals stand in way' which appeared in the *West Australian*, I ask -

- (1) Is it correct that the EPA bulletin 1251 in part states 'However, the EPA considers the 50m width (up to 200m in some areas) of the rim to be retained to be inadequate for the protection of troglobitic fauna, and landscape and Aboriginal heritage values associated with Mesa A. The EPA is concerned that the narrow width of the rim to be retained may mean that it is not geotechnically stable post mining'?
- (2) If no to (1), will the Minister quote the full text of this document?
- (3) Can the Minister explain how the EPA services unit came to the conclusion that the narrow width of the rim to be retained may mean that it is not geotechnically stable?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) Can the Minister state what specific advice was provided by the EPA services unit to the EPA in relation to the EPA's concern that the narrow width of the rim to be retained may mean that it is not geotechnically stable post-mining?
- (6) If no to (5), why not?
- (7) Is it correct that EPA has identified five new species and that these creatures live between 5 metres and 30 metres below ground level and feed on organic matter that comes down in the rainwater from the roots of surface plants?
- (8) If no to (7), what specifically is correct?
- (9) Can the Minister explain what evidence does the EPA services unit have that these creatures live between 5m and 30 metres below ground level and feed on organic matter that comes down in the rainwater from the roots of surface plants?
- (10) If no to (9), why not?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) The EPA considered that the proponent had not demonstrated that the rim of the mesa would be geotechnically stable in the long term after mining.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) The EPA Service Unit advised the EPA that the long-term geotechnical stability of the remaining rim of the mesa post-mining had not been demonstrated by the proponent.
- (6) Not applicable.
- (7) No.
- (8)-(9) The presence of troglobitic fauna at Mesa A was identified by the proponent. The sampling by the proponent has not yet been able to determine precisely which portion of the mesa profile the species live in. It is expected that the species rely on organic matter derived from the surface but this remains to be confirmed.
- (10) Not applicable.

Notes:

- (i) The EPA assessed the proposal by the Robe River Mining Company and released its report and recommendations (EPA Bulletin 1251) on 26 March 2007. This report was subject to a 14 day appeal period. Appeals have been lodged on the EPA report. These appeals will be considered by the Office of the Appeals Convenor as part of the appeals process.