

KALTAILS TAILINGS DAM — SEEPAGE OF HYPERSALINE WATER

5965. Hon Paul Llewellyn to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

I refer to the Kaltails tailings dam and to various documents which may exist on files including a facsimile message from Normandy Kaltails Pty Ltd dated 29 April 1997 to Caroline Raphael, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and a letter dated 4 April 1997, signed by Andrew Baker from the DEP addressed to Mr Jim Kendal, and I ask —

- (1) Is it correct that part of the facsimile dated 29 April 1997 states, ‘W1: OK, W2: I’m unsure of the relevance of this condition. Any facility cannot be constructed without a formal submission and assessment by the appropriate authorities and would be covered by section 8 of the *Tailings Treatment (Kalgoorlie) Agreement Act 1998*. Why have it as an operating condition’?
- (2) If no to (1), will the Minister quote the full text from this facsimile dated 29 April 1997?
- (3) Is it correct that part of the facsimile dated 29 April 1997 states, ‘Barry is participating in a review of the ANZECC guidelines for water quality and has agreed to consider Goldfields groundwater as a ‘special case’ where low ph and high salinity render it unusable for any other purpose other than mineral processing. Quite apart from the consideration of what standards should apply to such waters, we know that high salinity can interfere with analysis and reduce the reliability of any data which is generated.’?
- (4) If no to (3), will the Minister quote the full text from this facsimile dated 29 April 1997?
- (5) Is it correct that part of the letter dated 4 April 1997 states, ‘Tailings dam seepage, rising water levels to the North and East of the tailings storage indicate seepage occurring. I further understand that four additional abstraction bores are not operational to recover seepage losses.’?
- (6) If no to (5), will the Minister quote the full text from this letter dated 4 April 1997?
- (7) Will the Minister table copies of the facsimile message from Normandy Kaltails Pty Ltd dated 29 April 1997 to Caroline Raphael, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and a letter dated 4 April 1997 signed by Andrew Baker from the DEP addressed to Mr Jim Kendal?
- (8) If no to (7), why not?
- (9) For how long in years has the DEP been aware that high salinity can interfere with analysis and reduce the reliability of any data which is generated in saline to hypersaline water?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1)-(8) The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has advised that the Kaltails Tailings facility has not been active for some years and the records relating to this facility have been archived and stored off-site.

The period in question is more than ten years ago, and I do not support the substantial amount of time and resources it would take DEC to locate this information.

There is also no evidence to suggest that there are any current impacts as a result of this facility and there are no active investigations into Newmont Kaltails in regard to seepage and/or impacts relating to the facility.
- (9) It is common knowledge in science that the analysis of samples may be impacted by salinity levels. Analysis techniques and results need to take this into account and DEC considers this aspect of analysis when reviewing results.