

SOUTHERN QUEEN OF SHEBA ORCHIDS — GULL ROCK NATIONAL PARK

825. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to a 9 August 2019 ABC news article that reported the accidental destruction of southern Queen of Sheba orchids in an area of Gull Rock National Park by Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions staff.

- (1) Approximately how many plants were destroyed?
- (2) What was the cause of the environmental destruction?
- (3) How will DBCA work more closely with local conservation groups following this incident?
- (4) What is the status of Ramelius Resources' proposal to clear 48.8 hectares of land adjacent to the Edna May mine near Westonia, which has been delayed due to the potential disturbance of four native *Eremophila resinosa* plants?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Approximately 30 plants were disturbed.
- (2) An unauthorised existing track that was 60 metres in length had been historically used for illegal dumping of rubbish and abandoned vehicles. Under the supervision of Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions staff, the cleared track was rehabilitated and closed by ripping and heaping soils with a bobcat. No disturbance took place in the vegetated areas adjacent to the track. DBCA was not aware of the orchids on the track and had no intention of disturbing them.
- (3) DBCA staff have met with representatives from the local orchid group, and committed to improved communications and processes for data sharing on orchid locations. DBCA is working closely with volunteers in the local community, the Western Australian Native Orchid Study and Conservation Group and Adopt an Orchid project volunteers to minimise the likelihood of an occurrence of this type of event in the future.

Honourable member, the next part of the question should have been referred to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum; however, I have sought an answer from him and I provide that.

- (4) The Minister for Mines and Petroleum has advised that the native vegetation clearing permit for 48.8 hectares was refused on 1 November 2018. A new native vegetation clearing permit for 16.6 hectares is currently under assessment with the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety.

[Interruption.]

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: I would hate to enforce what our previous President might have had in place and confiscate the phone!