

ENVIRONMENT — ASBESTOS — PENGUIN ISLAND

691. Mr R.S. Love to the Minister for Environment; Climate Action; Racing and Gaming:

I refer to media on 16 and 17 December 2019 relating to asbestos off the coast of Penguin Island, “roughly the size of half a footy oval”, and the promise from the Premier to clean up that asbestos:

- (a) How much asbestos was identified at the site;
- (b) Has all the asbestos been removed from the site:
 - (i) If no, how much remains;
- (c) Did the removal request go out to tender and who was the successful tender;
- (d) Has an audit been undertaken to see if there is other asbestos on Penguin Island:
 - (i) One what date(s) did the audit occur;
 - (ii) How much other asbestos was identified;
 - (iii) Please table the plan to remediate the asbestos located on Penguin Island; and
 - (iv) What is the expected cost to remediate any remaining asbestos on Penguin Island;
- (e) If minimal or no action has been taken since 2019:
 - (i) Has the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation undertaken or contracted for an environmental assessment to determine the impact the last 3 years of inaction;
 - (ii) Is there an action plan to remediate the site(s)? If yes please table;
 - (iii) When is a tender going to be made public; and
 - (iv) What is the expected cost of remediation; and
- (f) Has the State Government sought advice from the State Solicitor’s Office on whether there is any liability due to any inaction around asbestos either on Penguin Island or off the coast of Penguin Island?

Mr R.R. Whitby replied:

- (a) A total of 232 pieces of asbestos were identified at the site, half was located in the water with the remainder on the beaches. The largest piece was 200mm x 100mm with the average piece being around 50mm square.
- (b) All identified asbestos was removed from the site; daily inspections of beaches continue during the visitor season (October to June) to identify any further asbestos that may be uncovered as a result of coastal processes.
- (c) No.
- (d) Yes.
 - (i) Between 17–31 December 2019. Daily inspections of beaches at Penguin Island continue during the visitor season (October to June) to identify any further asbestos that may be uncovered because of coastal processes.
 - (ii) Refer to the response to part (a).
 - (iii) Asbestos management on Penguin Island is guided by Department of Health guidelines.
 - (iv) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions manages asbestos on Penguin Island as part of the overall management of the island. It is not possible to provide a specific cost in relation to asbestos removal.
- (e) Management actions remain ongoing. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) continues to consult with the Department of Health in relation to asbestos management on and around Penguin Island and is guided by the ‘*Guidelines for the Assessment, Remediation and Management of Asbestos Contaminated Sites 2021*’. Consistent with these guidelines, the asbestos fragments that remain buried or submerged present little risk to the public if undisturbed.
- (f) No.