

C347

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
(Of which some notice has been given)

Wednesday, 2 April 2014

Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Agriculture and Food representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

I refer photos located at <http://www.robinchapple.com/qdata> of unfenced abandoned mining shafts referred to as "Google Goldfields Highway Mining Hole 1" located at 30.2m from edge of the Goldfields Highway, to the East, at Longitude 30°16'29.34"S and Latitude 121°14'37.88"E and "1 Walton Street Hole 5" and "2 Walton Street Hole 5" showing 5 holes located 70 meters East of Menzies Primary School in which 2 Shafts are partly covered and the others are open which also have residences within 40 meters, and I ask.

1. Are these shafts on the abandoned mine site register?
2. If yes to 1.) why are they not filled in?
3. If yes to 1.) why are they not banded?
4. If yes to 1.) why are they not fenced?
5. If no to 1.) why not?
6. Given the proximity of these unfenced shafts to public access what urgent action will the Minister take to ensure that they pose no risk to the public?

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

The Department of Mines and Petroleum (DMP) advises:

1. Yes. These shafts are on the abandoned mine site register. Google Goldfields Highway Mining Hole 1's register code is CDS3478_0054; 1 Walton Street Hole 5 and 2 Walton Street Hole 5's register codes are CDS38899, CDS38895, CDS38893, CDS38892 and CDS38891. The abandoned mine site register is a publicly-accessible database on the DMP website.
2. With more than 130 years of mining heritage in Western Australia, there are many historical mine features that were abandoned before the current strict environmental rehabilitation obligations were in place. There have been very limited funds provided by government over the years to address abandoned mine sites, with only the very high risk sites addressed. The recently established

Mining Rehabilitation Fund; by my Government, will, for the first time, create a perpetual fund so that the State Government can rehabilitate abandoned mine sites in Western Australia, starting with the high risk sites.

3. - 4.

See answer to question 2.

5. Not applicable

6. Unfortunately, the Government cannot provide a guarantee that the 10 000 documented abandoned mine features pose no risk. It is also important to note that funds for addressing these legacy mines can only come from the interest earned on the funds in the Mining Rehabilitation Fund (MRF). The available funds must be applied to the high risk sites.

DMP will reassess the risk rating for the legacy sites and prioritise them accordingly for rehabilitation action.

