

KALGOORLIE CONSOLIDATED GOLD MINES PTY LTD — COMMUNITY CONCERNS IN RELATION
TO EXCESSIVE NOISE LEVELS

6021. Hon Paul Llewellyn to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

I refer to questions on notice Nos 3206 of 1 December 2005 and 90 of 22 August 2002; a letter dated 2 June 1995 from the Department of Environmental Protection addressed to Mr J Baker of Boulder titled 'Noise from KCGM Operations, Kalgoorlie'; the expansion proposal by KCGM operator for Newmont Mining and Barrick Gold Stage 3 mine waste and dumps; an application to increase noise levels under the *Environmental Protection Noise Regulations 1997*; newspaper articles titled 'Is it the pits for Kal?', 'Spread of mine sparks fears' which appeared on page 71 of *the Sunday Times* 2 March 2008 and 'Open For Business: the mine that's swallowing a town' which appeared on page 1 of *the Weekend Australian* of 9 February 2008, and I ask —

- (1) Is it correct that part of the letter dated 2 June 1995 referred to above states 'I anticipate the new noise control Regulations will be introduced later this year, and do not consider it appropriate to modify the noise level standards for KCGM until after they have come into force. KCGM like all other industries in Western Australia, will be expected to comply with the requirements of these new regulations once they become law.'?
- (2) If no to (1), will the Minister quote the full text from the letter dated 2 June 1995?
- (3) Will the Minister table a copy of the letter dated 2 June 1995 referred to above?
- (4) Why has the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) made those people those living closest to the mining operations for over 17 years suffer with excessive noise despite complaints without any form of regulatory enforcement to reduce and lower noise levels during this period of time?
- (5) If no to (4), why not?
- (6) Can the Minister explain why the DEC formerly the Department of Environment mislead Mr J Baker and the community after receiving complaints in 1995 by apparently stating 'KCGM like all other industries in Western Australia, will be expected to comply with the requirements of these regulations once they become law', given now KCGM is applying to increase the noise levels over and above the assigned levels under the *Environmental Protection Noise Regulations 1997*?
- (7) If no to (6), why not?
- (8) Will the Minister reject the two northern waste dumps as shown in red, page 6 Bulletin No. 1273 of December 2007, and others closer to Boulder as being environmentally unacceptable to protect the amenity and community from noise emissions in Williamstown, Ninga Mia and other parts of Kalgoorlie Boulder?
- (9) If no to (8), why not?
- (10) Can the Minister state the names of all the other companies and locations of industries in Western Australia which have been given permission under the *Environmental Protection Noise Regulations 1997* to vary and increase the noise emission levels by up to 11-15dba in the evening and 1 — 5 dba in the day?
- (11) If no to (10), why not?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1) The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) has advised that the letter to which the question refers has been archived. The period in question is more than twelve years ago, and the Minister does not support DEC spending the substantial amount of time and resources it would take to locate this information.
- (2)-(3) Not applicable.
- (4) DEC has advised that complaints about KCGM's operation in Kalgoorlie were received by the former Departments of Environmental Protection and Environment during the period in question. These records are not easily accessible and the Minister does not support DEC spending the substantial amount of time and resources it would take to locate this information. Since its establishment on 1 July 2006, DEC has received some complaints associated with airblast levels, that is, noise level resulting from blasting and vibration. However, these levels have been within the regulations and the Australian Standards.
- (5) Not applicable.

- (6) DEC has advised that information relating to complaints received by the former departments has been archived. The period in question is more than twelve years ago, and the Minister does not support DEC spending the substantial amount of time and resources it would take to locate this information.
- (7) Not applicable.
- (8) There is currently an appeal against the Environmental Protection Authority's report on the proposed Fimiston Gold Mine Operations Extension (Stage 3) and Mine Closure Planning, which includes the northern waste dumps. The Minister is waiting for advice from the Appeals Convenor before making his decision on the environmental acceptability of the waste dumps.
- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) The Environmental Protection (Noise) Regulations 1997 make provision for permission to be granted for a range of activities to exceed the assigned levels. Many of these permissions have been granted by local government CEOs under delegation, covering activities ranging from construction work to rock concerts, and it is not proposed to list them all here. Seven approvals have been granted by the Minister under Regulation 17. The following approvals have provided for noise variations within the range stated in the question:
- KCGM — Mt Charlotte Kalgoorlie;
 - Wesfarmers Premier Coal — Collie;
 - Western Power Corporation — 15 of 34 approved transmission substations in various locations; and
 - Verve Energy Corporation — Geraldton.
- (11) Not applicable.