

KALGOORLIE CONSOLIDATED GOLD MINES PTY LTD - SULPHUR DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

4963. Hon Giz Watson to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

Regarding a newspaper article concerning Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines (KCGM) who manages the gold mine on behalf of mine owners Barrick Gold and Newmont Australia, dated Monday 23 April 2007, which appeared in *The Australian* newspaper titled 'Kalgoorlie Admits Pollution' and another newspaper article which appeared in *The Kalgoorlie Miner* dated 26 May 2007, titled 'Probe into sulphur emissions', I ask -

- (1) Is it correct that complaints in May 2007 of a thick fog and sulphur smells in Karkurla Park were confirmed by information provided by KCGM on behalf of the Kalgoorlie Air Monitoring Network?
- (2) If no to (1), what is correct?
- (3) Has the Department of Environment and Conservation ascertained the predominant cause of the sulphur dioxide emissions in May 2007?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) If yes to (3), which company predominantly contributed to the sulphur dioxide complaints which occurred in May 2007?
- (6) Will the company be prosecuted for breaching licence conditions or any other section of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* for causing elevated sulphur dioxide emissions in Kalgoorlie in the month of May 2007?
- (7) If no to (6), why not?
- (8) Can the Minister state what KCGM has specifically done after the May 2005 sulphur dioxide licence exceedance which occurred two years earlier, to prevent any further breaches of licence conditions or breaches to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986*?
- (9) If no to (8), why not?
- (10) Can the Minister state the quantity of sulphur dioxide that was detected at monitoring stations in May 2007, and how this figure relates to the legal Environmental Protection Policy limit and standard?
- (11) If no to (10), why not?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1) Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines, BHP Billiton and Barrick Gold (Kanowna) confirmed that on 22 May 2007, sulphur dioxide was measured at 0.239 parts per million (ppm). This is greater than the 0.2ppm standard, which can not be exceeded more than twice in 2007, but is less than the 0.25ppm limit.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) DEC is reviewing information available for the event. Current indications are that Barrick (Kanowna) predominately contributed to the event.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) See the answer to (3).
- (6) At this stage no investigation by the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is underway as no breach of licence conditions is considered to have occurred.
- (7) No breach of licence conditions is determined to have occurred. The licence conditions state that the 0.2ppm standard cannot be exceeded more than twice in 2007. The number of times the standard of 0.2ppm can be exceeded has been reduced from three exceedances in 2004, and will be reduced to one exceedance in 2008.
- (8) DEC understands that KCGM has improved its air quality management strategy in response to the 2005 event. In addition, the Kalgoorlie Air Monitoring Network is installing additional air quality monitoring equipment near Coolgardie to measure wind speeds and direction.
- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) See the answer to (1).
- (11) Not applicable.