

BHP BILLITON PILBARA OPERATIONS — ASBESTOS MANAGEMENT

779. Hon KATE DOUST to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:

I refer to BHP Billiton's iron ore mining operations in the Pilbara.

- (1) Is asbestos management part of the approved mine plans for the company's mines?
- (2) If yes to (1), does the mines safety branch of the Department of Mines and Petroleum have a process to assess these management plans in respect of asbestos?
- (3) Is the asbestos content of the company's ore being monitored; and, if yes —
 - (a) by whom and how is this being monitored; and
 - (b) what is the asbestos content of the ore that is being mined in each of the company's mines?
- (4) Is there monitoring for asbestos in the loading of the ore for export; and, if so, by whom and how is this being monitored?
- (5) Has there been any asbestos exposure to the community during loading?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. The Department of Mines and Petroleum advises —

- (1) Any company, including BHP, that is likely to encounter asbestos or other fibrous minerals during mining operations is required to have an asbestos management plan.
- (2) The department has developed a fibrous mineral management guideline that includes the requirements of an asbestos management plan for the mining industry. Asbestos management plans are submitted by companies where required to the Department of Mines and Petroleum. These are evaluated by DMP inspectors and verified on site from time to time.
- (3) DMP is advised when asbestos is first encountered in a mining operation.
 - (a) This department does not undertake monitoring of either BHP or any other company's ore. The obligation to determine the presence of asbestos in its ore is the responsibility of the company.
 - (b) This question should be referred to BHP.
- (4) The individual company is responsible for monitoring for asbestos or other contaminants during ship-loading operations. Monitoring results are submitted to DMP.
- (5) I am advised that the department has not received any advice from BHP that members of the community have been exposed to asbestos during ship-loading of iron ore.