

UNFENCED ABANDONED MINING SHAFTS

**403. Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE to the minister representing the Minister for Mines and Petroleum:**

I refer to photos posted on my website of unfenced abandoned mining shafts referred to as “Google Goldfields Highway Mining Hole 1”, located 30.2 metres from the edge of Goldfields Highway to the east, at longitude 30°16’29.34”S and latitude 121°14’37.88”E, and to images titled “1 Walton Street Hole 5” and “2 Walton Street Hole 5”, which show five holes located 70 metres east of Menzies Primary School, in which two shafts are partly covered and the others open, and which also have residences within 40 metres.

- (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 bunded?
- (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?

**Hon KEN BASTON replied:**

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

- (1) Yes. These shafts are on the abandoned mine site register. The register code for Google Goldfields Highway Mining Hole 1 is CDS3478\_0054; and the register codes for 1 Walton Street Hole 5 and 2 Walton Street Hole 5 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, many historical mine features were abandoned before the current strict environmental rehabilitation obligations were in place. Very limited funds have been provided by government over the years to address abandoned mine sites, with only the very high-risk sites being addressed. The mining rehabilitation fund, recently established by this 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 (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 come only from the interest earned on the funds in the mining rehabilitation fund. 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.