

ESPERANCE PORT — NICKEL AND COPPER CONCENTRATE EXPORT

504. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the letter the minister received from the community group Locals for Esperance Development dated 6 June 2015 regarding a proposal to export 220 000 tonnes of nickel concentrate and 50 000 tonnes of copper concentrate through the port of Esperance each year for 10 years using an open loading system.

- (1) Is it true that nickel and nickel compounds are class 1 carcinogens when inhaled?
- (2) Is it also true that soluble copper, like the copper concentrate to be exported, is highly toxic to aquatic organisms and can concentrate in the food chain?
- (3) Has the minister met with or spoken to the Locals for Esperance Development to address their concerns?

Mr W.R. Marmion: Not as bad as lead!

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

(1)–(3) It is not as bad as lead; I thank the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

Mr P.T. Miles interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Wanneroo!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Without going too far into that specific issue, the member for Gosnells asked an incredibly specific question. He refers to a letter that he said was sent to us on 6 June. That letter has not yet come to my direct attention; we have been focusing on estimates and other budget matters for the past week. However, as with any proposal, it will be required to go through the full assessment process, and potentially be referred to the Environmental Protection Authority for a decision on a level of assessment there; and, if not, it will go through part V of the Environmental Protection Act through the Department of Environment Regulation or regulator to the appropriate level. The last question the member for Gosnells asked me in this house was similarly very specific and again related to a letter from a third party. Interestingly, I looked at it and, as it turned out, it related to a letter I had received from maybe the member for Gosnells' colleague in the upper house Hon Robin Chapple. When I investigated that further, I had not received a letter from the member for Gosnells himself.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr A.P. JACOB: When I investigated the issue further, it turned out to be entirely unfounded. We are referring to a letter that I understand was sent less than two weeks ago—potentially 12 days ago—and I will look into it further.