

PREMIER — DREDGING — ROEBUCK BAY

427. Hon Robin Chapple to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to the \$7 million allocated to dredging Roebuck Bay and the statement the Premier made on the radio on 26 October 2017, which described the dredging as "...it's basically getting rid of some rocks...it's not that environmentally significant...", and I ask:

- (a) (a) is the Premier aware that part of Roebuck Bay was designated a "Wetland of International Importance" under the Ramsar Convention in June 1990, an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources;
- (b) (b) is the Premier aware that the Bay is used by up to 300,000 shorebirds annually, is a feeding ground and transit area on migration for Loggerhead and Green Turtles which are both on the international threatened species Red list;
- (c) (c) is the Premier aware that the Bay is a nursery and refuge for Sawfish which are listed as Totally Protected under the *Western Australian Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and also listed as Critically Endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources or IUCN Red List (IUCN 2008);
- (d) (d) is the Premier aware that Roebuck Bay is Australia's most important wetland in terms of the diversity of wader species it supports in internationally significant numbers;
- (e) (e) is the Premier aware that the proposed dredging is within 500 metres of crucially important seagrass beds that provide important feeding grounds for protected migratory dugongs and green turtles as well as a nursery for recreationally important fish and crabs;
- (f) (f) is the Premier aware that the second largest snubfin dolphin population in the world lives in Roebuck Bay and that they are vulnerable to noise disturbance;
- (g) (g) is the Premier aware that the proposed dredging is within 3.7kms of the Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park;
- (h) (h) is the Premier aware that water and sediment quality are a key performance indicator in the Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park and that despite the large tidal ranges, some areas of the bay are not well flushed and modelled retention times for nutrients in the water column can be more than 20 days at certain times of the year;
- (i) (i) is the Premier aware that the proposed dredging is 4kms away from Paspaley's pearling lease;
- (j) (j) is the Premier aware that according to the Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park management plan, it is generally understood that strong tidal currents flow through the Roebuck Deeps, where Channel Rock is situated, from north-west to south-east and back on flood and ebb tides respectively and that the Paspaley pearling lease is situated at the south east end of Roebuck Deeps;
- (k) (k) is the Premier aware that the Port of Broome has stated that 85,000 cubic metres of seabed as a minimum will need to be dredged including 15,000 cubic metres around the wharf;
- (l) (l) will there be any blasting taking place;
- (m) (m) does the Premier still believe that the dredging programme is about "...basically getting rid of some rocks..." and that it's "...not that environmentally significant...";
- (n) (n) will the Premier ensure that the Environmental Protection Authority assesses this proposal at the Public Environmental Review level in order to make sure that the dredging does not have negative impacts on seagrass beds and the dugong and turtle that feed on them, the marine park, the Paspaley pearling lease and important recreation fish species; and
- (o) (o) if no to (n), why not?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (a)-(o) The Premier is aware that the \$7m budget for the dredging of Broome Port to allow for all-hours access for cruise liners, includes funds to conduct the necessary environmental studies for the environmental assessment process.