

SHEFFIELD RESOURCES LTD — THUNDERBIRD DEPOSIT

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

I refer to the heavy mineral sands explorer Sheffield Resources Ltd.

- (1) Is the minister aware of the company's recent drilling activity at the Thunderbird deposit, located near Derby in the Canning Basin region of Western Australia, over an area of around seven kilometres by four kilometres?
- (2) Does the company have the necessary approvals from the Environmental Protection Authority and other agencies to conduct its exploration activity, which includes substantial land clearing and the drilling of more than 280 holes to collect samples?
- (3) Have any environmental surveys been conducted in the area, and will the minister table all available baseline environmental data to show that no harm is being caused?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) Does the minister support the water intensive strip mining practices that would inevitably follow if approvals for mineral sand extraction were granted?

**Hon KEN BASTON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. On behalf of the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, I provide the following response —

- (1) Yes. The Department of Mines and Petroleum has approved exploration activity by Sheffield Resources Ltd through two programs of work, registration identification 33715 and 39294, on two exploration licences, EO4/2083 and EO4/2159.
- (2) DMP has approved exploration proposed by Sheffield Resources Ltd on the basis that the proposed activity was not environmentally significant, as detailed above. However, any questions regarding approvals issued by other agencies should be directed to the relevant minister.
- (3)–(4) Baseline surveys were not required to be submitted to DMP prior to the exploration activities proposed by Sheffield Resources Ltd. DMP would require baseline surveys in instances where there is intensive exploration or development, or where the area is environmentally sensitive.
- (5) Prior to any mining being conducted on tenure granted under the Mining Act 1978, a mining proposal is required to be submitted to DMP and approved by the executive director of the environment division. Each mining proposal must detail how the environmental impacts of the proposal will be minimised and managed, and is assessed on an individual basis. Mining proposals will also be referred by DMP to the Environmental Protection Authority if the proposal triggers criteria for referral listed in the memorandum of understanding between these two agencies.