

PUMPED HYDRO — COLLIE

**423. Dr D.J. HONEY to the Minister for Energy:**

Some notice of this question has been given.

I note the proposal to repurpose the coalmine pits and overburden heaps at Collie for pumped hydro.

- (1) What is the estimated cost of remediating the Collie coalmine sites when mining ceases?
- (2) Who are the proponents for converting this area to pumped hydro?
- (3) Who would be responsible for the long-term remediation of these sites if they are converted?
- (4) Has any government agency determined whether the mine sites are geologically suitable for pumped hydro?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON replied:**

I draw the member's attention to standing order 75(1), which states that questions may be asked of —

Ministers regarding matters under the Minister's administrative responsibility;

None of the issues that the member has raised in his question are under the administrative responsibility of the Minister for Energy. However, I am happy to answer on behalf of the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, or perhaps the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, because most of the matters relate to the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade, and there are a few that relate to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum.

- (1) What is the estimated cost of remediating the Collie coalmine sites when mining ceases? The government does not have an estimated remediation cost for the Collie mine sites. This is the responsibility of the mining companies. However, it is recognised that the remediation costs will be substantial.
- (2) Who has expressed interest in converting this area to pumped hydro? I understand that at least two proponents have put proposals forward to government for consideration. However, I am also aware that there are other proponents that are proposing pumped hydro not using Collie coalmine pits.
- (3) Who will be responsible for the long-term remediation of these sites if the area is converted to pumped hydro? Will the current mine operators retain responsibility for final remediation of the sites? Consistent with the state agreements that apply to the mines, and also the Mining Act, responsibility for remediation is the responsibility of the mining companies. Of course, it would be open for the parties to agree to a different arrangement should there be merit in conducting the business of government in that manner. I point out that I do not have any control over any of those matters because they are matters for the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade.
- (4) Has any government agency determined whether the mine sites are geologically suitable for pumped hydro? Some investigations have been made previously regarding the viability of pumped hydro at the Collie mine sites. I remind members that I talked about that in estimates three years ago. Some of that was about the question of geological suitability. I make the point that the government is not making any proposal in respect of pumped hydro in the Collie mine voids. There are companies that say that they can bring forward those proposals; and, if they do, the government will entertain those proposals.