

**Question on Notice**  
**No. 214**  
**Asked on Wednesday, 27 February 2008**

QUESTION:

**MS STONE** asked the Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation (Mr McNamara) — With reference to silica dust from quarries in the Redlands area—

(1) How is the Environmental Protection Agency assessing the risk?

(2) Has the Environmental Protection Agency investigated the impact on residents in the Cornubia and Shailer Park areas and, if so, what was the outcome?

ANSWER:

(1) & (2)

The issue of silica emissions from quarries was raised by members of the Redlands community last year when proposals to expand the Karreman and Barro quarries in Redland Shire were being considered. At that time, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reviewed existing silica dust information with assistance from Queensland Health and found no evidence that silica levels represent a significant health risk to the Redlands community.

This view was based on consideration of expert technical assessments, prepared by the Department of Mines and Energy's, Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station (SIMTARS), showing that on-site, air-borne crystalline silica levels were below maximum limits required to protect the occupational health and safety of workers in quarries and mines.

In light of the recent community health concerns, and in keeping with a Memorandum of Understanding between the EPA and Queensland Health, senior EPA and Queensland Health representatives met and resolved a program to investigate this issue further.

The EPA and Queensland Health have commenced a joint dust monitoring program to determine nuisance dust deposition rates, suspended particulate matter (PM10) emissions and so-called "respirable" silica concentrations at suitable locations near the quarries in the Redlands area.

The EPA will take advice from Queensland Health on the screening level to apply in evaluating the respirable crystalline silica monitoring data. Nuisance dust deposition and PM10 monitoring data will be assessed against operating limits set for the quarries under the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

The dust monitoring program is being conducted at five sites; four in the community close to where impacts of the quarrying industries may be expected to occur, and one background site which is the EPA Springwood monitoring station. The Springwood site is in the vicinity of Cornubia and Shailer Park, which will allow for the adequate capture of data in relation to those communities. The program has been designed to ensure samples are captured on days when blasting occurs and will run, initially, over one month. Both the EPA and Queensland Health are prepared to monitor beyond this month should more data be required.

Detailed results of the EPA/Queensland Health study will be made available to the community as results come to hand.