

## QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 989

asked on Wednesday, 12 October 2022

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**MR P WEIR** ASKED THE MINISTER FOR RESOURCES (HON S STEWART)—

QUESTION:

With reference to resource reserves, jointly managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Department of Resources—

Will the Minister advise what procedure is followed by the department in regard to regulation and compliance when notified of illegal fossicking in Far North Queensland on a resource reserve where no fossicking is permitted?

ANSWER:

The term 'illegal fossicking' is used broadly to describe an activity where people are allegedly undertaking prospecting, panning or using metal detector equipment in resource reserves where these activities are not permitted.

The term can also describe an activity where people are allegedly undertaking prospecting, panning or using metal detector equipment with or without a licence, either:

- in areas where permission has not been granted by either the landholder or a relevant tenure holder, either with or without a current fossicking licence
- where the activity is being undertaken other than for recreational, tourism or educational purposes, either with or without a current fossicking licence
- undertaking fossicking activities in any area without holding a current fossicking licence.

In all contexts, any specific reports of illegal fossicking on resources reserves are dealt with in the following way.

The initial notification is recorded by the Engagement and Compliance Unit in the Department of Resources in its customer database before being referred to a departmental officer for review.

Depending on the extent of details provided, the officer will contact the notifier to obtain further information including any evidence that may have been collected and any other pertinent details to support the complaint.

In some instances, the department is unable to take any compliance action due to the lack of information provided and the transient nature of people allegedly undertaking unauthorised fossicking activities.

The department works in partnership with the Department of Environment and Science which also has officers appropriately authorised to undertake compliance actions relating to reserves. Information is shared between the two departments where appropriate to ensure effective use of resources.

Any person found to be fossicking illegally in a reserve may be removed from the reserve and can have their fossicker's licence cancelled.

Suspected breaches of the *Fossicking Act 1994* which include allegation of criminal activity will be referred to the Queensland Police Service.

For those matters that cannot be actioned immediately or that do not have substantiated evidence, the notification is used as intelligence to drive any future proactive compliance inspections or other targeted activities in line with the department's Regulatory Strategy 2021–2025.