

DRUMMOND NATURE RESERVE, FRESHWATER CLAYPAN WETLANDS

1289. Mr J.J.M. BOWLER to the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is the minister aware that very few claypan wetland areas remain in the Western Australian wheatbelt?
- (2) What is being done to protect these few remaining areas?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)-(2) I was lucky to visit the Drummond Nature Reserve, which is between Bolgart and Toodyay. The Drummond Nature Reserve houses two of the last remaining freshwater claypan wetlands in Western Australia. To protect the biodiversity of that region, about two years ago I was happy to announce the formation of the Drummond Natural Diversity Recovery Catchment. That group has done excellent work to protect those wetlands in the two years it has been running. It has planted about 80 000 seedlings to help surface water management and to provide a buffer. It has also installed 44 bores to check the quality of the ground water in the region. The group has instituted a fine remnant vegetation protection plan. Quite a lot of fencing is being erected to protect the remnant vegetation and that work will continue over the next 12 months. I am delighted with the cooperation of the Shires of Victoria Plains and Toodyay in the formation of a local catchment group. The Government has provided a recovery catchment officer.

I am also particularly pleased that in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, the Government will now look at what can be done to rehabilitate saline-affected land in that catchment, in tune with all the other biodiversity measures that are in place. The biodiversity of this nature reserve is reflected in the fact that around 430 different species of plants grow in this tiny nature reserve. That is about a third of all the species of plants grown in the United Kingdom, which illustrates how rich the biodiversity is. In particular, I congratulate the people on the ground who are working with the local governments and the State Government to achieve a good outcome for biodiversity for these claypans.