

FIONA STANLEY HOSPITAL SITE — ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

419. Hon Giz Watson to the Minister for Transport representing the Minister for Health

I refer to the site for the new Fiona Stanley Hospital, and ask —

- (1) Did the flora and vegetation assessment for the site indicate that development will or may have a negative impact on any critically endangered species?
- (2) If yes to (1) —
 - (a) which species;
 - (b) what is the nature of the risk; and
 - (c) how will the risk to each species be managed?
- (3) Did the fauna assessment for the site indicate that development of the site will, or may have a negative impact on any fauna species, whether specifically on site or in the metropolitan area generally?
- (4) If yes to (3) —
 - (a) which species;
 - (b) what is the nature of the risk; and
 - (c) how will the risk to each species be managed?
- (5) Have any previously cleared sites been considered as an alternative site for the development?
- (6) If yes to (5), for each alternative site, —
 - (a) what is the location of the site?
 - (b) what are the reasons it was rejected?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) (a)-(c) The fauna assessment found that the vegetated areas of the site are currently used by a range of fauna species. Specifically on site, the extent of habitat for these species will be decreased and there is a possibility of fauna being injured during construction works. To mitigate these risks, the project has implemented the following initiatives:
 - Reptile, frog, and Southern Brown Bandicoot (Quenda) trapping and relocation programs in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) prior to clearing activities;
 - Developing the land in stages over two years to ensure that not all habitat is removed at one time;
 - Clearing along a 'front' to provide the opportunity for fauna to move away from the clearing line into adjacent vegetated areas;
 - Procedures have been developed addressing actions for personnel should fauna be encountered during construction and a training program for Contractors implemented;
 - Funding has been provided to the Wildcare Helpline that personnel and the local community are advised to contact should injured fauna be encountered;
 - Retaining two areas of vegetation on site for conservation purposes;
 - Using local plant species in hospital landscaping and creating habitat niches in open space across the precinct; and
 - Creating constructed wetland habitats in areas of open space of the hospital.

Only one fauna species, the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo, which was found to use the site for foraging, is potentially affected at the metropolitan region scale. Clearing may have an impact on the extent of foraging habitat available to the species on the Swan Coastal Plain. Due to this perceived risk, the project was referred to the Australian Government's Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The Federal Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, The Hon Peter Garrett MP, granted approval for the project under Part 9 (section 133) of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) on 7 July 2008. The project was approved subject to the conditions set out in the approval decision. The conditions require the implementation of a range of conservation initiatives, which were proposed by the project to mitigate the potential impact to Carnaby's Black Cockatoo with the intention for there to be a long term benefit to the species as a result of this project. These initiatives incorporate both on-site and off-site measures and include:

- Retention of two areas of high quality foraging habitat within the site as conservation areas. These areas have been fenced and are actively managed and monitored;
- Use of native tree species suitable for Cockatoo foraging in hospital landscaping, such as areas of open space, streetscapes, and plazas. In consultation with the Australian Government's Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, the project is also examining the potential to plant suitable foraging plant species in roof gardens of the hospital. The project has been collecting seed from the site for the past two years and has just completed its 2008-09 harvesting. This seed will be used to propagate seedlings for planting in the hospital precinct;
- Rehabilitation of foraging habitat in Beeliar Regional Park, incorporating the reuse of vegetative material and the topsoil seedbank removed from the hospital site as part of clearing. This work commenced in September 2008 and to date, approximately 10 hectares has been subject to rehabilitation works;
- Commitment to develop a Conservation Agreement under the EPBC Act for the remaining foraging habitat in the surrounding Murdoch Activity Centre. The Fiona Stanley Hospital Project is currently progressing this agreement;
- Acquisition of freehold land to the south of the project site, which supports foraging habitat in excellent condition, for the purpose of conservation. This land will be managed by DEC for conservation purposes;
- Acquisition of freehold land at Clackline that supports important breeding and foraging habitat for the Carnaby's Black Cockatoo in the Wheatbelt. This land has now been purchased by Department of Environment and Conservation which has also commenced the process to include the land in the Clackline Nature Reserve;
- Funding of a research program focusing on obtaining further regional information about:
 - (i) the food resource base for the species on the Swan Coastal Plain and its capacity to support the existing Cockatoo population, and the implications of expected or potential changes; and
 - (ii) how Carnaby's Black Cockatoo uses other resources, such as roosting and watering points, and the influence of connectivity between bushland areas on its movements around the Swan Coastal Plain.
- Funding to support the direct involvement of the community and other stakeholders in a number of environmental initiatives, particularly in the rehabilitation of Beeliar Regional Park, and in the provision of care and rehabilitation facilities for injured Carnaby's Black Cockatoos. The first round of community grants through this funding was awarded in late 2008 and two fauna care facilities have already been distributed funds for cockatoo rehabilitation facilities; and
- Funding of research into critical factors affecting the success of rehabilitating Banksia woodland on the Swan Coastal Plain, an important foraging habitat for Carnaby's Black Cockatoo.

This comprehensive package goes well beyond the expectation of impact and demonstrates a strong commitment to environmental sustainability.

(5) Yes.

(6) (a)-(b) The proposed development of the Fiona Stanley Hospital at Murdoch, Western Australia is a key initiative in the state-wide reform of the Western Australian health system, as detailed by the Health Reform Committee's report in 2004 entitled "A Healthy Future for Western Australians". Recommendation 27 of the report stated that,

A new tertiary hospital should be constructed to service the south of Perth. The preferred location for this hospital is at Murdoch and planning should commence immediately.

Fiona Stanley Hospital will be at the centre of an integrated health, education and research precinct at Murdoch, with links to existing private hospital, local education and training providers, and a state-of-the-art medical research facility. These ancillary services are essential in providing a tertiary healthcare facility that works and is likely to result in improved care and increased patient and staff satisfaction.

The Murdoch site is the best site to achieve this total health precinct in conjunction with a private hospital.

The Health Reform Committee also assessed a site at Cockburn Central in 2004 and this location was subsequently discounted as it did not adequately address all of the required criteria such as:

- Available land for hospital usage;
- Sharing of core health facilities (between public and private health);
- Education and research synergies;
- Adjacent land uses;
- Accessibility;
- Population catchment; and
- Land ownership.