

ELLEN BROOK WETLAND PROJECT

853. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Environment:

Can the minister please update the house on the progress of the Ellen Brook wetland project?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

Certainly. In answering a question last week about publishing results of survey work done of the Swan River, I caught interjections from members opposite about what we are doing in and around nutrient inflows into the Swan and Canning Rivers system, so I thought this would be a very good opportunity to update the house on some of the work we are doing in this space.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the first time. I do not want to hear any more interjections. Some people are on three calls already.

Mr A.P. JACOB: As the member for Swan Hills asked particularly about the Ellen Brook wetland project, indeed, of all the subcatchments that flow into the Swan and Canning Rivers system, Ellen Brook is the largest nutrient contributor. As the nutrients flow into the Swan and Canning Rivers system, they are a large contributor to the algal blooms and fish deaths we sometimes see. A range of on-ground projects have been ongoing, including nutrient filters, the trial of soil amendment products, revegetation works and the fencing of riparian zones, particularly revegetation works in and around riparian zones.

Mr B.S. Wyatt interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park!

Mr A.P. JACOB: In particular the Swan–Canning water quality improvement plan made a strong recommendation for the construction of wetlands around key sites and tributaries flowing into the Swan and Canning Rivers system. This is exactly what we are doing.

Dr A.D. Buti interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, you are now on three calls and nine-tenths!

Mr A.P. JACOB: The first stage of the Ellen Brook wetland project will start this summer with a \$2 million funding commitment from this government. The project will divert a portion of Ellen Brook from the main brook area for treatment using biofilters and vegetated wetland. This project will strip up to one tonne of nutrients per annum.

Mr C.J. Tallentire interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Water diverted through that wetland will pass through nutrient-absorbing biofilters and a vegetated wetland area, with bank stabilisation and revegetation activities. A riffle will be installed as part of these works and will further contribute to the improvement of the water that flows into the Swan River, stripping nutrients out of that water as it flows through. Significantly, we have also used a product called Phoslock, a modified clay material, which was applied to the brook between September and October this year. Phoslock will directly reduce the phosphorous loads that will flow through the Ellen Brook into the Swan River system, particularly from the Ellen Brook catchment area. I look forward to updating the house further on other works we are doing in this space.