

ENVIRONMENT — SOUTH WEST WETLANDS MONITORING PROGRAM

2577. Hon Diane Evers to the Minister for Environment:

In response to the Minister's reply to question on notice 2208, I ask:

- (a) now that the highly significant and long-term South West Wetlands Monitoring Program, which has continued for over 40 years through successive State Governments and collected and analysed data from 105 wetlands and is used in climate change adaptation planning and restoration of hydrological regimes and biodiversity, has been largely terminated by Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) under this Government, how does the Minister plan to provide ongoing scientific-based information and data for conservation of wetlands and landscapes in the south-west, outside of Ramsar sites and the few wetlands that will be covered in the new monitoring program;
- (b) has DBCA informed natural resource managers, including regional groups, catchment organisations and other Government agencies of the changes to the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program:
 - (i) if yes to (b), which stakeholders have been informed of these changes and when were they informed; and
 - (ii) if no to (b), why not;
- (c) given that the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program was funded from consolidated revenue as part of the Government's commitment to the State Salinity Strategy, how does the Minister justify the loss of this funding from salinity management, especially when he has confirmed that some of the funds will be used in other areas of the State where salinity or water-logging is not an issue;
- (d) what are the locations and names of the 35 wetlands where monitoring was undertaken in 2018–19 through complementary programs using permanent gauges established through the south-west monitoring program:
 - (i) who undertook the monitoring referred to in (d);
 - (ii) was any biological data collected in the monitoring referred to in (d);
 - (iii) where does the data currently reside for the monitoring referred to in (d);
 - (iv) is the data collected in the monitoring referred to in (d) publicly available; and
 - (v) if no to (d), why not;
- (e) the Minister has advised that DBCA is “re-focussing wetland monitoring towards Ramsar and other high conservation value wetlands across the State”, and that no fieldwork was undertaken in 2018–19, and I ask:
 - (i) how many wetlands will be monitored under the new wetlands monitoring program;
 - (ii) what are the locations and names of the wetlands to be monitored; and
 - (iii) if details are not available for (e)(i) and (e)(ii), why not, given that changes to the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program were brought into effect by the Director of Science and Conservation at the DBCA in 2018–19 over 12 months ago and fieldwork by DBCA has effectively ceased;
- (f) will the Minister please outline the total amount of funding provided to the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program for the following financial years:
 - (i) 2004–2005;
 - (ii) 2005–2006;
 - (iii) 2006–2007;
 - (iv) 2007–2008;
 - (v) 2008–2009;
 - (vi) 2009–2010;
 - (vii) 2010–2011;
 - (viii) 2011–2012;
 - (ix) 2012–2013;
 - (x) 2013–2014;
 - (xi) 2014–2015;
 - (xii) 2015–2016;
 - (xiii) 2016–2017;

- (xiv) 2017–2018;
- (xv) 2018–2019; and
- (xvi) 2019–2020; and
- (g) will the Minister please outline the total amount of expenditure to the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program for the following financial years:
 - (i) 2004–2005;
 - (ii) 2005–2006;
 - (iii) 2006–2007;
 - (iv) 2007–2008;
 - (v) 2008–2009;
 - (vi) 2009–2010;
 - (vii) 2010–2011;
 - (viii) 2011–2012;
 - (ix) 2012–2013;
 - (x) 2013–2014;
 - (xi) 2014–2015;
 - (xii) 2015–2016;
 - (xiii) 2016–2017;
 - (xiv) 2017–2018;
 - (xv) 2018–2019; and
 - (xvi) 2019–2020?

Hon Stephen Dawson replied:

- (a) Scientific information for wetlands in the south-west is available from the existing data, and future research will be based on assessment of priorities and knowledge gaps.
- (b) (i)–(ii) The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has ongoing engagement with a range of natural resource management groups and communication of changes to the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program have been made through these channels.
- (c) The State Salinity Strategy was released in 2000 to which resources were allocated from consolidated revenue according to the priorities at that time. The budget to implement salinity management under the Strategy was reduced in 2013 by the previous Government.

I am advised that many of the wetlands monitored through the South West Wetlands Monitoring Program were not under threat from secondary salinity and therefore the data collected through the Program was not used to inform salinity management.

The allocation of resources for wetland monitoring continues to be prioritised and is currently being refocussed on Ramsar and other high conservation value wetlands across the State.
- (d) (i)–(ii) [See tabled paper no 3413.]
 - (iii) The data from the wetlands monitored is stored and managed within DBCA.
 - (iv) Data collected by DBCA is available on request.
 - (v) Not applicable.
- (e) (i)–(iii) The new wetlands monitoring program is still under development, and work in 2018–19 was focussed on data management and analysis to inform the program.
- (f)–(g) The funding and expenditure for the specific project called South West Wetlands Monitoring Program is detailed in the tabled paper. DBCA undertakes a range of other wetlands conservation and monitoring activities that are funded through other regional and science programs.