

LAND CLEARING REGULATIONS

2693. Mr M.G. House to the Minister for the Environment

I refer to the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the associated regulations and ask will the Minister advise -

- (a) the circumstances in which a single living tree standing in the middle of a paddock may be removed;
- (b) the scope under which landholders are able to clear land for firebreaks, especially through remnant vegetation;
- (c) the scope under which landholders are able to clear land for fence lines;
- (d) whether logs gathered during the process of cleaning up a paddock can be burned;
- (e) if, on a farming property, naturally-occurring stands of timber (such as white-gum, jarrah and blackbutt) have been isolated from that farming system and managed with a long-term view to milling, will the regulations and the Act allow these trees to be harvested in the future;
- (f) will landholders whose properties have revegetated areas along creek lines and water courses that have led to the establishment of riparian vegetation from what was formerly pasture or a degraded area be able to continue to use that land as he or she sees fit (such as for grazing, stock crossings, stock shelter, chopping it down for firewood); and
- (g) do the regulations or the Act restrict in any way a landholder's ability to construct large dams (for example, 10,000 to 15,000 square metres compared to the average two to three thousand square metre stock dam) on his or her property?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

The draft regulations for the new clearing provisions are currently in the final stages of a lengthy consultation process. The Working Group, Chaired by the Hon Ken Travers, has concluded an intensive round of robust discussions on how to address what are considered to be normal farming practices as well as deliver on our commitments to protect our unique biodiversity.

I expect to receive the final report of the Working Group as well as the Department of Environment advice on the public submissions within the next two weeks. I will then be in a position to finalise the regulations and circulate them back to stakeholders, including Members, before introducing them to Parliament.