

Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy — Statement by Minister for Environment — Motion

Committee was interrupted on the motion moved by Hon Sally Talbot.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Third time lucky, Mr Chair!

The CHAIRMAN: That is true; we will get there.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: The minister did not think he could make 10 minutes last so long, did he?

Hon Simon O'Brien: It always lasts this long.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: The minister is enjoying prolonging the agony. Just before we broke, I was acknowledging the work done by Hon Chris Ellison in what turned out to be a very substantial report. I was noting that what was captured by the responses is both the diversity of views on the future of the Kimberley in an environmental sense and the passion people have brought to the discussion of that topic. Having said that, what disappointed me about the couple of hearings I went to was that Hon Chris Ellison made it clear that his recommendations would be no more than a report to the minister. Hon Chris Ellison has not been empowered to make specific recommendations to the minister about directions to take. That to me is a most disappointing waste of an opportunity. It remains to be seen what the minister will do with this report. The ball is now absolutely squarely in her court. As much as I dislike sporting analogies, that one seems to fit on this occasion. The proof will be seen in what she does with it.

In the time that is available to me, in the context of these statements, many of which were made many months ago and have been noted several times in the past, I thought it appropriate to refer to specific things about the Kimberley in the minister's statement of, I think, just on a year ago. The first is that, as was noted in recent media coverage about the progress of the government's plans to build an LNG hub in the Kimberley, this process has been very badly handled since September 2008 when the Premier took the reins and the Minister for Environment stepped into that role. The point was made both last Friday on *Stateline* and on Monday night on *Four Corners* that, had the Labor government still been driving the process, we would have had an agreement by this stage. That is very significant because, as I pointed out in debate on the landfill levy, the minister succeeded where many others had failed in putting every single stakeholder offside in her handling of the ending of the hypothecation of the waste levy. The minister has done exactly the same thing with the handling of the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. No-one is happy with what the minister and the government are doing. One need only read the recent media comments over the past 12 months or so to see that no-one is happy with the way things are going. It is very important to note in this context that the minister has not done nothing. I have already acknowledged the Chris Ellison report. The minister has also made statements on several occasions now about the government's proposal to establish a marine park in Camden Sound. What was very surprising about that announcement was the time it was made and the tone in which it was made. Subsequent to that announcement, all we have been told—we pressed very hard to get this information out of the minister during the estimates hearing last week—is that the marine park is being fast-tracked. It appears to be the only priority area that the minister is working on at the moment. The problem I have, which is why I make the point again, is that the ball is in the minister's court to prove that her credentials are genuine. It is beginning to look as though the minister has been told to take a bit of heat off the government about the mess it is making of the proposed gas hub for the Kimberley by doing something green. That is what it looks like.

I thought I would test that assumption a couple of weeks ago when I asked the minister what it means in the budget papers where it says quite clearly that the government intends to protect multiple values in the establishment of the Camden Sound marine park. I asked the minister what the multiple values are. Frankly, her response was embarrassing. She was reduced at one stage to saying that I should know that. I was the one asking the questions. She is minister and she has to provide the answers, but she clearly does not know the answers. I gave her a second chance during the estimates hearing. Obviously, she thought that I would not return to the subject because she did not give me a more adequate answer in the estimates hearings some weeks after she botched the original attempt to answer my question. The many stakeholders of the proposed Camden Sound marine park who care very much about the future of the Kimberley include people from not only the Kimberley, but also around the state, Australia and the world. That suggests to me that I am right, and that all the minister is being asked to do is a bit of fancy footwork to take the heat off the government by doing something green.

I say again that it was not a trick question. I know how the answer should have been couched. The minister answered the question by saying that I ought to know the answer and she wondered why I was asking the question. I, as do other members on this side of the house, sometimes ask questions that we actually know the answers to. That is a little device we use that the government might want to study. I know the answer because I take an interest in these matters, as do many other members on this side of the house. The minister's answer should have been couched in terms of the interconnected ecological values of the area and the social, recreational, heritage and fishery values in that area. It was not a trick question. This is not rocket science; it is

marine science. We are talking about values. The minister eventually staggered to an answer and talked about the whales. This is a very old-fashioned way of thinking about creating marine sanctuaries and planning for marine conservation areas. That very old-fashioned way of thinking originated, I dare say, even before the minister was born. It is that old-fashioned.

Hon Jon Ford: It is Darwinian.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Darwin did quite well compared with the way that some of these dinosaurs think.

The minister confirmed some of my deepest, darkest fears in the way she stumbled over the answer to the question. All she talked about was drawing lines on a map, humpback whales and the need to protect the whale nursery. That means that there is no meaningful talk going on about multiple values or about how we will protect those values and how the protection of one might either compromise or enhance the protection of another. That, minister, is the whole point of modern marine science. The minister knows the language. She was happy to see in the budget papers the reference to multiple values, but when she was asked what it meant, she said that she did not have a clue. That is a very sad and serious state of affairs.

I suspect that I will not need many more extensions of time. The next point I will make goes to the other end of the Kimberley—the East Kimberley. I wonder whether the minister is aware of some information that recently came to light suggesting that we have some pretty serious salinity concerns in the East Kimberley surrounding the Ord – East Kimberley expansion project. The CSIRO produced a report a few months ago that identified some significant salinity problems with some of the land that has been allocated for the Ord – East Kimberley expansion project. This matter has been raised with the Premier—the minister’s boss—and he has conceded that he has received some communication from the commonwealth Minister for Environment, Water and Heritage, which I believe was in the form of a letter, suggesting that the salinity concerns are so serious that we should not proceed with the project. Have we heard anything from the Minister for Environment about this? No; not a word. We found out, as we do with so many of these types of things, only by digging and asking other ministers what they thought about things. We have found that the government has received some advice from the minister’s commonwealth counterpart saying that the salinity concerns in the East Kimberley are so serious that the project should not go ahead. I want to know what the minister thinks about that. I want to know whether she is even aware of the existence of that report. The dark red areas on the map that I have, which is titled “salinity Hazard – Unsaturated Zone”, show the areas that have been identified as having a high amount of salinity. They are the areas of concern. That should flash red lights in front of all members’ eyes. I seek leave to table this document so that it can be made available to all members.

Leave granted. [See paper 2180.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I also refer the minister to a press release dated 22 April 2010 from Mr Geoff Strickland, the CEO of Ord Irrigation Cooperative Ltd. I refer the minister to the paragraph near the end of the release in which Mr Strickland notes —

... that the study of the RAMSAR-listed Parry’s Lagoon nature reserve had confirmed the fragility of the freshwater lagoons in the area. “There are no freshwater lenses beneath the lagoons, with highly saline groundwater a few metres below the surface. The lagoons appear to be dependent on freshwater runoff from adjacent hills in the wet season”.

Apparently, that is such a serious finding that the commonwealth minister has written to the state government to recommend that this project not go ahead. I want to know what the minister thinks about that. I want to know how she thinks she can possibly get away with not commenting on that and why she thinks it is satisfactory to leave it to me to come into the house and raise it. Hon Donna Faragher is the minister and she is the person who has a large department with a massive staff. She is the person who should be alerting the people of Western Australia to this advice and telling them what she plans to do. If the answer comes in the same terms as the Premier’s answer, it will be far from satisfactory. The Premier’s answer apparently was that the Ord has been studied to death and any irrigation scheme is likely to have problems.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I take note of the statement and will respond to the somewhat typically negative comments that were made by Hon Sally Talbot, which, of course, we have come to realise is her normal pattern of behaviour.

This government is very much committed to developing a strategy for the Kimberley and that is why it has committed \$9 million to that strategy. This government is committed to protecting the unique values of the Kimberley region. It also recognises that it is important across a range of other industries, whether that be the pastoral industry, the resources industry, the tourism industry and, very importantly, Indigenous culture and art.

This government realises that this strategy is an ideal opportunity for it to take real and positive action in the Kimberley for existing and future generations. I said in my statement last year, and have repeated it since then,

that there has been a great deal of consultation and preparation of the Kimberley strategy. I said at the time I made the statement that we released a paper titled "A synthesis of scientific knowledge to support conservation management in the Kimberley region of Western Australia". The member suggested that everyone is unhappy. However, I wrote to a number of key groups seeking their view on the future management of the Kimberley. This was followed by a very comprehensive public consultation process, which was undertaken both in Perth and across the Kimberley region. Two public meetings were held in Perth and I attended one of those. Forums were held in Broome, Derby, Halls Creek, Kununurra, Wyndham and Fitzroy Crossing. These forums were excellent. I acknowledge the significant work undertaken by Chris Ellison. I find it interesting, and I am pleased, that Hon Sally Talbot recognises the value of having Chris Ellison undertake that work. She was somewhat negative about it last year. I am pleased to see that every now and again she realises that the government is doing a good thing.

Hon Sally Talbot: It is only you who makes me negative.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I might one day go back to the comments that Hon Sally Talbot made to *The West Australian*, which were interesting. I will not do that now.

The fact is that Chris Ellison chaired those meetings very well. I acknowledge the significant work of the Department of Environment and Conservation officers, particularly Mr Jim Sharp, the deputy director general of the department, and Ms Jacinta Overman, along with Chris Ellison, in facilitating those forums.

I am sure all members would agree that we will never get universal agreement on an issue, particularly when different groups of people with different interests are involved. It is fair to say, and it was recognised in the work undertaken by Chris Ellison that there is a great deal of common ground when it comes to the Kimberley.

Hon Sally Talbot: We had universal agreement.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: I am talking about the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. We have heard Hon Sally Talbot and now she can listen to me.

There is common ground on the issues surrounding conservation management—feral animals; weeds; fire management, in particular; Indigenous culture; the important role of Indigenous rangers; and tourism.

From a conservation perspective, since the release of Mr Ellison's report the government has made a significant commitment to establish a marine park in Camden Sound. Again, Hon Sally Talbot is somewhat negative about that. She needs to chill out a little bit because this government is currently going through a very good process. A draft indicative management plan will be released shortly and it will outline the proposed arrangements. It is not about putting a line here and there. It is very simplistic of the member to say that. A great deal of work has gone into this.

It is this government that is moving towards a marine park in Camden Sound. If Hon Sally Talbot thought it was such a good idea why did she not encourage one of the four, five or six environment ministers in the previous government to come up with this idea? Those ministers did not last long. I think there were four ministers in one and a half years.

Hon Simon O'Brien: She was parliamentary secretary to the minister.

Hon DONNA FARAGHER: Indeed she was parliamentary secretary to the Labor environment minister. I wonder what she did.

This government recognises the importance of this area and it is moving ahead with the development and creation of that marine park. The previous government did not do it, so this government is doing it. I cannot help it if the previous government did not initiate what this government has initiated. I can assure the member that it will be an excellent marine park.

This government is in the process of finalising the overall strategy. It believes that when the strategy is released it will be comprehensive and it is aided by the work that has been done through the consultation processes that I referred to.

I advise the member that I am very committed to developing a strategy that will have a long-term benefit to the Kimberley region for both those people who live in the region as well as to all Western Australians and Australians in general. It is a unique place that we must look after. We must recognise that a range of industries within the Kimberley region have a number of elements of common ground in terms of what we need to do. It is unfortunate that Hon Sally Talbot continues to be so very negative in relation to this issue. It is very sad. Hon Sally Talbot must go home every night feeling negative. Hon Sally Talbot can go home tonight knowing that this government, unlike the previous government when she was the parliamentary secretary to the environment minister and did absolutely nothing for the Kimberley, will do something very positive for the Kimberley.

Hon JON FORD: I am pleased that the government is going down the path of developing a Kimberley science and conservation strategy. Whilst it is very important to seek public input, it is also very important to underpin that with sound science.

I was talking to a resource company yesterday about a development that it is in the process of developing in the Kimberley. This company is expecting to spend in the vicinity of \$30 million to \$40 million on determining the impact of an area that is approximately 40 acres, which is a very small area. We are talking about \$9 million to develop a plan or a picture for the Kimberley and that is good, but there will be limitations to that.

Hon Sally Talbot talked about identifying the values that we are trying to protect. That has been ongoing and there has been a big error in the way that we develop our agencies and the way that governments have dealt with conservation and environmental issues in this state for years and years—not just this government that is carrying it on, not the previous government that just carried it on, but the government before that and the government before that. An example I can give members is that we allowed development of the Burrup Peninsula without any thought to the impact on local fish stocks of having 8 000 cashed-up people with access to some of the best fishing technology in the world and what they would do in their recreation time. If we had thought about that we would have put in some mitigation. One would have been restricting boat ramps, I can tell members! The net effect in that area now is that if people fish at the end of the main channel, they will catch hardly anything. If people go to the end of Enderby Island, they will catch hardly anything. Luckily, we have technology and four-stroke engines that allow people to go for hundreds of miles, so they can go to the Montebello Islands. In my day people used to have to do a fuel drop, but now they can put enough fuel on their boats to go all the way to the Montebellos and back. That is an issue; we do not connect the two. Therefore, when Hon Sally Talbot talks about what values we are trying to protect, that is an important issue. The minister's answer to that question, I remember it quite well, was in fact a stumbling answer and a bit of a concern for me. I am sure if I asked the Minister for Fisheries what values he wants to protect in a marine park that he would be able to tell me pretty quickly. One of the problems with fisheries is that when we look at a total allowable catch, one thing that we do not talk about is what is predated on by mammals. People will talk about the impact of commercial fishing, recreational fishing and Indigenous fishing, but they will not talk about the predation of a species by other animals or mammals.

The Kimberley is very, very complex. King Sound has the Fitzroy River going into it, which is perhaps one of the longest rivers in Western Australia—not the longest, I think the Gascoyne is.

Hon Ken Baston: The Gascoyne is longest.

Hon JON FORD: Yes, the Gascoyne is. The difference between the Gascoyne and the Fitzroy is that fish can swim to the end of it!

One of the great things about Fitzroy River is that it is full of rare and endemic species. There was a little article I think in one of the weekend papers that talked about sawfish that go into the Fitzroy River, which is actually the nursery, and then years later they go back out to sea. I know there are sawfish that are endemic to that region that stay up there and there are also sharks and rays. The Cambridge Gulf has five rivers going into it. If members go to Wyndham, they can go to the Five Rivers Lookout to see where all these rivers go into the Cambridge Gulf. One of the interesting things about the Ord River is that it has a huge amount of artificial intervention. It has a whacking great big dam, a diversion dam that goes out to the Ord River irrigation area and all sorts of environmental flows go through there from the dam to keep the river to a level. There is run-off from the Ord River irrigation area and depending on what the crops are—that is one of the interesting debates about the crops—that determines the run-off. There is also tourism and all the rest of it and there are towns placed along the river. At the end of the King River and the tributaries into that are the Argyle mining operations. In fact, there is run-off from two areas; from the Ord and from King River. That gives members an idea of the complexity of the area. Agricultural land goes up to the end of the Pentecost Range and anything we do up there will affect those rivers. I will use fish as an example again because that is what I am most familiar with! Barramundi spawn right at the end of the rivers, they reach a certain size and then they swim out to sea and grow up before they move back up the river to breed. One reason that we do not get any barramundi in the upper Ord is the diversion dam; the barramundi cannot actually get up there. Over time, people have tried to stock the diversion dam but within a couple of years it is empty because the barramundi all go out to sea and they do not get back up the river. Therefore, it is a very, very complex issue.

When we hear about plans for a marine park that is fantastic and we know that one value is to protect breeding whales but we want to know what the other values are. There are other businesses that will be impacted in the area; not only tourism but also pearling. Pearling needs pristine water. We want to know the impact of extra tourism boats in the area on not only the whales but also those other businesses. There are also mine sites in the area. We want to know what else is there. What are the ethnic values that we are trying to protect? What will be the impact on pelagic species and demersal species? Whereabouts in the Kimberley will we try to protect those

species? Therefore, it is not a flippant request to ask about the values and, indeed, it is not a negative comment; it is a very, very genuine request.

As I said before, it is great to have public comment, but if we talk to people in Fitzroy Crossing about the Fitzroy River, they will give us an idea about what they think is important for the Fitzroy River from their perspective. If we talk to people from Derby, they will give us their perspective about the river. Perspectives are spread out over about 430 kilometres of river and they will be very, very different, which is why we need to have it underpinned by science. We talk about possibly building a wharf at Point Torment, but if the government makes that decision without thinking that it will have an impact on the water quality of the Fitzroy River at Willare or Fitzroy Crossing, that could be a mistake because it also has some of the biggest tides in the world. I welcome the government's decision to proceed down this path but it does need to talk about the values that it wants to protect and study because that will give the scientists some focus. I suggest that the government will need a lot more than \$9 million if it is to get a real accurate picture. If it will cost \$40 million to look at 10 hectares, just to look at one area like Camden Sound, the government will spend that \$9 million very, very quickly.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: This is really interesting for me. I have read "Protecting the Kimberley: A synthesis of scientific knowledge to support conservation management in the Kimberley region of Western Australia" and I know a number of the authors and I think that they will do an exceptionally good job. My problem lies in the fact that whilst we are establishing well credentialled, well researched documents on one hand, on the other hand we are opening up the Kimberley ad nauseam for industrial development.

The Minister for Environment is aware of the proposed developments at James Price Point. The minister is also aware of the current seismic surveys that are going on in that region because the pregnant whales, cows and calves arrive in that very same area and they are experiencing impacts that have never been recorded anywhere else in the world. The nature of those impacts is seismic. Historically, we know that seismic activity has an impact on migratory whales. But no surveys have ever been done anywhere in the world on the seismic impact on newborn calves or on the relationship between those calves in what is, in essence, the kindergarten of the Kimberley for whales and whale pods.

The Minister for Environment has put forward a proposal to protect the Kimberley. The minister said in her statement —

In the heart of the Kimberley region there is incredible wildlife, spectacular gorges and waterfalls. On its coast lie some of the world's most beautiful beaches, untouched coral atolls and rugged islands with an amazing variety of marine life. It is recognised as one of Australia's 15 national biodiversity hot spots ...

Rightly so. The Kimberley is most probably one of the world's remaining truly minimally impacted wilderness areas. I say "minimally impacted", because there have been some impacts, so we cannot say it is pristine. But on a world scale, it has a set of values that sets it aside. We should be the custodians of this area not only for Western Australia and Australia, but also in a global context.

While we are talking about the Browse Basin development, the 2005 surveys that were prepared for the area indicated that we were looking at major trans-national pipelines, and we were looking at the advent of bauxite mining. I must congratulate the Swedish bauxite company that recently decided not to proceed with its developments in the Kimberley, citing the Kimberley's pristine wilderness as one of the reasons that it did not want to go ahead with that project.

We have also now got the Point Torment development, which is a brand new development. As of today—I am wondering if the minister is aware of this—good gosh, we have decided to bring back the Derby hydropower debacle. A proposal was submitted today to the federal government by the same group of idiots who proposed that development the last time it was proposed. They are saying that the reason they want to do this development in this case is to supply power to the Browse Basin development. This is a proposal that the former government knocked on the head. It was rightly knocked on the head. It was a basket case then and it is a basket case now. When we look at all the development projects that are proposed for the Kimberly, even this project pales into insignificance. The synthesis of scientific knowledge to support conservation management in the Kimberley will have no more value than the paper it is written on, not because the authors did a bad job, but because this government is paying no heed to its responsibility to the environment and to what is one of the wonders of Australia, the Kimberley.

Again, I was aware of the salinity hazards that are being articulated by Geoscience Australia. It causes me a great deal of concern that here we go with Ord stage 2, and that after the commitment of funds for this area, with much hype and everything else, we see from the map that the area that was studied is, in essence, 70 per cent saline. So what are the funds that we are putting into that area actually going to do? Are they going to establish an industry

that through hyper-salinity will collapse? The hydrology of hyper-salinity is that we get lenses of hyper-saline water or salts below the surface. That is fine where it is. We can grow vegetation on top, and the root systems of that phreatic vegetation will not be impacted. But the moment we bring in water from the Ord to create crop growth in that area, we mobilise those salts into the water column and we lift them to the surface. The moment those salts come in touch with the root systems of that phreatic vegetation, whatever crop is being grown will suffer the consequences. I actually think it is rather disingenuous of the government to encourage industry to go to that area, only to find out in the future that their industries are going to go belly up because they are cropping on top of salt lenses. We already know that through over-watering, the packsaddle has lifted the saline profile in that area, and, indeed, that area is already suffering a decline.

The Kimberley is an incredibly remote and fragile environment. We seem to be treating it with the same sort of disdain with which we treated the north east Goldfields in the early days of the goldmining industry. We seem to be treating it with the same sort of disdain that we paid to the Roebuck Plains area around Roebourne. We are just looking for another place to trash. I commend the work that people like Burbidge, Kenneally and Burrows are doing. They are doing that from the goodness of their hearts to articulate what the values of the Kimberley are. But it is a smokescreen. It is a smokescreen put out by this government to disguise its real intention; that is, what I see as the inevitable destruction of the Kimberley, unless we are very careful.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I want to take this opportunity to continue my remarks about the seriousness of the CSIRO report. I have given a couple of my papers to Hansard, but I think I can still recall what the issues were. As many members would know, particularly if they have spent any time in the Kimberley, the water bodies in the East Kimberley are magnificent. It is not just about the irrigation of the area. It is interesting when we consider what has been done in the East Kimberley with the damming of the Ord River. I can only assume that such a proposal on such a grand scale would be possible only under the sorts of environmental guidelines that were operating about 50 years ago when the dam came into operation. When we realise the scale of the dam, we realise that not only were some very famous homesteads lost under the water, but also any number of native species, both flora and fauna. I was reminded of a comment that was made by Hon Alannah MacTiernan some years ago when she said—I suspect she only partially had her tongue in her cheek—that the only place we ever found a spider orchid was on a patch of land identified by Main Roads for an off-ramp for the freeway. We can only speculate now, some 50 years later, about what that part of the Kimberley might have looked like if that dam had not been built. What I found very interesting, as a person who does not come from that area but who went there initially as a tourist and then did some work there with local groups, was to find out that even the water supply in Kununurra does not come from the dam. The water supply in Kununurra comes from bore fields. It is an extraordinary plan—I suppose it would not be too strong to talk about it as an ill-conceived plan—that was done 50 years ago when we look at the use that is being made of that dam now. That is not to say that we should not be looking very seriously at the next stage of the development of the Ord. Honourable members will know that in the second term of the previous Labor government, we put in place the task force to look at that development, along with many others.

The other issue that is very concerning when one goes to that area and looks at some of those water bodies is the encroachment of weeds and algal blooms, which have made areas of Lake Kununurra quite unsightly. I was up there a couple of weeks ago for the dragon boat race and I talked to people who were participating in that event, which has now become a biennial institution up there. On the night before the event, I was talking to a number of people who were competing in the event. I should add here in parenthesis for any member who is interested that if they are around in two years' time when that dragon boat race is run again, it would be well worth going up there for the weekend to watch the race, which is a spectacle in itself, but also to talk to the people who come from all over Australia to participate in it. Members would see their level of anticipation the night before when one starts explaining the sort of water body on which they are going to be competing; they are pretty keyed up by the time they tee off at some ungodly hour of the morning, and then to talk to them again on the night after they have paddled down that magnificent course, one gets a wonderful reaction from people who are seeing it all for the first time. It reminded me that being in a place with tourists can be quite an uplifting experience.

The competitors identified a problem. They started from the dam wall and in the first six hours or so they went through some of that magnificent country down the Ord River itself, but by the time they got within about 10 kilometres of Kununurra they were in the weed, and that is not a pleasant experience at all. I was looking around at what had been done to mitigate the problem of the weed locally, but I could not spot the weed muncher that was supposed to come from, I think, the Shire of Murray some years ago. Hon David Templeman and I put in some submissions as the local members of Peel to try to get that weed muncher up there. I am not sure whether that project came to fruition. Whatever the mechanisms, the weed has clearly got the upper hand. It is not just unsightly, it is also adding to the nutrient values in the area. There are all sorts of local solutions being put forward to mitigate the problem, but unfortunately, while the talk is going on, the weeds are increasing. In

the few months that have elapsed between my two most recent visits, there was a considerable increase in the amount of weed.

There are a number of local problems up there that clearly are in serious need of consideration and mitigation. If we add to that the fact that a number of tourists are attracted to the area because of the Ramsar listings and the fact that they can see wildlife there that they would simply not see elsewhere in Western Australia and that some environments are unique to Australia itself, to find that the area is under such grave threat from salinity is very disturbing indeed. I will refer now to a couple of charts in this CSIRO report dated February 2010. If any member wants to obtain a copy of this report, it is called “Ord Valley AEM Interpretation Project” and it has a gloriously technical subtitle that took me five minutes to work out whether I had got the right report: “Final Report: Using The SkyTEM Time Domain Airborne Electromagnetics (AEM) System to Map Aquifer Systems & Salinity Hazard in the Ord Valley, Western Australia”. This report was prepared for the federal Minister for Resources and Energy and Minister for Tourism, Hon Martin Ferguson, and the Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism. We find two very interesting tables. Table A lists various areas in the Ord, the hazard level and then puts a percentage value on the hectares that are affected by salinity. I want to go through this table. I may end up tabling it so that members can get a copy if they are interested. There are five categories: very low to moderately low, moderate, high, very high, and the fifth category is extremely high. What is really disturbing is that we find percentage-wise in an area called the Mantinea Plain, which includes Carlton Hill and Parry’s Lagoon—the area that relates to the map that I tabled in my earlier contribution to this debate—under the category “high” is seven per cent of the land area, that is, 371 hectares; in the category “very high” is 11 per cent, which is 559 hectares; and in “extremely high”—I remind honourable members I am talking about hazard class—is 23 per cent of the area, which is 1 170 hectares. If members do a quick calculation —

The CHAIRMAN: Noting the time, there were only 54 minutes left on this motion at the start and we are 30-odd seconds away from cessation of consideration, if the honourable member has a report or a table that she needs to table she should do that now because that will see us through.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Have we not got another six minutes?

The CHAIRMAN: No. It was originally shown as one complete hour.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: In that case I would like to table that. It is table A on page iii from a report titled “Ord Valley AEM Interpretation Project”.

[See paper 2181.]

Question put and passed.

Progress reported, pursuant to temporary orders.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm