

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION —  
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION COMMITTEES

**1030. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:**

I refer the minister to question without notice 831 and to the former minister's advice that the Western Australian threatened ecological communities scientific committee has not been abolished.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that this committee does continue to operate?
- (2) How do the committee's functions interact with the functions of the Threatened Species Council set up by the minister earlier this year?
- (3) How many times has each entity met this year?
- (4) What are the terms of reference under which each of these entities operates?
- (5) Will the minister table those terms of reference?

**Hon ROBYN McSWEENEY replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The threatened ecological communities scientific committee advises the director general of the Department of Environment and Conservation. If it considers matters that are relevant to the Threatened Species Council, these will be brought to the council's attention by the department.
- (3) Each group has met twice in 2010.
- (4)–(5) I table the attached paper detailing the terms of reference for each group and seek leave to have it incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted. [See paper 2888.]

The following material was incorporated —

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**1. Threatened Species Council - Terms of Reference**

Functions of the Council are to:

1. Deliver concerted and targeted actions for Western Australian threatened species recovery;
2. Review the existing recovery planning process and develop a status assessment program for targeted species recovery as well as timeframes for implementation of actions identified;
3. Take stock of current activities to identify duplication, gaps and opportunities in threatened species conservation;
4. Establish expert 'Threatened Species Working Groups' to fast-track the existing formal recovery plan development process to enable swift identification of key conservation actions;
5. Establish clear emergency processes for urgent species recovery;
6. Strengthen monitoring and reporting processes on threatened species conservation; and
7. Identify and oversee the delivery of priority projects for species conservation, such as:
  - the Dirk Hartog Island fauna recovery project;
  - a genetic storage capacity for Western Australian native animal species;
  - coordinated gene bank storage facilities for DNA, seeds and plants;
  - a Conservation Medicine and Threatened Species Research Centre at Perth Zoo; and
  - integrated education conservation programs delivered in Perth and throughout the State with a mobile education facility delivering incursion opportunities for regional and remote communities.

The Council will report regularly to the Minister for Environment.

**2. Threatened Ecological Communities Scientific Committee - Terms of Reference**

1. The Western Australian Threatened Ecological Communities Scientific Committee (WATECSC) will consist of six to ten persons, from the Department or elsewhere as appropriate, selected on the basis of their expert knowledge of the definition, conservation status and conservation management of Western Australian ecological communities. The Committee Chair will be appointed from the membership.
2. WATECSC will have responsibility for:
  - a) reviewing and making recommendations to the Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation on listing of threatened ecological communities;

- b) allocating threatened ecological communities to threat categories based on IUCN categories of threat for species or to 'Conservation Dependent' and making recommendations to the Director General;
  - c) recommending to the Director General ecological communities for addition to or deletion from the priority ecological community list maintained by the Department;
  - d) providing advice and recommendations to the Director General in respect of research and management needs arising from its reviews of the threatened community list, threat categories and the priority list; and
  - e) reviewing biannually the processes for identifying, and setting priorities for the conservation of threatened communities in Western Australia and recommending any necessary changes to the Director General.
- In carrying out a) and b) above, WATECSC must not consider any matter that does not relate to the continued existence of the ecological community and will consider the status of ecological communities throughout their total natural range in Australia.
- 3. WATECSC will advise whether any listed ecological community should have a higher or lower priority for conservation action than indicated by its threat category. This advice will be based on biological or ecological attributes and must not consider any matter that does not relate to the continued existence of the ecological community.
  - 4. The Committee may appoint subcommittees, e.g. to consider and review lists and categories of threat annually for particular types of ecological communities. Any subcommittees formed must be chaired by a member of the WATECSC and will consist of up to ten persons appointed on the basis of their expert knowledge of the conservation status of the relevant type of ecological community. The membership of any subcommittee will include at least one member of WATECSC in addition to the Chair. Subcommittees shall make their recommendations only to WATECSC.
  - 5. WATECSC will review subcommittee recommendations and submit them to the Director General. WATECSC will oversee the work of any subcommittees and ensure that standards are met and there is consistency between the subcommittees. WATECSC will provide feedback to subcommittees on its consideration of their recommendations and obtain additional information as required.
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