

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — TWO-TIER KARRI FORESTS — HARVESTING

113. Mr D.T. REDMAN to the Minister for Forestry:

I refer to the minister's decision to temporarily cut two-tier mature forest coupes from the 2020 harvest plan.

- (1) Why has the minister departed from the established "Forest Management Plan 2014–2023" review process and broken his contract with industry?
- (2) What consultation did the minister have with industry on this matter, and what was industry's view?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(2) I thought that the member would be pretty happy about some of the developments in the timber industry lately. If he had been paying attention, and I hope he has been, the Parkside Group, a Queensland company, has bought two very significant mills here in Western Australia—Nannup Timber Processing and Auswest Timbers. Both mills were struggling. Parkside has come to WA and it has begun to invest in both those mills. I am told that it has significantly increased employment at both those mills. It is planning to revitalise or reopen a number of other facilities. The arrival of that company indicates that the timber industry in WA has a very bright future.

One of the owners of Parkside said to me that the way the state government runs the Forest Products Commission should be the model for other states around Australia. If the member for Warren–Blackwood were interested in the future of the timber industry in WA, I would have thought he would be very happy about the direction things are moving.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, please!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The advice that FPC gave me last week about the status of two-tier karri forests is that there is no need to harvest in those areas. Under the forest management plan, the required timber volumes can be sourced without any harvesting being required.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Just wait.

Mr D.J. KELLY: As the member knows, FPC puts out a harvest plan each year. FPC has advised that for 2020, it does not need to harvest in those areas; it can meet customer demand without harvesting any of those coupes. There has only been a decision by FPC to make that change for this year. It is not, as the member characterised it, a breach of the contract with industry. The forest management plan runs until 2023. The decision that FPC has made is within the confines of and consistent with that forest management plan.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, you have got a supplementary.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is only a decision for 12 months. Any future decision will be made in the usual timetable for next year's harvest plan. The member should be very happy and he should not be talking down the timber industry.

Mr D.T. Redman interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Warren–Blackwood, I am sure the minister is getting near the end.

Mr D.J. KELLY: When the member was the forestry minister, and some of his mates on the other side, there was nothing but mill closures. There was a significant decline in the softwood plantation. The member did nothing about it. There was no good news in eight and a half years. The first good news in this industry has come from this government, so he should not talk down the industry.