

FIRES — CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

5452. Hon Sally Talbot to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment

Forest and bush fires have the potential to affect global climate change because of the significant emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. It has been noted that emissions from wild or uncontrolled fires are greater than prescribed burns or controlled fires, and I ask —

- (1) Does the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) account for emissions from wild/uncontrolled fires and prescribed/controlled burns?
- (2) In no to (1), why not?
- (3) If yes to (1), has DEC noted a difference in emissions from wild/uncontrolled fires and prescribed/controlled burns?
- (4) If yes to (1), what was the total amount of emissions as a result of escaped burns in each of the years 2000 to 2011 inclusive?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

- (1)–(4) The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) accounts for the areas covered by bushfires on land it manages, but does not account for emissions generated from these fires.

Emissions data for DEC's prescribed burns are calculated annually.

The exclusion of emissions from wild/uncontrolled fires is consistent with national reporting arrangements and Australia's commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol to account for only anthropogenic emissions and removals.