

PRESCRIBED BURNING PROGRAM — SOUTH WEST

1213. Hon Nigel Hallett to the Minister for Environment

Further to question No. 729, could the Minister please advise —

- (1) Has the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) accepted Conservation and Land Management's (CALM) 'strategic approach' to the prescribed burning program to enable 200 000 hectares per year of South West forest to be burnt?
- (2) If yes to (1), what efforts have the DEC made to make up the shortfall in burning of the 250 000 hectares indicated in question on notice No. 692?
- (3) Why was the Fire Review Committees recommended \$3 million per annum fire management increase not accepted?
- (4) As the DEC's city-based staff do not participate in prescribed burning, does this limit their opportunities to be promoted to higher positions in regional areas?
- (5) Who made the decision that grazing was not compatible with fuel reduction in south west forests?
- (6) Over what period is burn planning undertaken?
- (7) With regard to expenditure on prescribed burning, -
 - (a) what is the DEC's 2009-2010 fire management budget;
 - (b) what is the cost of burn planning and administration in percentage terms of this expenditure;
 - (c) what proportion of the 2009-2010 fire management budget is allocated to prescribed burning in south west forests; and
 - (d) what is the estimated area of south west forests to be burnt in 2009-2010?
- (8) The answer to question (7) of question No. 729 suggests that the DEC has no direct involvement with any fire matters that occur on the border of Crown Land or with the fire officers in brigades in these areas, is this so?
- (9) What consideration has been given to developing inter-agency agreements between the DEC, FESA and Bush Fire Brigades, to expand prescribed burning programs and to assist brigades in burning techniques?

Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) annual target for prescribed burning in the south-west is 200,000 hectares. Should weather conditions remain suitable for further burning, DEC will seek to exceed this target.
- (3) The Department of Conservation and Land Management considered at the time that the reallocation of \$1.5 million was sufficient to achieve the targeted prescribed burning program.
- (4) No.
- (5) It is widely recognised within the department that grazing in south-west forests is not an effective strategy for fire hazard management, as there is very little grass fuel under the forest canopy.
- (6) Burn planning is carried out on a number of scales. The Master Burn Planning process extends to at least 20 years. Finer scale burn planning is undertaken on a rolling three year (or six season) basis and is updated in advance of each spring and autumn burning season.
- (7)
 - (a) The total budget allocated to all fire management activities is \$19.65m.
 - (b) Approximately 20 per cent of the total fire management budget.
 - (c) Approximately 25 per cent of the total fire management budget.
 - (d) 200,000 hectares.
- (8) The response to part 7 of Question 729 was specific to those recommendations of the Fire Review Panel that relate to local government authorities and proposed amendments to the Bush Fires Act which are the responsibility of the Fire and Emergency Services Authority (FESA).

- (9) DEC regularly consults with bushfire brigades, local government authorities and FESA to support these organisations in their prescribed burning programs, and in offering opportunities for training in burning techniques. DEC regularly seeks the assistance of local bushfire brigades to participate in DEC burning programs adjacent to private lands