

PERTH URBAN BUSHLAND FUNGI PROJECT — DR BOUGHER’S EMPLOYMENT

**1051. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Environment:**

I have broken my golden rule and the question has six parts, but I will be brief. I refer the minister to the Perth Urban Bushland Fungi project based at the Western Australia Herbarium, which, according to the website [www.fungiperth.org.au](http://www.fungiperth.org.au), has been promoting an understanding of the roles of fungi in Western Australia’s bushland for the past six years.

- (1) On what basis was Dr Neale Bougher, the senior scientist seconded from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, employed?
- (2) Has Dr Bougher’s contract been renewed?
- (3) If so, on what basis is Dr Bougher now employed?
- (4) If not, who is now doing the work that was being undertaken by Dr Bougher?
- (5) Has Dr Bougher’s employment been raised by any groups or interested individuals in discussions with the minister or any of her staff?
- (6) If so, what was the nature of concerns being raised and what advice did the minister or her staff provide?

**Hon DONNA FARAGHER replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The member said “seconded” and I will make the position clear in a moment. Following the completion of Dr Bougher’s previous employment—so he had actually left the CSIRO—the Department of Environment and Conservation employed Dr Bougher on a three-year contract based at its herbarium to carry out taxonomic and other research into fungi. Dr Bougher also provided scientific leadership to the Perth Urban Bushland Fungi project.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) Dr Bougher is employed on a six-month contract until 31 March 2010 to enable him to continue his research and his coordinating role in the Perth Urban Bushland Fungi project until the end of its existing project funding round.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Matters were raised regarding Dr Bougher’s ongoing employment with DEC. My office and the director general of the department advised that senior DEC staff would work with Dr Bougher to explore further opportunities. As advised in answer to (3), his employment has been extended to 31 March 2010.