

WETLANDS — RAMSAR REGISTER NOMINATIONS

Hon GIZ WATSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for the Environment:

On 2 February 2008, World Wetlands Day celebrated the importance of wetlands around the world.

- (1) Why has the government failed to honour its 2001 election promise to make further nominations of WA wetlands to the Ramsar register?
- (2) Is the minister aware that his three predecessors promised to progress the nomination of a further eight WA wetlands and that the Department of Conservation and Land Management—the Department of Environment and Conservation, as it is now—prepared documentation on these?
- (3) In 2006 the minister informed the house that documentation was in preparation. What is the current status of that documentation?
- (4) Are these nominations being blocked by pressure from mining interests?
- (5) Will the minister reiterate his government's assurance that he will honour these commitments of the Labor Party in this term of office?
- (6) If no to (5), when?
- (7) If yes to (5), when?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The Minister for the Environment and for Climate Change has provided an answer in the following terms —

- (1) The Department of Environment and Conservation is preparing nomination documentation for eight candidate sites under the convention on wetlands, known as the Ramsar Convention. Since the government announced its intention, the nomination process has changed and now requires a detailed technical document called an ecological character description and a management plan to accompany any nomination. An ecological character description and a management plan have been completed for Lake MacLeod. Local pastoral lessees have expressed concerns with the nomination and have given their support to participation in a management group to implement the management plan ahead of progressing the nomination. An ecological character description and a management plan have been completed for Lake MacLeod. Local pastoral lessees have expressed concerns with the nomination and have given their support to participation in a management group to implement the management plan ahead of progressing the nomination. An ecological character description will be completed for the tributaries of the lower Blackwood River by mid-2008, and the Department of Environment and Conservation anticipates that a management plan will be completed by the end of 2008. It is intended that two further candidate sites will have management plans completed in 2008—the Cape Range subterranean waterways and the Millstream pools. The minister will progress nominations when documents required by the Australian government are completed and adequate consultation has been undertaken.
- (2) Yes.
- (3) See the answer to (1).
- (4) No.
- (5)-(7) See the answer to (1).