

DIVISION 72: SWAN RIVER TRUST —

[Supplementary Information No E1.]

Page 912 of the *Budget Statements*, under the heading “Service Summary”,

Hon Phil Edman asked: *I refer specifically to item 4, which is the communication of environmental information. Can the Minister explain what community programs are run by the trust and how effective they are?*

Answer:

The Trust delivers four key community engagement and education programs.

Great Gardens workshop program - since 2003, more than 25,000 people have attended one of 260 Great Gardens Workshops, made possible by Swan River Trust funding. These free workshops provide the Perth public with sustainable garden practices and environmental education to reduce urban fertiliser and water use. Annual research is demonstrating an 80% rate of community behaviour change each year as a result of this program.

River Guardians program - since 2008, more than 580 people have joined the new River Guardians Pilot Program. Membership provides the public with the opportunity to attend river science activities, take part in Indigenous cultural awareness training and river restoration projects, increasing their knowledge and involvement in river management activities. For example, 35 members of the public are actively participating in a new social science research project recording the activities of Swan River dolphins with Curtin and Murdoch universities through the River Guardians Program. Independent market research to monitor and evaluate the pilot program’s effectiveness is being conducted by Research Solutions.

Ribbons of Blue program - environmental education in the Swan Canning Catchment is also being delivered through the Ribbons of Blue Program which actively engages with 75 schools, 3,500 students, 540 teachers and 11 community groups each year. This program has been running in WA for 20 years.

Phosphorous Action Group – since 2001 the Trust’s support of this program has educated more than 14,000 Perth people a year, to reduce urban fertiliser use and in particular, phosphorous-based products. The program also delivers an annual Local Government Nutrient Survey for Trust management response.

Hon Ken Travers asked:

- (1) *As of the last date you reported to Treasury on your finances:*
 - 1.1 *Can you please identify all accounts held by the agency?*
 - 1.2 *How much cash is held in each of these accounts*
 - 1.3 *How much of this cash is restricted or subject to approval or control?*
 - 1.4 *As of this date, what is your estimated annual average cash as a percentage of your appropriation?*
- (2) *As of the last date you internally monitored each account your agency has:*
 - (2.1) *How much cash is held in each of these accounts?*
 - (2.2) *How much of this cash is restricted or subject to approval or control?*
 - (2.3) *As of this date, what is your estimated annual average cash percentage of your appropriation?*
- (3) *Please provide, for each question below, what you expect to be figures as of 30 June 2009?*
 - (3.1) *How much cash is held in each of these accounts?*
 - (3.2) *How much of this cash is restricted or subject to approval or control?*
 - (3.3) *As of this date, what is your estimated annual average cash percentage of your appropriation?*

Answer:

- (1.1) Swan River Trust WA Operating Account.
- (1.2) As reported to Treasury on 31 March 2009 the cash held was \$5,314,278.

- (1.3) All cash is subject to approval.
- (1.4) 37.4%
- (2.1) As at 18 June 2009 cash held is \$3,366,197.
- (2.2) All cash is subject to approval.
- (2.3) 23.7%
- (3.1) It is estimated that on 30 June 2009 cash will be at \$ 2,854,000
- (3.2) All cash is subject to approval.
- (3.3) 20.1%

Hon Ljiljana Ravlich asked:

- (4) *I refer to the Government's aspiration for savings of \$7.6 billion over five years across government as outlined on page 13 of the budget overview and ask –*
 - (4.1) *Is your agency redirecting any capital works expenditure – if so can you provide details including value?*
 - (4.2) *Is the agency selling surplus government land or assets, and if so can the Minister provide a list of land or assets earmarked for sale?*
 - (4.3) *Is the agency proposing to privatize any of its function or contract out any of its services – if so, which ones?*
 - (4.4) *Is the agency intending to reduce staff numbers over the next 4 years and if so what ceiling has the agency set and how many staff will be shed?*
 - (4.5) *Is the agency aware of the Government's new responsible public sector wages policy – if so, what is it?*

Answer:

- (4.1) No
- (4.2) No
- (4.3) No
- (4.4) Yes. 56.4 staff and it is expected that staff numbers will be reduced by one.
- (4.5) The Swan River Trust is not an employing authority; staff are employed via the Department of Environment and Conservation. The public sector wages policy is available on line at www.commerce.wa.gov.au

Hon Sally Talbot asked:

- (5) *Explanation of Significant Movements(5.1) How much is the agency expected to receive from the Burswood Casino Levy in the 2009/10 budget?*
- (6) *Waterways Management(6.1) Can you explain in more detail the increase in the average cost per tonne of waste removal?*
 - (6.2) *Can you please advise which service is now providing Audit Compliance?*
 - (6.3) *Noting that advocates of the creation of very small councils around the Nedlands-Dalkeith-Peppermint Grove area have suggested that the Swan river Trust would pick up the total cost of the river care, I ask:*
 - (i) *Would you give us an outline of the Trust's relationship with local government?*
 - (ii) *What funding arrangements are currently in place?*
 - (6.4) *What powers does the Swan River Trust have to prosecute people who damage the foreshore or pollute the waterways?*
 - (6.5) *How many prosecutions have resulted from charges brought by the Swan River Trust in relation to the destruction of the foreshore vegetation?*

- (6.6) *How many prosecutions have resulted from charges by the Swan River Trust in relation to heavy industry and irresponsible householders and businesses blamed for toxic chemical contamination revealed by the Department of Water study commissioned by the Swan River Trust and released in March 2009?*
- (7) *Development and implementation of environmental management programs(7.1) Which aspects of policy development have you outsourced? Why?*
- (7.2) *Why has the allocation under "Development and Implementation of Environmental Management Programs" effectively doubled?*
- (7.3) *Why does it reduce significantly in the out years?*
- (7.4) *How is shore erosion controlled?*
- (7.5) *Who is responsible for this?*
- (7.6) *What monies if any have been allocated to control or eradicate introduced and/ or feral species in the river and its tributaries and catchments?*
- (7.7) *What research programs have been funded and what are they targeting/studying?*
- (8) *Communication and Environmental Information(8.1) Can you give us an idea of what form an Environmental Education Program might take?*
- (8.2) *Do participants pay to be involved in the program?*
- (8.3) *If so, how much do they pay?*
- (9) *Statutory Assessment of Development Proposals(9.1) What is the process of the expansion plans by the self described small working man's club the Perth Flying Squadron Yacht Club?*
- (9.2) *Does the Swan River Trust have concerns about the effects of the proposed expansion on the health of the river?*
- (9.3) *Are there any costs involved to be met by the Swan River Trust?*
- (10) *Dot Point 2 Does the Trust have any plans in place to migrate the effects of the record tides and rising sea levels associated with climate change?*

Answer:

- (5.1) It is expected that the agency will receive 3 million.
- (6.1) In 2007-08, the total waste collected was 409 tonnes. In 2008-09 it was 169 tonnes. The reduction was largely due to the drop in weed collected. The budget figure of cost per tonne is significantly affected by this shift and by other apportioned costs.
- (6.2) Statutory Assessment of Development Proposals.
- (6.3) (i) The Trust works closely with local governments, especially with the 21 councils fronting the Swan and Canning rivers. As well as ongoing operational interactions, for the past several years the Trust has co-hosted a bi-annual forum with the Minister, Trust and local council mayors and chief executive officers as a forum in which issues about the river can be discussed.
- (ii) The Trust partners with local governments in several ways. The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* makes the Trust jointly responsible for Riverpark shoreline management with the adjoining land manager – in most cases this is local government. Through the Trust's Riverbank program \$5,475,997 has funded 124 shoreline restoration projects, with matched funding from councils. In 2009-10, the \$900,000 grants project was boosted by \$1.9m for works on the river wall at Mounts Bay Road. This will be matched by the City of Perth.

The Trust is also collaborating with councils in the delivery of the Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program by providing funding to the cities of Canning and Belmont and Shire of Chittering to build interventions in nutrient-enriched drains, such as constructed wetlands.

Through the development of local Water Quality Improvement Plans (WQIPs) the Trust also works closely with local councils located in priority catchments not meeting nutrient targets. In 2009-10, the Trust has allocated \$400,000 to the

implementation of local WQIPs. Funding recipients are still to be determined but may be local councils which partner in the local WQIPs.

- (6.4) The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Regulations 2007* provide for offences which prohibit damage to the river bed, banks and vegetation of the Riverpark and Development Control Area. The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* provides for the issue of River Protection Notices to protect the ecological and community benefits and amenity of the Riverpark. Infringements or other legal action may also be taken under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* and its regulations.
- (6.5) No prosecutions. Three infringements were issued in 2008-09. The nature of the offence is such that it is extremely difficult to identify an offender. The Trust's response to this has been to work with local councils to erect large 'tree vandalism' signs at sites where foreshore vegetation has been deliberately damaged.
- (6.6) None. The Department of Water study into non-nutrient contamination was not designed to identify sources, many of which are likely to arise from historical land use.
- (7.1) None. The Trust develops its own policies, but will seek appropriate external comment and technical expertise.
- (7.2) The Environmental Management Programs 2008-09 Budget did not include the \$6m allocated from the Burswood gaming levy; this was reflected in the 2008-09 Estimated Actual and hence the apparent doubling. The 2009-10 Budget contains the one off \$1.9m for urgent river walling repairs.
- (7.3) The out years for Environmental Management Programs are reduced because the Burswood funding drops to an expected \$3m per year. The \$1.9m in 2009-10 was one-off funding.
- (7.4) The Trust's Riverbank Program is designed to address shoreline erosion. The program has provided \$5,475,997 in funding for 124 projects since 2002, supporting a wide variety of activities such as foreshore vegetation planting, weed control, fencing, development of foreshore management plans, construction of fishing platforms and river walling maintenance and replacement.

To improve management of shoreline assets in the longer term the Trust is establishing an asset management system in consultation with relevant shoreline managers.

The asset management system along with recently completed projects including the Foreshore Assessment Strategy (completed in 2007) and the Best Management Practice Guidelines (under development) will be used to identify priority sites and appropriately budget for works into the future, ensuring that available funds are allocated to the most appropriate projects.

- (7.5) The *Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006* makes the Trust jointly responsible for shoreline management with the adjoining land manager – in most cases this is local government.
- (7.6) No funding has been allocated in 2009-10 for direct feral control. However in 2009-10 the Trust will provide \$150,000 as devolved grants to land and river care groups, a proportion of which is expected to go towards weed management. Also, through its Drainage Nutrient Intervention Program (DNIP) the Trust may provide funding to local councils or natural resource management groups for the maintenance of DNIP sites, including weed control.
- (7.7) In 2008-09, through its Swan Canning Research and Innovation Program, the Trust funded seven research projects totalling \$146,780. The results will be delivered in 2009-10. Funding recipients and research programs are:
- CSIRO - *Quantifying and managing dissolved Organic Matter-Derived Nutrients in Agro-Urban Coastal Catchments*;
 - University of Western Australia - *Spatial and seasonal variability in nitrogen cycling processes and Application of high-resolution laser optical plankton counting technology for the study of spatial and temporal distribution of zooplankton in the Swan-Canning System*;
 - University of Tasmania - *Does cryptophyte abundance trigger algal blooms and toxicity of the fish killing dinoflagellate *Karlodinium veneticum* in the Swan Canning river system?*

- Curtin University - *Status of fish health in Claisebrook Cove; and Implications of exposure by agriculture and urban runoff to crustaceans within Swan-Canning catchments;*
- Murdoch University - *Toxicant exposure, population genetics, and trophic associations of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops sp.) in the Swan River;* and
- Australian Maritime College, University of Western Australia and Curtin University - *Effect of boat wake on shorelines.*

(8.1) The Trust engages with the community at many levels. The Trust also runs four key engagement and education programs:

First, the Great Gardens program. Since 2003, more than 25,000 people have attended one of 260 Great Gardens Workshops, which are made possible by Swan River Trust funding. These free workshops provide the Perth public with sustainable garden practices and environmental education to reduce urban fertiliser and water use. Annual research is demonstrating an 80% rate of community behaviour change each year as a result of this program.

Second, the River Guardians program. Since 2008, more than 580 people have joined the new River Guardians Program. Membership provides them the opportunity to attend river science activities, take part in Indigenous cultural awareness training and river restoration projects, increasing their knowledge and involvement in river management activities. For example, 35 members of the public are actively participating in a new social science research project recording the activities of Swan River dolphins with Curtin and Murdoch universities through the River Guardians Program.

Third, the Ribbons of Blue program. Environmental education in the Swan Canning Catchment is also being delivered through the Ribbons of Blue Program which actively engages with 75 schools, 3,500 students, 540 teachers and 11 community groups each year. This program has been running in Western Australia for 20 years.

Also, since 2001, the Trust's support for the Phosphorous Action Group has educated more than 14,000 Perth people a year to reduce urban fertiliser use and in particular, phosphorous-based products.

(8.2) No

(8.3) N/A

(9.1) The Perth Flying Squadron Yacht Club development proposal has been advertised for public comment. The Trust Board will consider the proposal and submissions received and is expected to report to the Minister by mid-August.

(9.2) The Trust's report and recommendations will outline all relevant issues considered in the project assessment and will be publicly reported.

(9.3) The Trust meets the cost of the assessment of the proposal.

(10.1) The Trust is developing a tool kit that will enable local councils to assess the vulnerability of foreshore areas to sea level rise and the risk this presents to ecological, social and infrastructure assets. This tool kit should be available in early 2009-10 and uses the Point Fraser Wetland area in East Perth as a worked example of this risk assessment.

Page 911 – 3% efficiency dividend

Hon Giz Watson asked:

- (1) *Please provide details regarding the projected \$145,000 savings on media, marketing, advertising and consultants?*
- (2) *What projects will be affected by this reduction?*
- (3) *Please explain how FTE will be affected by the proposed reduction in salaries of \$332,000 in the coming financial year?*
- (4) *In what way will this reduction affect the statutory assessment of development proposals?*
- (5) *In what way will this reduction affect the Development and Implementation of Environmental Management Programs?*

Answer:

- (1)-(2) Separate to the 3% efficiency dividend and in line with the Government's election commitments, the Trust has reduced its budget in media, marketing, consultants and advertising. The dividend affects the Trust's community education programs with the reduction of one staff. The reduction in consultants spending was achieved by reducing funds to the Trust's Technical Advisory Panel. Advertising was reduced by \$2,250 in 2009/10.

- (3)-(5) None.

The historical Swan River Trust approach to salary budgeting is to load 100% FTE salary and wages for the full financial year. Modest savings are realised on the basis of vacancies between staff appointments. The Trust proposes to use this factor to achieve the 3% efficiency dividend.

Page 912 – Service Summary

Hon Giz Watson asked:

- (1) *How does the efficiency target match the actual budget, being \$16,453,000 or 118% of the estimated actual 2008-2009?*
- (2) *Please explain the difference in budget and actual for 2008-2009?*

Answer:

- (1) There is no efficiency target indicator that relates to the total cost of services. The difference between the estimated actual 2008-09 and the 2009-10 Budget Estimate is due in large part to the addition of a one-off \$1.9m for urgent repairs for river walling at Mounts Bay Road. The State's contribution via the Swan River Trust was matched by the City of Perth and Main Roads.
- (2) The 2008-09 budget figure does not include \$6,000,000 received through the Burswood gaming levy which became available after the Budget was set in May 2008. The funding was made possible by the passage through State Parliament of legislation to amend the Agreement Act between the State and the Burswood Island Casino.

The 2008-09 amount was double that expected in any one year, as the Trust was offered gaming machine revenue accumulated over two years before the commencement of the Casino (Burswood Island) Agreement Amendment Act empowering the Minister to direct funds to the Swan River Trust.

The level of funding available for 2009-10 and all future years will be an estimated \$3m per year.

Page 913 – Outcome Key effectiveness Indicators

Hon Giz Watson asked:

- (1) *On what basis is the Trust identifying whether a development recommendation has attracted negative responses from the community?*
- (2) *How many people attended environmental education programs in the past year? (- also Page 916)*
- (3) *How is it ascertained what percentage of people change their behaviour after an education session?*

Answer:

- (1) After the Trust Board has considered a development proposal, the draft report and recommendations are posted on the website for community comment. The comments are analysed and the report may be amended before it is presented to the Minister or to the WA Planning Commission.
- (2) 4,208 people attended the Great Gardens Program workshops in 2008-09 at 31 workshops directly funded by the Swan River Trust. Leveraged from these core workshops, a further 4,823 people attended an additional 56 workshops in the Swan Canning Catchment with alternate funding.
- (3) Participants of the Trust's environmental education program are surveyed before and after attending programs. The current figure (80% community behaviour change each year) relates to the Great Gardens Program. The benchmark was set in 2004 after an external market research targeted survey, as part of the evaluation of the Swan Canning Cleanup Program. The indicator is being given greater backing in the past year with the inclusion of follow up household visits and behaviour change audits by the Great Gardens program providers.

Page 913 – Significant Issues impacting the Agency

Hon Giz Watson asked –

- (1) *Which of the strategies the Trust is using to address excess nutrients entering the waterway are regarded as most successful?*
- (2) *How is the Trust measuring the success of each strategy?*
- (3) *What concern does the Trust have about unallocated crown land on the foreshore?*
- (4) *What financial implications has the new research and education project recording the activities of bottlenose dolphins in the Swan Canning Riverpark?*

Answer:

- (1) Managing excess nutrients in a waterway needs to respond to the complex set of interactions between nutrient species, their ratios, water temperature, salinity, oxygen, light, flow and phytoplankton present. The management response has to be multi-faceted and be applied from the catchment to the waterway. No single action will successfully address the impacts of excess nutrients.
- (2) The effects of the Trust's strategies are reported in its effectiveness indicators contained in the Trust's annual report to Parliament.

Measures include the extent to which management of water quality targets are achieved in the Swan-Canning catchments for phosphorous, nitrogen, chlorophyll A, and dissolved oxygen. Other measures include the percentage of foreshores protected and rehabilitated in relation to total area and the percentage of people attending environmental education programs who change their behaviours as a result.
- (3) In terms of environmental impacts, the tenure of land along the foreshore is not generally relevant. Tenure affects what management arrangements can be struck and so it is preferable for riverside lands to be vested usually with local governments or government agency.
- (4) The community recording project is staffed by volunteer River Guardians. The project is part of a broader program overseen by a level 5 salaried Trust officer.

Page 918 – Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies

Hon Giz Watson asked:

- (1) *Please provide details as to the significant reduction in controlled grants and subsidies under the Health Rivers Action Plan?*
- (2) *What community organisations (not local councils) are recipients of any grants or subsidies by the Swan River Trust?*

Answer:

- (1) The 2008-09 amount of \$6 million was double that expected in any one year, as the Trust was offered gaming machine revenue accumulated over two years before the commencement of the Casino (Burswood Island) Agreement Amendment Act empowering the Minister to direct funds to the Swan River Trust.

The level of funding available for 2009-10 and all future years is an anticipated \$3m per year.

- (2) The following organisations received grants from the Swan River Trust in 2008-09:

Perth Region Natural Resource Management (Perth Region NRM);
South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare;
Eastern Hills Catchment Management Group;
Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group;

Swan Alcoa Landcare Program recipients (through devolved grants that the Trust and Alcoa Australia Ltd each contributed \$250,000 in 2008-09 and Perth Region NRM, in addition to administering the program, contributed \$25,000):

Armadales Gosnells Landcare Group Inc
Baldavis Children's Forest Inc
Blackadder-Woodridge Catchment Group Inc
Bungendore Park Management Committee

Chittering Valley Land Conservation District Committee
City of Bayswater
City of Nedlands/Friends of Allen Park
Coogee Beach Surf Lifesaving Club Inc
Ellen Brockman Integrated Catchment Group
United Nations Association of Australia (WA) Environment sub committee
Friends of Attadale Foreshore Inc
Friends of Bennett Brook Reserve
Friends of Black Cockatoo Reserve
Friends of Blue Wren/Susannah Brook Catchment Group
Friends of Boya Trail
Friends of Coolbinia Bushland
Friends of Lightning Swamp Bushland
Friends of Marionvale Brook
Friends of May Brook
Friends of Piesse Brook Inc
Friends of Pioneer Park
Helena River Catchment Group Inc
Jane Brook Catchment Group
Mt Henry Peninsula Conservation Group
North Swan Conservation District Committee
Roleybushcare Inc
Sandy and Roger Stone
South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare
Susannah Brook Catchment Group
Swan TAFE
The Canning River Regional Park Volunteers Inc
Two Rivers Group
Wandi Landcare Group/Town of Kwinana
Wilson Wetlands Action Group Inc
Wooroloo Brook Land Care District Committee

Swan Canning Research and Innovation Program recipients:

CSIRO;
University of Western Australian;
Curtin University;
Murdoch University; and
University of Tasmania.
