

**DIVISION 66: ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION —**

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**Question:** *Have funds been allocated to protecting the Ramsar listed Peel-Harvey wetlands? Are there plans to map and protect remnant vegetation?*

**Answer:** Funds have been allocated to the protection and management of the Ramsar listed Peel-Harvey wetlands.

The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) allocates funding to the management of conservation reserves, and to the protection of significant biodiversity values throughout the State. A number of the reserves within the Ramsar listed Peel-Harvey wetlands are managed by DEC and therefore a proportion of DEC's Swan Region budget is allocated to management of biodiversity and management of visitation to these areas. This funding is allocated through DEC's Nature Conservation and Parks and Visitor Services budgets.

The level of funding varies from year to year in response to the issues applying at any time and the resources available. In 2007/08 DEC will expend approximately \$120 000 on the protection and management of the Peel-Harvey wetlands. Similar expenditure is forecast for 2008/09. A special allocation of \$90 000 was made for preparation of an ecological character description for the Ramsar site in 2007/08. This will help set priorities for future management and monitoring.

In addition, a proportion of the funding allocated to the Nature Conservation and Environmental Impact Assessment services is used in the assessment of impacts of development and other proposals on the environmental values of the Peel-Harvey wetlands through statutory environmental and planning processes.

There is existing mapping, and plans to update mapping, of the remnant vegetation of the Ramsar wetlands.

The Peel-Harvey wetlands are included within the study area of the Swan Bioplan project. This project aims to identify significant biodiversity values and includes mapping of remnant vegetation. As part of the Swan Bioplan project, mapping of the remnant vegetation in the Peel-Harvey Wetlands area has been done. This information and information on other significant values of the eastern shore of the Peel-Harvey estuary was included in a 2007 report, State of Play: Peel-Harvey Eastern Estuary Catchment Environmental Assessment for the Department of Water.

An amount of \$15,000 has been allocated from the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality/Natural Heritage Trust funded project Accredited management plans and implementation of critical actions for WA's wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites). This funding is for implementation of key actions identified in the ecological character description for the Peel-Yalgroup site. Key work areas include assessment of hydrological information that will assist in management of water quality in Lake Clifton and assessment of changes in fringing remnant vegetation extent and condition for the Peel-Yalgroup site.

The Swan Bioplan project will identify natural areas that warrant protection. Many of the natural areas of the Peel-Harvey wetlands are existing reserves or are identified within the proposal for a Peel Regional Park. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure is preparing planning for establishment of the Peel Regional Park on behalf of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

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**Question:** *Will DEC provide a break-down of the estimated \$39,094,000 allocated to Sustainable Forest Management?*

**Answer:** A break-down of this expenditure into major components is:

- |    |                |   |
|----|----------------|---|
| 1. | \$7.6 million  | Works undertaken for the Forest Products Commission (FPC) from the appropriation to DEC, including protection burning and forest silviculture.  |
| 2. | \$1.75 million | Works undertaken for the FPC that the FPC pays DEC for, particularly a corporate services bureau.   |
| 3. | \$3.57 million | Implementation of the Forest Management Plan, inventory mapping services, dieback management and policy determination undertaken by DEC's Sustainable Forest Management Division. This includes expenditure of \$900,000 funded by the FPC as a contribution to the implementation of the Forest Management Plan. |
| 4. | \$2.4 million  | Forest science research.  |

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|----|-----------------|--|
| 5. | \$9.12 million  | Prescribed burning, control of dieback, weeds and pest animals, maintenance of access roads and other forest estate management activities in DEC's three forest regions:<br><br>Warren Region — \$3.04 million<br>Swan Region — \$3.0 million<br>South West Region — \$3.08 million. |
| 6. | \$4.2 million   | Fire management activities including providing for wildfire suppression administered by the Fire Management Services Branch.   |
| 7. | \$3.26 million  | Grants and recoupable projects undertaken for external parties.  |
| 8. | \$3.4 million   | Depreciation charges.  |
| 9. | \$3.794 million | Central corporate costs incurred by DEC to support the above activities. These costs include financial services, human resources, geographic information, information technology, audit, insurances and other corporate support.   |

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**Question:** *What is the budget for research on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity?*

**Answer:** The Department of Environment and Conservation has not established a separate budget allocation for research on the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. Rather, climate change is now seen as a fundamental consideration within a wide range of research areas, and is now embedded as a factor in program and project designs across a wide range of research areas including biological survey, threatened species ecology, dieback and fire. DEC's existing datasets provide a basis for assessing the vulnerability of WA's biodiversity to climate change and for monitoring impacts.

The Science Division of DEC has established a Biodiversity Climate Change Unit which is currently developing a research program. DEC's investment in the Unit during 2007/08 is estimated at \$209,000 and this investment will increase in 2008/09.

In addition, one of the WA Marine Science Institution's nodes is specifically concerned with climate change, to which the WA Government has contributed \$2.6 million.

In May 2007, the Premier's Climate Change Action Statement committed funding of \$8.625 million over five years to help adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. Of this funding \$4 million has been provided for Stage 3 of the highly successful Indian Ocean Climate Initiative, a research partnership between the State Government, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Bureau of Meteorology.

IOCI 3 will produce detailed climate change scenarios for both the South-West and North-West of Western Australia. This will enable assessments of climate change impacts on biodiversity and the development of adaptation options.

2. Page No 1061, Service 4

2.1 **Question:** *What percentage of the DEC's regulatory budget is set aside for the resources industry?*

**Answer:** The DEC regulatory budget is inclusive of all industry sectors, and is not broken down by resources and other sectors.

2.2 **Question:** *Does the DEC have a cost recovery plan so that the resources sector funds the costs mentioned at (1.) and (2.1)?*

**Answer:** Yes, the DEC industry regulation function is established on a cost recovery basis, which means that all services provided for industry licensing and regulation are met by licence fees.

2.5 **Question** *What funds have been allocated for the ongoing lead clean-up works at Esperance?*

**Answer:** The Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) is not responsible for the clean-up of lead at Esperance. This responsibility rests with the Esperance Port Authority.

DEC has issued an Environmental Protection Notice to the Esperance Port Authority to undertake a survey across the Port Authority area and clean up any areas which are contaminated above the specified criteria. The Port Authority has advised DEC that this work is well advanced. DEC will receive a validation report once the Port Authority has completed the clean-up. The question in regard to how much this will cost should be directed to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

A Health and Ecological Risk Assessment, being undertaken by an independent consultant on behalf of DEC, will examine the need for areas outside the Port boundary to be cleaned up.

The Government allocated an additional \$680 000 to DEC during 2007/08 for this risk assessment, as a one-off funding allocation for this specific purpose. DEC will spend the full amount, however, some funds (\$460 000) will be carried over for expenditure in the 2008/09 financial year.

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**Question:** *How many DEC staff members have resigned since 1.7.06 to date?*

2.3.1 What percentage of the total staff does this represent?

2.3.2 What band of employees does this represent in the public service?

**Answer:**

2.3 The number of employees who have resigned is 166 in 2006/07 and 195 to date in 2007/08.

2.3.1 These figures represent 7.8 and 8.4 percent respectively of total staff numbers.

2.3.2 The bands of employees represented are:

|                 |                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 2006/07         | Level 8 — 3                      |
|                 | Level 7 — 7                      |
|                 | Level 6 — 21                     |
|                 | Level 5 — 12                     |
|                 | Level 4 — 11                     |
|                 | Level 3 — 21                     |
|                 | Level 2 — 21                     |
|                 | Level 1 — 15                     |
|                 | Level 1/2 — 5                    |
|                 | Level 2/4 — 10                   |
|                 | Ranger Grade 1 — 4               |
|                 | Ranger Grade 2 — 5               |
|                 | Senior Ranger Grade 3 — 2        |
|                 | Rangers Assistant — 1            |
|                 | AWU Level 2 — 19                 |
|                 | AWU Level 3 — 6                  |
|                 | AWU Level 4 — 3                  |
| 2007/08 to date | Group 2 — 1                      |
|                 | Class 1 — 1                      |
|                 | Level 9 — 1                      |
|                 | Level 8 — 3                      |
|                 | Level 7 — 10                     |
|                 | Level 6 — 23                     |
|                 | Level 5 — 30                     |
|                 | Level 4 — 19                     |
|                 | Level 3 — 24                     |
|                 | Level 2 — 18                     |
|                 | Level 1 — 5                      |
|                 | Level 1/2 — 2                    |
|                 | Level 2/4 — 20                   |
|                 | Level 5 (Specified Callings) — 1 |
|                 | Level 4 (Specified Callings) — 1 |
|                 | Level 3 (Specified Callings) — 2 |
|                 | Level 2 (Specified Callings) — 4 |
|                 | Level 1 (Specified Callings) — 4 |
|                 | Ranger Grade 1 — 1               |
|                 | Ranger Grade 2 — 3               |
|                 | Senior Ranger Grade 3 — 1        |
|                 | AWU Level 2 — 13                 |
|                 | AWU Level 3 — 6                  |
|                 | AWU Level 2 — 2                  |

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**Question:** *What percentage of the DEC's environmental impact assessment budget is set aside for the resources industry?*

**Answer:** Approximately 43% of DEC's 2008/09 environmental impact assessment budget will be allocated to the assessment of resource development and related infrastructure proposals.

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4.1 **Question:** What is the allocation for acquisition of conservation reserves in 2008-2009?

**Answer:** The Department of Environment and Conservation receives an annual capital budget allocation of \$210 000 for the acquisition of suitable lands to add to the conservation reserve system. In addition to State funds, the Commonwealth Government through the Caring for our Country's National Reserve System Program has announced it will fund acquisitions (on a case-by-case basis) for addition to the reserve system in 2008/09 on the basis of \$2 Commonwealth to \$1 State. This will supplement the Department's acquisition program.

Other available funds include:

Carryover funding (\$599 000) under the Biodiversity Adjustment Scheme which will be expended in 2008/09.

Funds allocated by the Government in 2000/01 (\$300 000) for the purchase of Dirk Hartog Island for the creation of a new national park that are likely to be expended in 2008/09 pending the satisfactory conclusion of the purchase agreement.

Funds returned to the Department for conservation land acquisition from the disposal of land that does not have conservation values, e.g. the Department's Swan Region headquarters at Kelmscott and surplus housing lots in Nannup and Busselton. Carryover funds available in 2008/09 from land disposal in previous years amount to \$1.5 million.

Environmental offset funds, as a consequence of approved development projects, that may be received during the year for conservation land acquisition.

4.2 **Question:** *With annual funding at this rate, in what year do you estimate that we could achieve completion of the terrestrial and marine conservation system as outlined in the draft Biodiversity Strategy?*

**Answer:** Land purchase is only one strategy used to improve Western Australia's terrestrial conservation reserve system. The annual capital allocation from the State Government along with funding from other sources including the Commonwealth Government's National Reserve System Program is continuing to make significant improvements towards achieving targets for a comprehensive, adequate and representative conservation (CAR) system by 2029.

The table below provides State (former Department of Conservation and Land Management and Department of Environment and Conservation) and Commonwealth government expenditure on land acquisition for the formal Western Australian terrestrial conservation reserve system over the past fifteen years.

| Year ended<br>30 June | State \$   | Commonwealth \$ |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1994                  | 243 700    | nil             |
| 1995                  | 210 160    | nil             |
| 1996                  | 609 100    | nil             |
| 1997                  | nil        | nil             |
| 1998                  | 342 650    | 115 800         |
| 1999                  | 1 221 000  | 2 300 000       |
| 2000                  | 10 680 000 | 1 020 000       |
| 2001                  | 3 610 000  | 5 090 000       |
| 2002                  | 1 670 000  | 1 480 000       |
| 2003                  | 1 300 000  | 1 650 000       |

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|      |                     |                     |
|------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2004 | 763 000             | 333 500             |
| 2005 | 188 000             | 284 000             |
| 2006 | 3 703 125           | 487 625             |
| 2007 | 2 345 500           | 977 500             |
| 2008 | 1 776 500           | 287 500             |
|      | <b>\$28 662 735</b> | <b>\$14 025 925</b> |

Other strategies to expand the terrestrial conservation reserve system include pursuit of land tenure changes in State land use planning documents and Departmental area and regional management plans; tenure changes in the Forest Management Plan 2004-2013; the reservation proposals in the Perth Metropolitan Region in Bush Forever; the reservation of areas identified for exclusion for conservation purposes from pastoral leases when they expire in 2015; and joint management of Aboriginal lands.

It is anticipated that acquisition coupled with these other strategies, particularly conversion of tenure of appropriate areas of Crown land, will deliver CAR targets for the terrestrial conservation reserve system by 2029.

The State's marine conservation reserve system is developed through a statutory process established by the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984. The Department's 2008/09 allocation for the planning and establishment of new marine conservation reserves is approximately \$1.25 million. With this level of funding continuing, the 2029 target set out in the draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy is achievable.

**[Supplementary Information No 11] Question:** *Hon Nigel Hallett referred to line item "proceeds from the Sale of Real Property" on page 1081 of the Budget Statements and asked – What was the real property? Where was it? What was sold?*

**Answer:**

The real property sold related to two classes of assets. One class of asset is surplus freehold land.

In 2006-2007 the following four parcels of land were sold:

- Lot 2, 6 Higgins Street Nannup was sold for \$120,000
- Lot 16, 22 Dunnet Road Nannup was sold for \$120,000
- Lot 5, 25 Dunnet Road Nannup was sold for \$120,000
- Lot 3, 61 Duchess Street Busselton was sold for \$550,000.

The four lots were previously used for departmental employee housing. The lots were sold to the Department of Housing and Works. No freehold land has been sold in 2007-2008. Proceeds from sale of land are used to purchase lands for conservation purposes.

The second class of assets relates to sale of plant and equipment, particularly fire suppression equipment as part of a planned replacement program. Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment are used as part of the funding source for purchase of new items.

In 2006-2007 sale proceeds from plant and equipment were \$1,024,000 and estimated actual proceeds for 2007-2008 are \$654,000.

**[Supplementary Information No 12] Question:** *Hon Nigel Hallett asked why has the rebate amount for the 2008 Wood Heater Rebate Program been decreased from \$600 in 2007 to \$150.*

**Answer:** The 2007 Wood Heater Replacement Program offered Perth residents \$500 to convert their wood heaters to flued or ducted gas heating. This required eligible applicants to purchase a flued or ducted gas heating system, averaging in price about \$3500. The 2008 Wood Heater Rebate offers a rebate of \$150 to eligible applicants willing to remove their wood heater from their home and transport it to a designated disposal site. There is no requirement for the applicant to purchase any type of replacement heating system, hence the decreased rebate amount.

**[Supplementary Information No 13]** *Question: Hon Paul Llewellyn asked what is the cost of the Living Smart program to date and what are the forward projections? If it is successful and people want it, how much has been paid for it up to date in this budget allocation and what are the forward projections.*

**Answer:** In the 2007-2008 budget \$750,000 was allocated to this program.

The Living Smart budget for 2008-2009 comprises \$750,000 from the Department of Environment and Conservation, \$1 million from Travel Smart funding that the Department for Planning and Infrastructure incorporated in the Living Smart program and \$217,000 in local government co-contributions.

No further funding has been allocated after the 2008-2009 financial year.