

CHESTER BLOCK — SCHEDULED LOGGING

6005. Hon Paul Llewellyn to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

In relation to the scheduled logging of Chester block, I ask —

- (1) Has the 'significant flora' in Chester block been mapped in accordance with Appendix 13 of the Forest Management Plan 2004 - 13 (FMP)?
- (2) Have all known areas of significant flora, eg. threatened ecological communities and declared rare flora, been excluded from 'timber harvesting' in accordance with page 126 of the FMP?
- (3) Have flora management plans been developed and implemented in accordance with page 125 of the FMP?
- (4) When were the conservation statements and flora management plans for Chester, as required by the FMP, prepared?
- (5) What is recorded in these statements and plans about the flora values in proposed operations areas?
- (6) Where can they be sourced?
- (7) What recent surveys have been undertaken to ensure there are no declared rare or priority flora in all proposed operations areas?
- (8) What are the results of those surveys?
- (9) If no recent surveys have been undertaken, why not?
- (10) Can the Minister explain how the ecological values of a highly biodiverse forest containing threatened species are retained when that forest is harvested using current intensive methods of logging and burning?
- (11) What recent scientific investigations have been undertaken to determine the recovery rate of jarrah forest, post the current methods of intensive logging and burning?
- (12) Where can these be sourced?
- (13) Since the dieback free areas in the initial operations area at Chester have been designated 'protectable', why aren't these high conservation value areas being protected in accordance with the State 'Dieback Threat Abatement Plan', rather than being put at risk with the scheduled gross disturbance?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1) Flora values in the south-west were mapped as part of the Regional Forest Agreement process (January 1998).
- (2) Not applicable. Threatened ecological communities and declared rare flora values are not known to occur in the scheduled harvest area of Chester forest block.
- (3) A flora management plan for 'Declared Rare and Poorly Known Flora in the Central Forest Region' (2001) is in place. Chester forest block is located in the Central Forest Region.
- (4) Flora management plans and conservation statements are not developed on a forest block basis.
- (5) The flora management plans and conservation statements do not detail information about specific timber harvesting operations. They provide management strategies and protective actions to ensure the continued survival of populations of threatened flora species.
- (6) Flora management plans can be sourced from the Department of Environment and Conservation's (DEC) website, NatureBase, and library.
- (7) A threatened flora survey was undertaken in January 2007 as part of the planning process for timber harvesting in Chester 0103 forest coupe.
- (8) The survey identified three populations of a Priority four flora species (i.e., taxa considered to have been adequately surveyed and which, while being rare (in Australia), are not currently threatened by any identifiable factors - requires monitoring).
- (9) Not applicable.
- (10) Biodiversity values are protected through a range of measures including the formal and informal reserve system, fauna habitat zones and management practices at the operational scale, such as understorey

- management requirements in silvicultural guidelines, soil protection measures and flora survey requirements.
- (11) Studies with respect to recovery of jarrah forests post logging and burning are ongoing. The most significant of these includes the Kingston Project (near Manjimup) which commenced in 1994, has ongoing monitoring, and was specifically designed to investigate the effects of silvicultural systems on jarrah forest biodiversity. FORESTCHECK is a monitoring framework devised in 1999 to quantify, record, interpret and report on the status of key forest organisms, communities, and processes in response to timber harvesting and natural variation. Since 2001, a network of some 50 biodiversity plots has been established in jarrah forests and elements of biodiversity have been measured in these plots.
- (12) Results from these studies can be sourced from DEC's website, NatureBase, and library, and are published in relevant scientific journals.
- (13) Dieback free areas designated 'protectable' in Chester forest block are protected in accordance with DEC policies and guidelines including the 'Abatement Plan for *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and Best Practice Guidelines for the Management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi*' and 'Management of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* and diseases caused by it, Policy Statement number 3'. A planning requirement of timber harvesting operations is the development of a dieback hygiene management plan to ensure the protection of designated or identified 'protectable' areas by managing human access and hygiene on entry to these areas.
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