

PILBARA ENVIRONMENTAL OFFSETS FUND

**1004. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:**

I refer to page 127 of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's *Annual report 2020-21*, and to the Pilbara environmental offsets fund, or PEOF—a bit cheeky! That is what the government called it.

- (1) What governance arrangements apply to management of this fund?
- (2) How are the environmental objectives of the fund determined, and are these the sole factor in deciding whether environmental offset projects receive funding?
- (3) How is the effectiveness of environmental offset projects evaluated, and by whom?

**Hon STEPHEN DAWSON replied:**

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The fund is a special purpose account, established under the Financial Management Act 2006. The special purpose statement for the account defines what can be receipted and expended from the fund. The governance framework includes a fund implementation advisory group and a project recommendation group. The implementation advisory group for the fund comprises traditional owners and representatives from industry, natural resource management groups, government agencies and the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute. The project recommendation group comprises representatives from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, the commonwealth Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.
- (2) The environmental objectives of the fund are defined as part of conditions of approval under the Environmental Protection Act 1986 and the commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. Environmental objectives and priorities are further defined in the implementation plan for the fund. The fund's implementation plan was released by the former Minister for Environment in November 2019.
- (3) Delivery agents report on the effectiveness of management actions to DWER in their project reports. The project recommendation group reviews the project reports and advises whether the project should continue, be adjusted or discontinued. DWER monitors the impact of management actions on the condition of vegetation and habitat. The implementation advisory group assesses the project reports and the vegetation and habitat monitoring information and evaluates whether the fund is on track to meet its objectives.