

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
QUESTION ON NOTICE 2185 – CORRECTION

Mr President

Pursuant to Standing Order 109(2) I table the corrected response to Question on Notice 2185.

The answer submitted earlier contained some formatting errors.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Question on notice

Tuesday, 18 November 2014

2185. Hon Robin Chapple to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Regional Development.

I refer to a proposal by the Shire of Esperance to clear land for agriculture north of the town, and I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of a proposal from the Shire of Esperance for the allocation and clearing of public land for agricultural land releases north of Esperance;
- (b) is the Minister aware of a map provided to the Government by the Shire showing five separate locations for new agricultural land releases totalling 500,000 hectares;
- (c) can the Minister confirm that most, if not all the land identified by the Shire, is within the Great Western Woodlands as defined in the Government's *Biodiversity and Cultural Conservation Strategy Great Western Woodlands*;
- (d) is the Minister aware that the Department of Regional Development is providing advice to the Shire on how to go about securing new land releases in the north Esperance region:
 - (i) if yes to (d), what does the advice say; and
 - (ii) if yes to (d), will the Minister release this advice, and if not, why not;
- (e) given the massive clearing of native vegetation that has already occurred across the south west of Western Australia and the many long term environmental and sustainability problems this has caused, what is the Government's policy on new agricultural land releases involving clearing of large areas of native vegetation in southern Western Australia, including areas that are recognised internationally as part of a "Global Biodiversity Hotspot" and come under the Government's *Biodiversity and Cultural Conservation Strategy Great Western Woodlands*;
- (f) is the Minister aware that some of the owners of land immediately adjacent to areas proposed for allocation by the Shire of Esperance, have received ex-gratia payments through his department due to that land's unsuitability for agriculture:
 - (i) can the Minister confirm how much money has been paid out for this reason;
- (g) does the Minister accept that Government has an obligation to ensure any land allocations for agricultural purposes are viable for that use and, that if they are subsequently shown to be unviable then Government carries an obligation to compensate landholders;
- (h) has the proposal for new large scale land clearing for agriculture as presented to the Government by the Shire of Esperance been referred to the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Parks and Wildlife for advice:
 - (i) if no to (h), when will it be referred; and
 - (i) will the Government be subjecting the proposal to an open, independent and expert cost-benefit study addressing the full range of economic, social and environmental factors prior to any Government endorsement of the proposal;
 - (i) if no to (i), why not?

Answer

- (a) The State Government is aware the proposal is contained in the Shire of Esperance's (Shire) Draft Esperance Region Economic Development Strategy (Strategy), which is yet to go through a public consultation phase before being finalised.
- (b) Yes