

OLD GROWTH FORESTS — CARBON STORAGE

663. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister representing the Minister for Environment

- (1) Is the Minister aware that an intensive scientific study done by the Australian National University (2007) on the amount of carbon stored in old eucalyptus forests has stated that natural forests are an important part of the global carbon cycle therefore soaking up excess carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and storing it in the biomass of trees and in the soil?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that forests that are commercially logged store about 30-40% less carbon than an un-logged forest?
- (3) What is the Government's environmental policy relating to carbon stored in old growth forests?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

- (1)-(2) The scientific study on *Green carbon: the role of natural forests in carbon storage* by the Australian National University adds to the body of knowledge regarding forests and carbon storage. However, the extent to which the findings are relevant to all Australian native forests needs further examination, since the study area was confined to south-eastern Australian eucalypt forests.
- (3) The majority of old-growth forest is included in national parks and other conservation reserves. Other areas of old-growth forest within State forest are all protected in informal reserves. All old-growth forest is protected from timber harvesting.