

JARRAH AND KARRI FOREST ECOSYSTEMS — LOGGING FOR BIO-FUEL

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

- (1) How much energy would 8-hectares of a jarrah forest ecosystem generate in a biomass plant at any one time?
- (2) If jarrah logs from the Yabberup forest 8-hectare biomass trial site were the only source of fuel for a biomass plant generator, how long would 8-hectares of jarrah forest provide all of Perth with electricity during peak periods?
- (3) Is the Minister aware that there is enough plantation timber available in the South West to supply all the bio-fuel required to power several biomass plants without having to source any bio-fuel from the native forest ecosystem?
- (4) Does the Minister endorse and support the destruction of the jarrah and karri forest ecosystem to supply whole logs to the biomass industry as bio-fuel so they can claim carbon credits under the Federal Government's Emissions Trading Scheme?
- (5) Will the native jarrah and karri forest ecosystem continue to be sold off indefinitely to the energy sector to supply biomass plants with bio-fuel so that biomass plants and coal-fired power stations can claim carbon credits under the Federal Government's Emissions Trading Scheme?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

- (1)-(3) I refer the member to the Minister for Energy for information regarding biomass plant energy generation.
- (4)-(5) The Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 (FMP) provides for ecologically sustainable forest management, which includes the establishment of a reserve system, sustainable forest management practices and the availability of wood products that the Forest Products Commission (FPC) can sell under contract. The FMP provides for a specified annual sustained yield of jarrah and karri first and second grade sawlogs. In the process of harvesting these sawlogs, lower grade logs are obtained from the trees felled for sawlogs, and from thinnings and trees removed to promote regeneration. The FMP requires the Forest Products Commission (FPC) to pursue additional markets for these lower grade logs that have previously been under-utilised, and the potential for some of these logs to be used as fuel or for any other purpose is under investigation by the FPC. The FPC issued a request for tenders for approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum of low grade native forest logs in April 2008.

The FMP provides for the protection of old-growth forests in formal and informal conservation reserves and old-growth forest is not available for timber harvesting including the provision of logs for fuel. The environmental assessment process managed by the Department, and the standards for the protection of forest values including habitat, soil, and water are mechanisms in the FMP to ensure that timber harvesting is undertaken in a manner that is ecologically sustainable. Any removal of residue materials will need to meet the stringent environmental standards of the FMP.