

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT REGULATION — SODIUM FLUOROACETATE

412. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Department of Environment Regulation practice of using sodium fluoroacetate, commonly known as 1080, to control introduced animal species in Western Australia's native forests.

- (1) (a) What quantity of sodium fluoroacetate is dispersed annually by the agency?
- (b) What is the cost of the distribution of that quantity?
- (2) (a) What is the impact on animals other than the targeted species?
- (b) What research has been conducted into secondary poisoning of non-targeted species?

Hon HELEN MORTON replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) (a) The Department of Parks and Wildlife's western shield program used more than 600 000 fox baits and 300 000 feral cat baits on 3.9 million hectares of conservation reserves and state forest to recover threatened fauna species.
- (b) The Department of Parks and Wildlife's western shield program expended \$797 000 in 2012–13 on the aerial distribution of fox baits. This amount does not include the cost of bait production or the costs of on-ground baiting operations, which are undertaken locally and the expenditure for which is not available at short notice. The precise dollar figures for the distribution of feral cat baits were also not able to be compiled within the time available for responding to this question.
- (2) (a) Western Australian native wildlife has a very high natural tolerance to 1080 poison, as the poison pea plants that naturally occur in the wild contain an almost identical chemical toxin. This natural tolerance has been well established by scientific research and gives Western Australia a natural advantage in the use of 1080 that is not replicated across parts of eastern Australia.

The DPAW's feral predator baiting programs are essential for the recovery and maintenance of many native animal species that would otherwise be extinct or near extinct in the wild, including the state's mammal emblem, the numbat. These programs are undertaken following state and national requirements, including the Western Australian Department of Health's "Code of Practice for the Safe Use and Management of 1080 in Western Australia" and the requirements of the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority. The use of 1080 baiting under these strict requirements ensures acceptably minimal levels of non-target impact in the achievement of essential native species conservation.
- (b) The secondary poisoning of non-target species has been the subject of specific research, including 1996 research by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management—Algar and Kinnear, 1996—which investigated the secondary poisoning of foxes following the use of 1080 poison to control rabbits.