

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

34. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

My questions are about timber, not health. I refer to the Government's old-growth policy and the release of the draft forest management plan.

- (1) Is the Premier aware that the volumes of jarrah announced are so pitifully low that they will mean the destruction of a once proud timber industry in this State?
- (2) Is the Premier aware that the social and economic study on this decision has only commenced in the past few weeks? If so, why?
- (3) Is the Premier aware that the deficit balance of timber imports to Australia's \$2.2 billion timber industry is mainly from Third World unsustainable supplies? If so, how does the Premier justify the volumes?
- (4) Given that the Liberal Party supports a volume of 180 000 cubic metres of jarrah as a base, will the Premier ensure that a viable timber industry will exist at the end of this management plan?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(4) One of the points the member for Warren-Blackwood makes is true: the Western Australian timber industry is undergoing very significant changes. On the weekend I was very proud to sign the state agreement between Wesbeam and the Western Australian Government to create a new timber manufacturing facility that will provide 140 new jobs in the State's plantation industry. We are changing the industry. We are moving away from the policies of the previous Government, which saw the destruction of our old-growth forests. We have saved our old-growth forests and we are focusing on plantation industries.

As the member knows only too well, the draft forest management plan is just a draft. Public submissions should be made to the Conservation Commission of Western Australia by 15 October 2002. A second round of community forums has been scheduled for September in Collie, Manjimup, Perth, Bunbury and Walpole. The member might like to look at the Government's web site, at www.conservation.wa.gov.au, so that he, like anyone else in Western Australia, can make a submission. We are conducting this process properly, unlike the wonderful Regional Forest Agreement created by the previous Government. Within seconds of its agreement being published, scientists and the community undermined it because the former Government did not manage it properly. The Minister for the Environment and her colleague in the upper House will manage this agreement properly. The process of social and economic analysis has been going on for some time.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Does the Leader of the Opposition support the logging of old-growth forests in Western Australia?

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Liberal Party and I support a base jarrah allocation of 180 000 cubic metres.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: We know that the Liberal Party will allow logging in the old-growth forests again. Old-growth forests are a wonderful conservation asset for Western Australia. They are unique to Western Australia, yet the Liberal Party wants to destroy them. That is what it regards as a forward-looking Government; however, it is a form of backward-looking Government. The State has moved on. We have stopped the logging of old-growth forests and we will not do it again. That would happen only if there were a change of government in Western Australia. Our draft plan has been released and public submissions will be considered. The final plan, along with a copy of the public submissions, will be sent to the Environmental Protection Authority for assessment.

I will contrast the philosophies of the Liberal and Labor Parties. The Government is committed to the conservation of our old-growth forests and is active in creating new plantation industries in Western Australia, either through export overseas or through the creation of a new industry, as we have done in Gngangara, which has created 140 new jobs in Western Australia. However, the Liberal Party would send the loggers into the old-growth forests. The Liberal Party has a backward and reactionary view of the future of our State. I am pleased to report to the people of Western Australia that those views held by members opposite are not the views of the Government of Western Australia. We are looking to a future whereby we conserve our old-growth forests and appreciate their conservation value. My great grandchildren will look back and say they are very proud that it was their great grandfather who was in the Labor Government that stopped the logging of old-growth forests.