

TIMBER INDUSTRY, MORATORIUM AREAS

370. Mr OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer to the Government's announcement that the indicative yield levels for jarrah and karri under Labor's environmental policy are 140 000 cubic metres and 40 000 cubic metres respectively, and that some timber will be harvested from moratorium areas -

- (1) What volume of timber does the Government intend to harvest from the moratorium areas?
- (2) When will timber companies and communities be made aware of the specific volumes so that they can plan their futures?

Dr GALLOP replied:

- (1)-(2) We have not yet made a decision about the moratorium areas. The Minister for the Environment and Heritage made that point when she responded to the earlier question.

Mr Omodei: Your minister last week released a statement that timber would be taken from moratorium areas.

Dr GALLOP: No decision has been made about that. She confirmed that in her earlier answer to the Parliament. I am pleased to say that we have fulfilled our commitment regarding the State's old-growth forests. I was in London last week, and it was remarkable to be able to talk to the tourism industry, the media, travel agents and others interested in Western Australia about our policy on old-growth forests. That policy enables us to project the State of Western Australia as different from the other States in our very competitive federal system.

Mr Barnett: Why didn't you go to Pemberton instead of London?

Dr GALLOP: As this Government has shown, it will not desert the people affected by this policy. The Labor Party introduced the concept of worker assistance into the debates on forest in Western Australia. A couple of years ago, the minister and I went to the eastern States to lobby for a worker assistance plan. We introduced that concept into the debate. We care for the communities and people in the member for Warren-Blackwood's electorate.

Western Australia must be different and establish an identity that will enable it to attract tourists to our State. That difference - our policy on old-growth forests - is having an impact, and it will continue to have an impact and create jobs for Western Australia. The answer to the member's question is clear, and the minister gave it earlier: we are yet to decide on that issue. We have announced our policy. The forest management plan is being drafted. We are open about that. Our old-growth policy will result in big reductions in the amount of available timber. However, we are still to determine the areas in which logging will be undertaken in the future.