

WATER CATCHMENTS, FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

**127. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage:**

I refer the minister to the forest management plan process and to her responsibilities for the Water and Rivers Commission and water catchments.

- (1) Given that there are 45 water catchments in the area covered by the forest management plan, including nine major storage reservoirs providing in excess of 50 per cent of Perth's water supply, will the minister now make a submission to the forest management plan process outlining the full impact of the plan on Perth's water supply?
- (2) Given that at page 36 of the forest management plan it is stated that proposals in the plan will have a negative effect on water yield, will the minister support a jarrah harvest volume of 182 000 cubic metres, a figure considered by scientists to be a sustainable timber yield that will also deliver an adequate water supply?

**Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I feel like saying, "Nice try" because it was clear from the member's question where he was leading.

- (1)-(2) The Water and Rivers Commission has been involved in the consultations in drawing up the draft forest management plan. As the member well knows, the draft forest management plan is now in the community. Six forums have been held, during which the community provided feedback. The Conservation Commission of Western Australia is now set to pull together that feedback, put together its final report and then send the report to the Environmental Protection Authority.

I am quite happy with the way the Government has managed the water supply aspects of the forest management plan. However, as Minister for the Environment and Heritage, I am open to other options that arise throughout this process. Indeed, during the serious work on the forest management plan over the past year, I have made sure that the water agencies have been as involved as they wanted to be. We have received submissions from them along the way. It is open to any of those agencies to approach us again as we go through the rest of the procedure. To date, they have not signalled any need to do that.

With respect to the final volumes, the forest management plan spells out two scenarios and two ranges of volumes. We will get a lot of feedback on that. I am already getting a lot of feedback on what people think about either end of the range. The Conservation Commission will closely examine both scenarios and the feedback on both of them, and look at the mixes that could flow if a number of scenarios were combined. At the end of the day, the final yield figure will be determined as the law sets out; that is, through the forest management planning process following assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority and finally by Cabinet.