

OLD-GROWTH FOREST, RECENT LOGGING IN SOUTH WEST

80. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for the Environment:

Notwithstanding the Premier's response in this House yesterday, can the minister shed a little more light on the facts behind some of the comments attributed to the member for Warren-Blackwood in yesterday's edition of *The West Australian* about the felling of large karri trees?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for the question and I am pleased to be able to answer it.

Challar 8 forest coupe, which was the forest coupe referred to by the member for Warren-Blackwood -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Have you been down to look at it, minister?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: No, not that particular coupe. However, I will be down the member's way next week, so who knows. That forest coupe was in the 2002 indicative forest plan. Wide consultation was held with the community. Indeed, the Forest Products Commission met with the Western Australian Forest Alliance and the Conservation Council of Western Australia, so if the member wants to be added to the consultation list for future coupes, we would be more than delighted to put him on it.

The coupe is two-tiered karri forest, and it is two-tiered because a large proportion of that coupe has been logged previously. The member for Warren-Blackwood, who was previously the minister for forests, should know better than anyone the definition of "old growth" and how it is applied. We are seeing an amazing case of reinvention by the member. I welcome his new green tinge, because when he sat on this side of the Chamber, he was at times rather emotional about the fact that his Government might have cut back the amount of timber that would be logged. I am delighted that he is starting to see the light.

I am a little amazed at his capacity in decision making. We know that this coupe is not old-growth forest; it is not even under consideration as old-growth forest. What does the member say? He says that they are tall trees with interesting genes. That is novel.

Several members interjected.

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: What is most fascinating about the Opposition is that it clearly does not know what its policy is. Our policy is clear: we will not log old-growth forests, and we will protect them in national parks. We have a new forest management plan. While members opposite were in government from 1997 until the last election, 4 500 hectares of old-growth forest were logged. If they had remained in government from the election until the end of this year, and if the rate at which logging was occurring had been maintained, 8 000 to 10 000 hectares of old-growth forest would have been logged. Old-growth forests can know that they are safely protected under our Government.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Kingsley to order for the second time.