

JARRAH AND KARRI FOREST ECOSYSTEMS — LOGGING FOR BIO-FUEL

661. Mr M.P. Murray to the Minister representing the Minister for Environment

- (1) Is the Minister aware that under the scope of the Forest Management Plan (2004-2013), there is a specific sustainable yield mentioned of jarrah and karri logs available to be sourced from the native forest ecosystem to supply existing timber contracts from now and until 2013, and not as bio-logs or bio-fuel for biomass plants; and
- (a) if yes, will the Minister advise if the Forest Products Commission (FPC) is breaching the allowable cut clearly stated in the Forest Management Plan (2004-2013) by up to 60%, considering the amount set by the previous state government was recommended by experts to be ecologically sustainable;
- (b) if yes, is the Minister aware that already there is a strong community backlash against the logging of the Jarrah and Karri forest ecosystem specifically for logs as bio-fuel; and
- (c) if no, when will the Minister, on behalf of the community, request that the Minister for Forests, the Honourable Terry Redman, request the FPC to stop logging the Jarrah and Karri forest ecosystem specifically for bio-fuel?

Dr G.G. JACOBS replied:

- (1) (a)-(c) The Forest Management Plan 2004-2013 (FMP) provides for ecologically sustainable forest management, which includes the establishment of a reserve system, sustainable forest management practices and the availability of wood products that the Forest Products Commission (FPC) can sell under contract. The FMP provides for a specified annual sustained yield of jarrah and karri first and second grade sawlogs. In the process of harvesting these sawlogs, lower grade logs are obtained from the trees felled for sawlogs, and from thinnings and trees removed to promote regeneration. The FMP requires the Forest Products Commission (FPC) to pursue additional markets for these lower grade logs that have previously been under-utilised, and the potential for some of these logs to be used as fuel or for any other purpose is under investigation by the FPC. The FPC issued a request for tenders for approximately 250,000 tonnes per annum of low grade native forest logs in April 2008.

The FMP provides for the protection of old-growth forests in formal and informal conservation reserves and old-growth forest is not available for timber harvesting including the provision of logs for fuel. The environmental assessment process managed by the Department, and the standards for the protection of forest values including habitat, soil, and water are mechanisms in the FMP to ensure that timber harvesting is undertaken in a manner that is ecologically sustainable. Any removal of residue materials will need to meet the stringent environmental standards of the FMP.

The FMP mid-term audit reports on compliance with sustained yield limits. This report can be accessed at: <http://www.conservation.wa.gov.au/>.

Jarrah and karri forests are not being harvested specifically for logs as fuel.