Hon Sally Talbot to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment.

I refer to the Great Western Woodlands (GWW) Reference Group set up to advise Department of Environment and Conservation on the implementation of the GWW conservation strategy and I ask -

(1) When was the group established?

(2) Have the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the group been developed?

(3) If yes to (2), can you the Minister please advise where?

(4) If no to (2), will the Minister provide a copy of the TOR? If not, why not?

(5) Who are the members of the group and which key stakeholder groups do they represent?

(6) How often has the group met?

(7) Have any key stakeholders stopped participating in the group?

(8) If so, which key stakeholders have withdrawn and why?

I thank the Hon. Member for some notice of this question.

(1) The Great Western Woodlands Reference Group had its inaugural meeting on 30 March 2011.

(2)-(4) The Terms of Reference were developed in consultation with and adopted by the Great Western Woodlands Reference Group. I seek leave to table the following document.

(5) The membership of the Great Western Woodlands Reference Group is as follows:
The group has met four times since 30 March 2011.

Yes.

The Western Australian Farmers Federation (Inc) has withdrawn its representation due to its capacity to attend meetings.

Gondwana Link has also withdrawn its representation due to concerns regarding the consideration of their views on the bushfire mitigation works program.
BACKGROUND

The Great Western Woodlands is regarded as the largest and most intact eucalypt woodland left in southern Australia, covering almost 16 million hectares from the edge of Western Australia's Wheatbelt to Kalgoorlie in the north, the inland deserts to the north-east and the Nullarbor Plain to the east.

As well as being recognised internationally for its natural values, the Great Western Woodlands is rich with Indigenous cultural significance, supports major exploration and mining activity, includes active pastoral leases and is increasingly popular for recreation and tourism.

The State Government's election policy committed $3.8 million over four years to better manage and protect the Great Western Woodlands. In 2009, a Stakeholder Reference Group was established to provide input into the development of a conservation strategy for the area and fulfilled its terms of reference over three meetings.

A Biodiversity and Cultural Conservation Strategy for the Great Western Woodlands was released by the Minister for Environment on 3 November 2010. Implementation of the strategy will be coordinated through the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) in consultation with the Great Western Woodlands Reference Group which will build on the work of the earlier Stakeholder Reference Group.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Great Western Woodlands Reference Group has been established to:

1. Provide advice to DEC on the implementation of A Biodiversity and Cultural Conservation Strategy for the Great Western Woodlands;
2. Provide advice to DEC on management issues relevant to the Great Western Woodlands; and
3. Consider environmental, economic, social, governance and cultural factors influencing management of the Great Western Woodlands in framing its advice.

Meeting conduct:

1. The Reference Group will be chaired by a nominee from DEC.
2. Each Reference Group member may nominate a proxy. Proxyees are to be kept briefed on the group's deliberations so that they are able to contribute to meetings when required to attend.
3. Guests and observers may attend and contribute to Reference Group meetings at the invitation of the Chairman, following their nomination by a member of the Reference Group.

The Executive Officer for the Reference Group will be DEC's Project Coordinator for the Great Western Woodlands.