LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question Without Notice

Wednesday, 22 August 2018

C696. Hon Diane Evers to the Minister for Environment

(1) Does the State Government collect data relating to roadside clearing undertaken in the southwest?

(2) If yes to (1),

(a) What data is collected, how is the data collected, and when is it collected;

(b) What volume and type of vegetation has been cleared in the region?

(3) If no to (1), why not?

(4) Has the government been notified about breaches to roadside clearing in the South West region through its own monitoring or by members of the public?

(5) How many breaches to roadside clearing regulations have been recorded in the South West region within the past five years?

(6) How many of the recorded breaches have been:

(a) local government authorities who have cleared roadside vegetation without a permit;

(b) private landholders who have cleared roadside vegetation without a permit?

(7) What action has been taken against parties who have cleared roadside vegetation without a permit?

Answer

(1)–(2)(a) The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation maintains records of clearing authorised through clearing permit applications made under Part V, Division 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. This information, including the areas and locations of proposed and authorised clearing, are recorded in the Clearing Permit System which is maintained by the Department and made publicly available via the Department's website.

The Schedule 6 of the Act and the Environmental Protection (Clearing of Native Vegetation) Regulations 2004 contain a number of exemptions from the requirement for a clearing permit. Clearing carried out under an exemption is not required to be reported, therefore, it is not possible to provide data on the amount of exempt clearing carried out.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IBRA Bioregion</th>
<th>Clearing approved within the SW Land Division under Part V, Division 2 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 since 2004 (in hectares)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avon Wheatbelt</td>
<td>349.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esperance Plains</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geraldton Sandplains</td>
<td>40.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jarrah Forest</td>
<td>618.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallee</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swan Coastal Plain</td>
<td>642.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalgoo</td>
<td>22.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There is no consolidated dataset containing information on areas which have been cleared lawfully, unlawfully or in accordance with a statutory approval or exemption.

(2)(b) Since the commencement of the clearing provisions of the Act in 2004, 1798.9 hectares of native vegetation within the south west land division has been authorised to be cleared for the purposes of ‘road construction or upgrades’ and ‘road maintenance’ by permits granted under Part V, Division 2 of the Act.

The breakdown of this 1798.8 hectares of approved clearing across relevant south-west Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) bioregions. I table attached information.

Information regarding the type of native vegetation impacted by clearing authorised through clearing permits is contained in decision reports accompanying each permit. As a single permit may impact upon a number of different vegetation types, it would require considerable time to collate this information for the entire south west land division.

(3) Not applicable

(4) Yes

(5) 2

(6)

(a) Nil

(b) 2

(7) One was closed with no action due to low environmental impact and in the second case the landholder was given a letter of education.