

BUSHFIRE — LEEUWIN-NATURALISTE REGION

Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for the Environment:

- (1) Is the minister aware of last week's serious bushfire which threatened sections of the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, Wallcliffe House, and property around Prevelly?
- (2) As this is the latest in a series of fires over the years in that volatile area, does the minister support a secondary access road following the established strategic firebreak through the national park to provide the missing one-kilometre link—that is an approximation—between Baudin Drive and Rainbow Cave Road?
- (3) If not, why not?
- (4) What approaches have been made to the Department of Environment and Conservation on this matter over the years?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The Minister for the Environment has provided an answer in the following terms —

- (1) The minister is aware that the bushfire brigades of the Augusta-Margaret River Shire, with the support of DEC, fought a wildfire in the vicinity of Wallcliffe House near Prevelly on the weekend. The fire threatened the Leeuwin-Naturaliste National Park, Wallcliffe House and property around Prevelly, but it was brought under control by the combined efforts of the brigades and the Department of Environment and Conservation.
- (2) The minister supports additional access for fire-prone areas subject to the usual environmental and planning assessment processes, particularly where it might impact on the natural values that are protected by national parks. In the particular case raised by the honourable member, the minister is prepared to request the Department of Environment and Conservation to examine a secondary road in Prevelly, in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) A number of discussions have been held by the Department of Environment and Conservation with landowners, authorities and others in recent years regarding road access in the vicinity. Some of the matters discussed have included the difficult towers, the terrain, national park values, fire safety and the planning context.