

PORT GEOGRAPHE PROJECT — MINISTERIAL CONDITIONS

5981. Hon Paul Llewellyn to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for the Environment

I refer to the Ministerial Conditions regarding Western Ringtail Possums on the Port Geographe project, and I ask —

- (1) Will the Minister provide my office with the short term study of the Western Ringtail Possums that covered the project area prior to the commencement of habitat clearing at Port Geographe, as detailed in condition 8 - 2 of the Ministerial Conditions?
- (2) If no to (1), why not?
- (3) How many Western Ringtail Possums were translocated from the site?
- (4) Where were they translocated to?
- (5) What was the survival rate of the translocated Western Ringtail Possums?
- (6) Has the proponent made provision to a fund for the maintenance of the captured Western Ringtail Possums as per the Ministerial Condition 8 - 4?
- (7) If no to question (6), why not?
- (8) If yes to question (6) —
 - (a) how much did the proponent provide to a fund for the maintenance of the captured Western Ringtail Possum;
 - (b) where did the funds go;
 - (c) what were the funds spent on; and
 - (d) by whom were the funds spent?
- (9) Has the proponent made provision to fund a three year study of the conservation requirements of the local Western Ringtail Possum population with a view to the re-establishment of Western Ringtail Possums in the project area as per Ministerial Condition 8 - 5?
- (10) If no to question (9), why not?
- (11) If yes to question (9) —
 - (a) how much did the proponent provide to fund a three year study of local Western Ringtail Possum;
 - (b) where did those funds go to;
 - (c) was the study undertaken;
 - (d) If yes to (11)(c), would the Minister provide this office with a copy of the study; and
 - (e) If no to (11)(c), why not?
- (12) Has the proponent retained and planted *Agonis flexuosa* as recommended in Environmental Protection Authority Bulletin 386 as per Ministerial Condition 8 – 6?
- (13) If no to (12), why not?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) Eighteen western ringtail possums were translocated from the Port Geographe development site to Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park and 31 to Yalgorup National Park.
- (4) See answer to (3).
- (5) Leschenault Peninsula Conservation Park:

Survivorship was monitored for a radio-collared subset of eight (four female and four male) of the 18 possums. The site was and continues to be baited for fox control. No predation deaths were recorded and there were two deaths attributed to gastritis/ulcers, one of these was one month post release, the other four months post release.

Two animals were censored (i.e. the radio collar signal was lost and the fate is therefore unknown) at five months and 13 months post release. The remaining four radio-collared possums survived for up to two years post release, and possibly longer as the signal was lost after this time.

A minimum of six young is known to have been produced by the four radio-collared females. By 1998 the translocation was deemed to have been successful. However, subsequent monitoring up to 2006 indicated a lower probability of survivorship with predation by feral cats and pythons potentially limiting translocation success.

Yalgorup National Park:

Survivorship was monitored for a radio-collared subset of 27 (18 female and nine male) of the 31 possums. Translocation was to two sites, Preston Beach Road and White Hill Road. Both sites were and continue to be baited for fox control.

There were 10 known mortalities from the 27 radio-collared possums. One was attributed to gastritis and occurred within one month of translocation. Of the remaining nine, three were from unknown causes, two attributed to fox predation, one attributed to either fox or cat predation, one to a predator which was unable to be identified, one drowning (in a water tank) and one attributed to natural causes.

Regular monitoring focussed on survivorship, which ranged from one month to nearly six years post release. The average length of survivorship was 12 months. The longest lived female continuously monitored produced a minimum of eight young.

The translocated populations at the two Yalgorup National Park release sites have persisted and do not appear to be limited by predation by cats or pythons.

- (6) Yes.
- (7) Not applicable.
- (8)
 - (a) \$76 500 in 1994/95 to meet the requirements of Ministerial Conditions 8-4 and 8-5.
 - (b) The funds were administered by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management's Science and Information Division.
 - (c) The funds were used to conduct the capture, translocation, ongoing monitoring of the translocated animals and subsequent research.
 - (d) Science and Information Division staff of the then Department of Conservation and Land Management.
- (9) Yes.
- (10) Not applicable.
- (11)
 - (a) \$76 500 in 1994/95 to meet the requirements of Ministerial Conditions 8-4 and 8-5.
 - (b) The funds were administered by the then Department of Conservation and Land Management's Science and Information Division.
 - (c) The funds contributed to an ongoing monitoring and research program.
 - (d) The results to date are available in the following publicly available reports and publications and can be provided if required:
 - de Tores, P. (2005). A proposal for translocation of the western ringtail possum, *Pseudocheirus occidentalis*, an arboreal marsupial endemic to the south-west of Western Australia. Unpublished report prepared for the Western Australian Department of Conservation and Land Management. Perth, Western Australia.
 - de Tores, P. and Berry, O. (2007). Will curiosity kill the cat? *Landscape* 22 (3):49-55.
 - de Tores, P., Jackson, J. and Bertram, I. (2006). Conservation management of the Western ringtail possum, *Pseudocheirus occidentalis*. SPP # 1993/0142. In Annual Research Activity Report July 2004 - June 2005, Science Division. Discovering the Nature of WA. pp: 66-68.
 - de Tores, P. J., Guthrie, N., Jackson, J. and Bertram, I. (2005). The western ringtail possum - a resilient species or another taxon on the decline? *Western Wildlife* 9 (3):4-5.

de Tores, P. J., Hayward, M. W. and Rosier, S. M. (2004). The western ringtail possum, *Pseudocheirus occidentalis*, and the quokka, *Setonix brachyurus*, case studies: Western Shield review - February 2003. *Conservation Science Western Australia* 5 (2):235-257.

de Tores, P. J., Rosier, S., Guthrie, N., Jackson, J. and Bertram, I. (2005). The western ringtail possum - a resilient species or another taxon on the decline? (Part 2). *Western Wildlife* 9 (4):1 & 4-5.

- (e) Not applicable.
- (12) Yes, planting of *Agonis flexuosa* as street trees, in public open space and adjoining the Vasse Wonnerup wetland is ongoing as the subdivision is developed.
- (13) Not applicable.