

CONSERVATION RESERVE SYSTEM — IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

187. Hon GIZ WATSON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Climate Change:

What planning and/or preparation is occurring to prepare for the impact of climate change on Western Australia's conservation reserve system?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question. The Minister for the Environment has provided an answer in the following terms —

In March 2007 the Premier announced an extra \$8.625 million over five years to help Western Australian industries, people and the environment adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. This climate adaptation initiative includes stage 3 of the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative, which will provide essential climate data to enable detailed vulnerability assessments, including that of the conservation reserve system. In addition to the work being undertaken by the IOCI, the Department of Environment and Conservation is setting up a climate change research unit. The unit's role will include investigating the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, including determining the impact of climate change on the spread and distribution of invasive plant populations. DEC also undertakes a range of operational programs to alleviate system-wide pressures on the conservation reserve system. This includes management of altered fire regimes, weeds, invasive animals and pathogens and the identification of critical linkages between reserves. These activities contribute to the overall resilience of the reserve system and ecosystem to cope with the changing climate.