

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS — LOGGING

193. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

- (1) Has logging in old-growth forests been banned?
- (2) Has the government dated the age of trees felled in the Challar Forest near Walpole?
- (3) If yes to (2), what age were the oldest trees?
- (4) Is the minister aware that carbon dating by Dr Marjorie Apthorpe places jarrah trees felled in Challar Forest at 400 years old, as reported in *The Sunday Times* of 9 March 2014?
- (5) Does the minister accept that the majority of Western Australians want old trees protected from logging?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes. There has been no harvesting in areas classified as old-growth forest since 2001 when the Protecting Our Old Growth Forests policy was implemented. Harvesting occurs only in regrowth forests. Since 2001 the status of some areas of forest has been reviewed, resulting in approximately 2 260 hectares of additional previously unmapped old-growth forest being set aside in informal reserves.
- (2) No. Forest management guidelines for harvesting native forest are applied to ensure that a diversity of age classes is retained. Areas of regrowth forest such as Challar may contain old trees, including ones that are approaching maximum life expectancy. Harvest operations in Challar Forest have been undertaken in accordance with the “Forest management plan 2014–2023”, which includes an assessment for old-growth forest.
- (3) Not applicable.
- (4) Yes. However, the Forest Products Commission has not been able to view the test results, the testing procedures used or the chain of custody used in the study.
- (5) Within the forest management plan 2014–2023 area, over 62 per cent of the state’s south west native forests that are vested in the Conservation Commission are set aside in reserves and national parks, including all old-growth forests. The forest management plan is developed by the Conservation Commission of Western Australia in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. It is reviewed by the Environmental Protection Authority and approved by the Minister for Environment.