

STRATEGIC CONSERVATION FUND

963. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the minister's continued inaction on establishing the Pilbara strategic conservation fund, even though contributions to the fund are a condition of multiple recent ministerial approvals, and both the Environmental Protection Authority and the mining companies —

Mr N.W. Morton interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Forrestfield, I call you to order for the first time. Carry on, member.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The fund is supported by both the EPA and mining companies. They agree on the need for the fund.

- (1) Why is the minister yet to establish this fund when millions of dollars has already been committed and not collected from companies such as Fortescue Metals Group, Hamersley Iron, and Iron Ore Holdings?
- (2) Could this money be used for conservation programs in the Pilbara right now, if the minister had established the fund?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

(1)–(2) I have had this question many times from the member for Gosnells. I think we explored it at length in estimates, and my answer remains the same: we remain committed to that fund.

Mr C.J. Tallentire: Sixty million dollars; \$40 million outstanding —

The SPEAKER: Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes, that is all correct, and that fund is a condition of those ministerial approvals. As a condition of the environmental approval of those major iron ore projects, the proponents are required to contribute to that fund. That condition will remain, and this government will implement it. Having said that, this is an opportunity for a substantial investment of tens of millions of dollars into Pilbara conservation outcomes, and it is vitally important that the fund has the most robust governance structure around it, and that it is targeted and delivers the maximum conservation benefit. The requirement for those funds is locked in, but we will work to make sure that we get how we spend the money and how we structure the fund absolutely right. Those sorts of funds only come around once.