

ENVIRONMENT — GREEN GROWTH PLAN 3.5 MILLION — CLEARING

5446. Mr C.J. Tallentire to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Government's Green Growth Plan 3.5 Million, and ask:

- (a) what is the total amount of clearing of native vegetation proposed or allowed under the Plan for the entire Advice Area over the 30 year period;
- (b) is this clearing restricted to the combined classes of action footprint;
- (c) what is the total amount of pre-approved clearing permits (where clearing is yet to happen) in the Advice Area, and will this amount be part of the overall clearing allowed, or is it separate to (a);
- (d) does the total amount of clearing allowed under the Plan in (a) accommodate area of clearing exemptions;
- (e) if no, to (d), what is estimated area resulting from clearing exemptions over the Plan's life;
- (f) which government agency will have overall responsibility to report on the total area of annual native vegetation cleared under the Plan, including clearing that has resulted from exceptions;
- (g) are all local government authorities and the Department of Planning expected to report on clearing under their control every year;
- (h) is the Department of Mines and Petroleum and the Department of Environment Regulation expected to report annually on:
 - (i) clearing permits issued;
 - (ii) actual clearing occurred; and
 - (iii) amount of area cleared resulting from clearing exemptions;
- (i) if no to (h), why not; and
- (j) given that there will be a time lag in reporting of possibly up to a year, how will the Government ensure that the total area cleared under the Plan will not be exceeded?

Mr A.P. Jacob replied:

- (a) The draft Plan addresses the impacts of vegetation clearing for urban, industrial, rural residential and infrastructure development and basic raw material extraction at a strategic scale, as well as the harvesting of the Gnarara, Pinjar and Yanchep pine plantations. The draft Plan accommodates the clearing of approximately 17 100 hectares of native vegetation, which includes previously approved and future development. This represents clearing of a further three per cent of the Swan Coastal Plain in the Perth and Peel regions and clearing of one per cent of the area of the Perth and Peel regions east of the Darling Scarp to accommodate a nearly 70 per cent increase in the population of 3.5 million people. This is in contrast to the clearing of around 70 per cent of the coastal plain in the Perth and Peel regions that has occurred to date to accommodate our present population of approximately 2.1 million people.

Avoidance of environmental impacts has been a key consideration in the development of the draft Plan, with major reductions in potential environmental impacts in comparison with development contemplated under previous land use planning and basic raw materials mapping. A strategic, landscape approach to developing the Western Australian Planning Commission's (WAPC) draft sub-regional planning frameworks and draft *Green Growth Plan* resulted in changes to future development areas avoiding potential impacts on approximately 16 000 hectares of native vegetation.

Under the draft plan, impacts will be addressed through the establishment and management of more than 170 000 hectares of new conservation reserves in and around the Perth and Peel regions as well as through revegetation and rehabilitation initiatives and threatened species programs.
- (b) The intention is that actions undertaken in accordance with the strategic assessment will be able to proceed through a streamlined Part IV approval process under the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* without the need for project-by-project assessments and approvals under the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. Actions that are not one of the classes of actions or consistent with the conservation commitments under the draft Plan will need to be considered separately under existing Commonwealth and State environment approval processes.
- (c) Current approvals, including clearing permits on matters of national environmental significance, have been considered as part of the impact assessment report for matters of national environmental significance.

- (d) Any classes of action under the draft Plan are included in the total amount of clearing regardless of whether an exemption under the clearing provisions of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* applies.
- (e) Not applicable.
- (f)–(j) The *Strategic Conservation Plan* is based on the identification of classes of action and locations of planned future development. *Draft Action Plan I – Assurance* outlines the responsibilities for proposed monitoring, reporting and compliance activities that will be undertaken to provide assurance that the *Strategic Conservation Plan* for the Perth and Peel regions is being delivered effectively. A monitoring program will be implemented in order to determine if the outcomes, objectives and commitments of the Plan are being achieved and allow for adaptive management to occur. The State Government will prepare and publish an annual report outlining implementation performance achieved in the previous year, measured against the requirements of the Plan. An Executive Body will oversee the implementation of the *Strategic Conservation Plan* and will have responsibility for reporting the total area of native vegetation cleared.