

FOREST PRODUCTS COMMISSION — LOGGING — FIRE BANS

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

- (1) Did Forest Products Commission contractors log in Mowen, Helms and/or other native forests in the south west during the total fire ban in recent weeks?
- (2) Is the minister aware of the Department of Fire and Emergency Services requirement that during a total fire ban, chainsaws cannot be used in bushland or other areas where their use is likely to cause fire?
- (3) Does the minister agree that using chainsaws and heavy machinery in a forest during a total fire ban is reckless?
- (4) If the minister agrees there is a clear difference in terms of the bushfire risk posed between operating agricultural machinery on cleared farmland and using chainsaws in a jarrah forest, will the minister ensure that FPC-contracted logging ceases during total fire bans?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

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

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Under regulation 24A(5A) of the Bush Fires Regulations 1954, the restrictions on the use or operation of any engine, vehicle, plant, equipment or machinery during a total fire ban do not apply if the use or operation is part of an agricultural activity, and all reasonable precautions have been taken to prevent the use or operation from causing a bushfire. The Forest Products Commission received confirmation in 2011 from the then Fire and Emergency Services Authority that forestry is considered to be an agricultural activity.
- (3) I am satisfied that the Forest Products Commission has reasonable precautions in place as per the requirements of the Bush Fires Regulations 1954.
- (4) Please refer to (3).