

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

*Thirty-second Report — “Inquiry into the Sandalwood Industry in Western Australia —  
Terms of Reference” — Tabling*

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan)** [3.02 pm]: I am directed to present the thirty-second report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs advising the house that on 7 August 2013 the committee resolved to continue the inquiry into the sandalwood industry in Western Australia.

[See paper 512.]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** During the closing months of the thirty-eighth Parliament the previous members of this committee commenced a formal inquiry into the sandalwood industry in Western Australia. The committee heard evidence from key stakeholders in the industry and from the government departments involved in the management of sandalwood in this state.

As part of its preliminary inquiries, the committee identified significant issues in connection with the sandalwood industry, including antiquated and sometimes conflicting sandalwood legislation; criminal activity, including illegal harvesting of the resource; how to ensure the sustainable management of native trees into the future; and how to effectively govern the contracts for the sale and marketing of sandalwood in Western Australia. The committee tabled an interim report on 27 November 2012 that identified matters of concern and recommended that future members of the committee continue the inquiry and investigate these issues further.

The committee has resolved to continue with this important inquiry in the thirty-ninth Parliament with the following terms of reference: the roles of the Department of Environment Regulation, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Forest Products Commission in the management and commercialisation of sandalwood; how future contracts for the harvesting, marketing and selling of sandalwood can be managed to ensure that all sectors of the industry remain viable and sustainable, and the returns to the state are maximised; the management of wild sandalwood, including monitoring of the resource and regeneration; the government resources required to effectively detect and prosecute the illegal harvesting and exporting of sandalwood, including the transport, storage, purchase, possession and identification of the sandalwood resource; and a review of all relevant legislation pertaining to the sandalwood industry. The committee has considered the report from the thirty-eighth Parliament and is continuing to gather evidence and conduct hearings to build upon the work of the previous committee. The committee acknowledges and is grateful for the work of the previous members of this committee and also extends its appreciation to all those individuals who provided submissions and evidence during 2012.

I commend the report to the house.

*Thirty-third Report — “Inquiry into the Implications for Western Australia of Hydraulic Fracturing for  
Unconventional Gas — Terms of Reference” — Tabling*

**HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan)** [3.05 pm]: I am directed to present the thirty-third report of the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs advising the house that on 7 August the committee resolved to commence an inquiry into the implications for Western Australia of hydraulic fracturing for unconventional gas.

[See paper 513.]

**Hon SIMON O'BRIEN:** The committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the implications for Western Australia of hydraulic fracturing for unconventional gas, otherwise known as fracking. This is the first time that a parliamentary committee in Australia has inquired into the process of fracking for unconventional gas and we anticipate that this inquiry will draw widespread interest, not only in Australia, but also from the international community. Western Australia is uniquely placed to contribute to the debate on fracking due to our abundant deposits of shale gas and the challenges that we face as a result of our climate and land use.

The environmental effects of fracking for unconventional gas are still being analysed and assessed by global experts in the field, and we have identified several matters related to the legacy of fracking that we will explore as part of this inquiry. This inquiry will therefore be focused on the implications for Western Australia of hydraulic fracturing for unconventional gas, including the following issues: how hydraulic fracturing may impact on current and future uses of land; the regulation of chemicals used in the hydraulic fracturing process; the use of groundwater in the hydraulic fracturing process and the potential for recycling of groundwater; and the reclamation or rehabilitation of land that has been hydraulically fractured.

The committee will be calling for submissions and gathering evidence in the near future as we explore the impact of fracking on the environment. We look forward to contributing to the global literature on fracking and to providing meaningful information to the Legislative Council on this emerging environmental issue.

