

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE — LAND FOR WILDLIFE

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

I refer to one of the few remaining voluntary conservation programs supported by the Department of Parks and Wildlife—Land for Wildlife—and the new model of delivery that is mentioned in the latest edition of *Western Wildlife*.

- (1) How will the minister guarantee ongoing support to the 82 per cent of properties in regional Western Australia under the new model?
- (2) Will he guarantee that every future Land for Wildlife property will be visited by a Land for Wildlife officer and that all current properties are given ongoing support?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

- (1)–(2) I thank the member for Gosnells for the question. Today is 23 April and I am delighted to be able to answer my very first question so far for 2015. That is particularly interesting, because I know that the member for Gosnells is passionate about the environment, but I think it is very telling of two things: firstly, the track record of this government —

Mr D.J. Kelly interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Member for Bassendean, I ask you to withdraw that.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr A.P. JACOB: It tells me two things. Firstly, it tells me that when it comes to issues of the environment, unless there is immediate political mileage, the opposition generally is not all that interested in what the government is doing; and, secondly, it tells me that the track record of this government in the environment is so good that there is really nothing in particular the opposition can target.

It is good to have a question on Land for Wildlife. Land for Wildlife is a great program that has been running within the Department of Parks and Wildlife for a number of years. Essentially, so that members understand, Land for Wildlife is a covenanting program for private property and for which those owners can seek to have their private property preserved in perpetuity as private property but for conservation purposes.

Western Australia makes up one-third of the Australian continent and the Department of Parks and Wildlife manages some 100 national parks, including 28.5 million hectares of conservation reserve and 89 million hectares of other reserves. That 28.5 million hectares is larger than the state of Victoria and that other 89 million hectares is larger than the state of New South Wales. Those estates that sit under the Department of Parks and Wildlife are, in the first instance, our highest priority, but we will seek to engage with private landowners when they believe they have conservation value on their land. That is a good thing. I say in the first instance that if those landowners want to look after that land for conservation purposes, they are going to do it anyway, but we can certainly work with them and help them, and that is the space within which the Land for Wildlife program will continue.

We are looking at some community partnership models to keep that program going into the future. It will still exist, but it is not the core business of a department that manages an area of land larger than New South Wales and Victoria put together.