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**Division 68: Environment and Conservation, \$215 445 000 —**

Ms A.R. Mitchell, Chairman.

Mr W.R. Marmion, Minister for Environment.

Mr K.J. McNamara, Director General.

Mr R.P. Atkins, Deputy Director General, Environment.

Mr J. Sharp, Deputy Director General, Parks and Conservation.

Dr J.C. Byrne, Director, Corporate Services.

Mr P. Dans, Director, Regional Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. This is the prime focus of the committee. Although there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the *Budget Statements* while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he/she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by Friday, 10 June 2011, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers, and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by Friday, 10 June 2011.

It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the program statements volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, items, program and amount in preface to their question.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Dr Byrne is profoundly deaf, but our Hansard reporter is providing translation as we speak. Therefore, I ask everyone to speak clearly and loudly. Please do not speak over other people, because that makes it difficult for our Hansard reporter to pick up the information. I thank everyone for their cooperation in this matter.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I would like to begin by looking at waste matters on page 823 of the *Budget Statements* and the line items concerning the amount of money that goes to the waste avoidance and resource recovery account. Can the minister confirm that 75 per cent of that money goes to the Department of Environment and Conservation? Can the minister also explain the staff levels associated with waste management at DEC, noting that some 64 full-time equivalent employees are working on waste matters?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Can I clarify which line item on page 823 the member is referring to?

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Note 1 on page 823 refers to \$10.5 million from the forecast levy amount going to the waste avoidance and resource recovery account. I seek confirmation on what happens to the remaining amount. I also refer to the FTE line that is presented in the table immediately under the heading "Environmental Sustainability".

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes, I can confirm that 25 per cent of the levy goes to the Waste Authority. The remaining 75 per cent is spread throughout the Department of Environment and Conservation. My understanding is that about 23 FTEs are in the waste management branch of DEC.

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**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** The budget papers note that 64 officers work in that area, or do those officers work on other tasks? The minister has given a different number.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** My opening remark is that 23 FTEs are specifically on the waste area of environmental sustainability in that division. I will allow Mr McNamara to explain the numbers for the remaining FTEs.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** As in all other areas of the department, no services apply, for example, to corporate matters and other matters that service the whole department. Those parts of the department are apportioned across the six services. Clearly, an allowance is made for that component. In addition, there is a policy group within that division, which I do not have the FTE count for. However, within the 65 FTEs, a group of staff works primarily on environmental policy.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I could get Mr Atkins to add something further, if that might help.

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** Our policy group has developed strategic policy that also supports the federal Environment Protection and Heritage Council and federal environmental policy. That policy group supports the office of the director general in providing policy support to government.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** It seems that those 42 staff members who are funded through the money raised on the waste levy work in policy and administration. Is that waste-related policy or are we talking about other areas of the department?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Only 23 FTEs are funded specifically through the levy.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** I refer to “Income from State Government: Royalties for regions fund” on page 826 of the *Budget Statements*. Can the minister outline the Department of Environment and Conservation programs that receive funding from royalties for regions? Which royalties for regions funds do they come from? How does each of the programs meet the funding criteria?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Does this question relate to line item “Income from State Government: Royalties for regions fund” with footnote (d)?

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Yes, that is correct; it is on page 826.

[5.10 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** There is funding from royalties for regions for the Capes and Dampier marine parks, and that funding is \$11 million over four years to the Department of Environment and Conservation. Those funds will cover the costs associated with finalising management plans and carrying out management in the field. There is also \$10.215 million of capital funding to be used for two programs: funding of \$7.5 million for conservation parks infrastructure and roads; and \$2.715 million for the Kimberley tourist initiatives. Last year the then Minister for Environment and the Minister for Regional Development announced that \$20 million from the royalties for regions initiative would be allocated to increase regional tourism through a range of projects throughout Western Australia’s most popular parks. These projects will create local jobs in construction and tourism through the development of new and improved tourism infrastructure such as roads, visitor facilities, camp sites and eco-friendly accommodation. For example, Kalbarri is one of Western Australia’s top tourist destinations, and the government is investing \$5.8 million to improve an 11-kilometre stretch of road that brings more than 30 000 vehicles each year to the Z Bend and Nature’s Window, which I am sure the member has been to.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Yes.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** A further \$700 000 will be spent on visitor infrastructure, primarily focusing on upgrading walk trails and installing bike tracks in the park. The sites where projects will be undertaken to improve camping and visitor facilities are Lane Poole Reserve, Cape Range National Park, Wellington National Park, Yalgorup National Park around Tims Thicket, Serpentine National Park, Torndirrup National Park down at Albany, and Kalbarri National Park.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** The last dot point on page 819 states that the waste deposited in landfill is expected to reduce as a result of the significant increase in the landfill levy. I notice on the next page that the percentage of waste in the metropolitan area diverted from landfill through recycling is projected to be 45 per cent. Can the minister tell us what impact the landfill levy is having on the quantity of waste going to landfill? When I managed this issue in this place some time ago, a lot was made of the fact that the levy may in fact drive up the number of people who illegally dump waste; that is, if they have a truckload of stuff, they have to pay a levy, so they will go into a state forest and dump it somewhere else. What evidence do we have that that is occurring, if it is occurring? What is the minister’s experience of the adoption of this landfill levy?

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**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes, that is a good question, member. Reduced waste to landfill is the primary objective of the landfill levy and, therefore, a reduction in revenue is a positive result that we are looking for. The forecast levy revenue estimate continues to reduce further in the out years, as shown on page 830. Although it can be difficult to predict recycling rates given the uncertainties around the influence of economic growth and the level of investment in recycling infrastructure, the achievement of 40.6 per cent recycling in 2010–11, compared with 34 per cent in 2009–10, is a positive trend. Our target is that this trend should continue and reach 45 per cent in 2011–12. Compliance officers have not reported any noticeable increase in illegal dumping rates that could be attributable to the levy increase; however, one prosecution has recently been authorised under the new offence of illegal dumping that the government introduced under the Environmental Protection Act.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** My question relates to item 6 under “Service Summary” on page 818, which refers to the coordination of the response to climate change. It is interesting to note that the money allocated for the response to climate change in 2011–12 is \$19.215 million, but this falls to just over \$1 million in 2014–15. Can the minister explain why that expense will fall to such a low level?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I thank the member for the question. The member is right. He may notice that the allocation in 2011–12 is significantly higher than the level of funding provided in the 2010–11 budget. This is because of carryovers and the timing of milestones for budgeted grants from the low emissions energy development—LEED—fund. The reason that the forward estimates are comparatively low is that the finite climate change funding of \$1.725 million a year approved in the 2006–07 budget ends in June 2011, and further funding reductions will occur as the LEED fund is disbursed and the funding under the then Premier’s climate change statement announced in May 2007 ends in 2011–12. The government is in the process of finalising its climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy, which will inform funding needs for the out years. The working draft climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy has been prepared and is undergoing consultation with government agencies. I anticipate that a draft of the strategy will be available for public comment later this year. Funding requirements for the implementation of that strategy will be determined in the context of its recommendations and actions that are adopted by this government.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I have one further question, just for clarification. Most of us see the fight to combat climate change as a commonwealth government thing. What role are the states expected to play, and what does the minister see as our role in this?

[5.20 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We will actually be focusing on the adaptation required. It is a good question. Our strategy has probably been delayed somewhat in terms of adopting what the commonwealth is yet to advise. It is all a bit unclear at the moment. We are probably ready to roll, but we are treading water until we receive clarification from the commonwealth to inform our future strategy. That is a very good, concise question.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I refer to \$19.215 million under “Services” and item 6 “Coordinate the Response to Climate Change”. Contrary to popular opinion, I am not actually a climate sceptic; I am interested in this —

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** That is not what Bill told me!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** What are we getting for \$19 million? What does that go towards?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We have a detailed breakdown of that figure. I will let the director general, Mr McNamara, run through the \$19.215 million.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The department has a climate change unit that is driving preparation of the climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy. There are staffing and other costs associated with that of course. The department is also represented on various national processes that deal with climate change and advise government in a broad sense on some of the national measures. There are two other major consumers of available funding. We are a member, through the Department of Environment and Conservation, of the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative, in partnership with the Bureau of Meteorology and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, studying climate change in Western Australia, particularly with reference to what is called down-scaling of national and international models and making them more particular to our circumstances, first in the south west and, more recently, in the north west of the state, so we can plan adaptation measures more specifically than some of the international models would let us do. The funds will predominantly be expended under the banner of the LEED fund—the low emissions energy development fund. Several projects have been approved in the past including Future Farm Industries Cooperative Research Centre’s oil mallee harvester, the wave power generation, the Carnegie Corporation project, and a biofuels project in Karratha. There has been in-principle approval for a geothermal energy project and a new energy source for the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder pool. Each of those projects has various milestones. They are the reasons for some of the re-

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cashflowing of earlier LEED funds. The proponents have to attract \$3 for every \$1 in state funding. The bulk of the \$19.215 million that was referred to is against the LEED fund.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** One of the projects that everyone is aware of is the wave power project, which is fairly new technology. There has been a delay in allocating funds. There is a hump that has arisen for this current year. We hope that projects such as the wave energy program, which is probably a world first, will be an exciting project for a new, efficient energy source for Western Australia.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Of the \$19.215 million, how much is going towards coordinating the response from agencies other than DEC?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will defer that question to the director general.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The only real cost incurred in that way is officer time. There is a climate change unit with—I am not sure of the precise number today—about 12 staff. The overwhelming emphasis of their time and effort at the moment is on the climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy's development. Salary time is significantly devoted to the interagency discussions going on at the moment.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I could raise this question when we deal with the Swan River Trust, but I think it is a broad issue. In recent times some of the local government authorities on the Swan and Canning Rivers, including the City of South Perth in my electorate, have raised concerns about rising sea levels and the impact it might have on the Swan and Canning Rivers with regard to flooding, river walls and all that sort of stuff. Has the department been involved in any of this science or has it had any discussions with local government authorities? I believe a report was commissioned by the Local Government Association—has the department had any input into that?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I am not sure how it is related to it, but the WA Planning Commission has adopted the sea level rises. From memory, 900 millimetres has been adopted as a standard. Any development along the foreshore and along the WA coast has to take into account 900 millimetres. I might defer that matter to Mr Atkins.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** Has the Department of Environment and Conservation had input into the science that is telling us that the river will rise?

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** Not directly. There has been input into the science through the Indian Ocean Climate Initiative, which is an organisation that does that sort of research. The WA Planning Commission is the main link to that project with local government. They are feeding into the draft climate change adaptation and mitigation strategy. We are working through their input. The sort of science being talked about is outside the range of science that DEC indulges in.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Before I ask my question, can I put on the record my thanks to the minister and the Department of Environment and Conservation for taking strong action in the Cockburn Cement appeal process. The people of Cockburn are very, very pleased with the appeal decision. Hopefully the department will make sure the company does the right thing with kiln 5. My concern is they will take the cheap option. The people of Cockburn wanted me to pass on best wishes and thanks to the minister and his department for their action.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, member. Your question?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The landfill levy —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Cockburn, can you refer to the page number?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I would like to know whereabouts it is referred to because it will be here somewhere; it is a question of where.

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** You have not got a line item?

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** No. It is a question of the minister taking me to that line item.

I refer to "Explanation of Significant Movements" on page 823. The reason I cannot find a line item to it, as that section says, is that there is a forecast levy of \$42 million, of which \$10.5 million has been credited to the waste recovery account 2011–12. If we go to "Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies" on page 827 we find only \$9 million allocated to that for 2011–12. The explanatory note says we collect \$42 million and \$10.5 million is allocated to the waste recovery account. If we go to the line item dealing with the account, there is \$9 million allocated. My first question is: what happened to the other \$1.5 million? My second question is: where is the rest of the money going to and where can I find it in these budget papers; that is, the rest of the \$42 million that is being collected? We know where \$9 million of the \$10.5 million of a total of \$42 million in the line item has

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gone, but there is \$1.5 million missing. The second question is: of the rest of the money, which is \$31.5 million, where can I find it in these budget papers?

[5.30 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** There is a simple explanation, and I will ask the director general to point that out. We are talking about two different things. One is a levy, and the other is a grant. That is the difference between the \$10.5 million and the \$9 million. The answer to the question that the member for Gosnells asked is similar to that. The 75 per cent is spread out through the accounts of the agency. But I will ask the director general to elaborate on that.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** As the minister has said, \$9 million out of the revenue of \$10.5 million is used for the grants program, which is overseen by the Waste Authority. The balance contributes to the cost of the staffing and the other functions in the waste management branch that were referred to in an earlier question this evening. As for where the remainder of that \$42 million is, I do not know where the line item is necessarily, but on page 817, the total appropriation provided to the department to deliver services is \$206.6 million, and the total cost of services is \$349 million. The difference of \$144 million is made up of a variety of revenues, one of which is the landfill levy. The portion of the landfill levy not credited to the waste avoidance and resource recovery account is used as one of the sources of funding to fund all of the department's services.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** That does not quite explain it, Mr McNamara. Section 79(3)(a) of the act requires that an amount of \$10.5 million be credited to the WARR account, but the budget papers say that only \$9 million has been credited. So either the budget papers are wrong, or the minister is in breach of the act.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I think that what the member is after is the accounting treatment of that \$42 million in the books, and that is not shown there. I think that is the purpose of the question.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Minister, I am only going on what is in the budget papers. If the minister can explain that —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will get Mr Atkins to explain that. However, before I do, I had forgotten to thank the member for his compliment about where we are going on Cockburn.

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** To clarify the minister's statement, the table on page 827 is grants and subsidies that are paid from the WARR account. That \$9 million is not the proportion of the levy that goes into the account.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Sorry, but can Mr Atkins explain that again?

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** The \$9 million is the amount of funding that is in the WARR account that is allocated by the Waste Authority, with the approval of the minister, for grants and subsidies; for instance, the strategic waste initiative scheme, which pays out money for projects, which I am sure the member is familiar with, is part of that \$9 million. If we now go back to page 823, the \$10.5 million, which—the member is absolutely correct—is required by law to go into the WARR account as the 25 per cent proportion of the forecast levy amount, actually sits as part of the cost of service under the \$17.441 million for environmental sustainability. That is for the cost of providing services to the Waste Authority, such as sitting fees and the cost of the waste management branch, which, as the minister pointed out, covered 23 FTEs. The total amount of money that is in the WARR account is not shown in these papers. The WARR account actually has a surplus in it that exceeds the sorts of moneys that we are talking about.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Just to clarify that, there is the \$10.5 million that is required under the act to be provided to the WARR account. Is there then, on page 827, an additional \$9 million?

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** No. The \$9 million is payments from the WARR account by the Waste Authority for grants and subsidies.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** It is a payment out of the account?

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** Yes. It may come out of the \$10.5 million that is allocated for this year, or it may come out in part from the surplus or the account balances.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** By way of supplementary information, can I ask—because clearly the minister cannot provide the answer now —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We might have the answer.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** No; the minister will not. This goes to the point that Mr McNamara was making about how the remainder of that \$42 million is distributed across the department. Can the department provide us with a breakdown of how that \$42 million is provided to the various sections of the department?

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**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will let the director general be more specific. But the way I would see it working from an accounting point of view is that the money forms part of the overall money that the department gets, and it is then allocated. It is all in the pool. Therefore, we cannot differentiate where that money actually goes, because it is part of the money that is allocated to the department.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister was asked whether he would supply supplementary information. Will the minister be providing that?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Madam Chair, I will first see whether we can answer the question; and, if we cannot answer the question, we can deal with that request.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I will narrow it down, given the minister's answer. We know where \$10.5 million of that \$42 million has gone. That is fine. But if the remainder of that money—the \$31 million—then goes into the general pool of funding for the department, that is fine; I do not need to know where all that money goes. But I would like to know where in the budget papers that money has been allocated. Is that \$31 million accounted for as a service appropriation, or is it a line item? That money needs to be accounted for somewhere, otherwise we would have to break it down into which components it goes to.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will ask the director general to answer that question.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** Just to elaborate, the minister is absolutely right. When the landfill levy was increased and the projection was made about the extra revenue that would be earned from that increase, a compensating amount was deducted from the appropriation to DEC for its budget. That deduction was not applied to any particular service or services across the six services that the department now delivers. It was, if we like, taken off the bottom line, or off the pool, which is the language that we have been using. For that reason, the amount that is credited to the WARR account simply goes into that pool, and that helps to make up the department's total funding, from which it funds its six services.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I thank Mr McNamara for that explanation. Given the fact that that money has effectively been deducted by Treasury from the overall appropriated amount, did the department end up, as a result of the increase in the levy, with an overall increase, or was it completely cost neutral, because, at the end of the day, that money was allocated to the department?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will ask the director general to answer the first part of the question, and Dr Byrne, who is an expert on the numbers, can give the member some clarification of the numbers.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The reduction in the budget exactly matched the increase in the revenue, and there was no increase or decrease to the department's budget.

[5.40 pm]

**Dr J.C. Byrne:** I can confirm that it was budget neutral. The member also asked exactly how it was done in accounting terms in the budget statement. It was referred to on page 823—the environmental sustainability service, with the total cost of that service is \$17.441 million. Members can see an income of \$42.6 million for the waste management levy. That is \$25 million or a negative amount. The net cost of the service is negative \$25 million. That \$25 million is redistributed to the other services.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** It was there all along!

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to page 817, "Major Spending Changes" and the line item "Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy – Establishment and Management of Camden Sound and Eighty Mile Beach Marine Parks". I am keen to know firstly how the \$1.185 million budgeted for will be allocated in the coming financial year. There are two other parts to my question. How many full-time equivalent officers are allocated to the program, where will they be based and what will their roles be? And the final part of my question is: does the total of \$5.7 million include any federal funding for the Indigenous —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I am sorry; I missed the \$5.7 million. Where is it in the budget? Is that \$1.18 million?

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** The \$5.7 million relates to Indigenous training and employment. I will find the reference if the minister can tackle the first parts of my question.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** There were three parts to the question. The member specifically wants to know where the \$1.185 million will be spent. There is a whole range of things —

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** That is the Yawuru native title agreement.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is the other part of the question. However, in response to the first part, funds are required to establish both parks. Someone will hand me the number of FTEs required to support that. Obviously,

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in setting up the resources, my preference would be to set them up in Derby, but I am advised that services will probably be located in Broome because, I think, there are more resources there. It is a good question. Derby is closer but there are more Department of Environment and Conservation people working in Broome. It is a case of whether —

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** But this is about the Yawuru, who are in Broome.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Kimberley, are you asking a further question?

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** No; I am just saying for the record that you cannot move Yawuru to Derby because that is —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Kimberley, that is not the discussion at this stage. It is not the question. The question is with the member for Gosnells.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Thank you, Madam Chair. To clarify, Eighty Mile Beach might be, but Camden Sound is not Yawuru. In answer to the question, it is likely that resources will be located in Broome. Being a “Derbyite”, I can argue that it would not be bad to have someone based in Derby. It is a lot closer to Camden Sound—but then there is Eighty Mile Beach, and Broome is probably in the middle. Six FTEs are budgeted for that program. The other item the member has referred to is the last line item on page 817, which is the Yawuru native title agreement. Those funds are set aside because the land management agreement with the Yawuru requires funding. There will be nine Yawuru joint-management staff working as rangers in conjunction with DEC to look after the parks. There will be staff costs for trainers and assessors, planning of the terrestrial marine parks, and individual training costs for the Yawuru. We officially opened the new office last week or the week before with Jimmy Edgar, who played in a band when I was in Derby and who is quite a good guitarist. In addition, there is money for field equipment, a fire truck, marine vessels and then, of course, services such as weed control and trail maintenance, and research and monitoring. I am looking forward to the integration of the management of some of the Kimberley parks by DEC and the traditional owners.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I clarify for the minister that the \$5.7 million I referred to is the total of the Kimberley science program. If we add up the line items along the top line starting with \$1.185 million, we get \$5.7 million. Will the minister clarify whether that money will include Indigenous training and employment opportunities? Also, we have touched on the native title agreement and the \$5.8 million listed. Is that CDEP money—in other words, community development employment program money?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** It is the Office of Native Title money.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Is any of this CDEP funded by the federal government?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will have this clarified by the director general, but I understand that it is all state budget money.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The funds shown on page 817 are all new state funds. For the Eighty Mile Beach and Camden Sound marine parks, clearly the funds will be oriented to the delivery of the strategies and actions detailed in the management plans for those two marine parks; as is the case for Ningaloo and everywhere else. We are very confident that through the Kimberley science and conservation strategy and partnerships embedded in that strategy we will be able to multiply some of the commitment to those parks and other areas across the Kimberley through commonwealth programs and other partners to grow the overall program.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** My question is about the fifth dot point on page 819 which states —

Planning for new marine parks in the north Kimberley and Roebuck Bay will be a priority.

When does the government expect the planning for these parks to be finalised? What resources are currently allocated to this planning? How many national parks now have management plans? How many national parks are without a management plan? And what resources have been allocated to draw up the management plans for those other parks? I know it is a big one, but it is important and we are running out of time. It is the only question that I have been able to ask.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We will be doing the initial planning for those two marine parks from within our own resources, but for any extra detail I will defer to Jim Sharp.

**Mr J.R. Sharp:** In relation to the Kimberley science and conservation strategy, \$300 000 was allocated in last year’s budget for the planning of those four marine parks. Two are well advanced in their planning and those resources will be available for the planning of the north Kimberley and Roebuck Bay marine parks. The planning for the Roebuck Bay marine park is well advanced but there is a commitment under the Yawuru agreement for the development of a cultural management plan.

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**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Yes; the rangers.

**Mr J.R. Sharp:** So those two things will need to be synchronised. We are hopeful that we will have an indicative management plan for Roebuck Bay by the end of this year. The principle relating to marine parks is that an indicative management plan is required before the park can be created. Therefore, there will be management plans for marine parks —

[5.50 pm]

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Quickly.

**Mr J.R. Sharp:** Yes, because it is a requirement for their creation.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** This question is part of my previous question. How many national parks now have management plans? Are there statistics on how many do not?

**Mr J.R. Sharp:** I do not have the exact number, but a large proportion of them do.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Could we have that as supplementary information?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I am happy for that information to be collated and provided to the member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Could the minister please clarify the information he will provide?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The number of national parks that have management plans can be provided to the member for Kimberley.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** How many have not; and where are the resources?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member keeps changing the information that is required.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** No; I am trying to help the minister!

**The CHAIRMAN:** The minister decides.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We will supply statistics about national parks that have a management plan and national parks that do not.

[*Supplementary Information No A31.*]

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I draw the minister's attention to the first dot point on page 819 of the *Budget Statements* on significant issues impacting the agency. I quote the last three lines —

Action to address these threats will continue, with a particular focus on the conservation of threatened plants, animals and ecological communities and reducing the impacts of phytophthora dieback in the Fitzgerald River National Park.

I also thank the minister for his visit with the director general to Fitzgerald River National Park in the last couple of months and for some of the work that has been done there. My question relates to the stated action to prevent dieback in the Fitzgerald River National Park and what measures will be put into place. It is important to recognise that, in light of the Environmental Protection Authority finding of a high potential dieback spread with the proposed trail from Point Charles and Quoin Head. What is the future plan for walk trails in Fitzgerald River National Park?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I thank the member for the question. I had not been to Fitzgerald River National Park until that visit, and I was really impressed. I have been advised that it is probably one of the biodiversity hot spots in Australia and probably has more endangered flora and fauna than anywhere else in Australia. I was impressed by my visit and also by the Department of Environment and Conservation's attention to detail in its efforts to minimise dieback. When I was there, I noticed that a fair bit of work had been done by Main Roads to improve access at each end of the park. One of the problems of dieback is that when moist gravel soil sticks to tyres and is deposited from one place to another, it spreads. The sealing of the roads at either end of the park is important to allow access to the park in wet weather. In this year's budget the government has decided to inject another \$1 million into efforts to manage the dieback in Fitzgerald River National Park. The additional money will come as \$250 000 a year over four years, and will enable the Department of Environment and Conservation to employ two additional rangers and add to the significant efforts already being made to manage the disease in the park. The member will be aware that the recent release of the Environmental Protection Authority report on a proposed walk trail through the park reinforces the need to proceed with caution when undertaking any development in dieback-vulnerable areas. I can assure the member that I recognise the significance of the park and will carefully consider the report and appeals before making a decision on the proposal. DEC has already carried out extensive work to control the spread of the disease in an area of the park known as Bell Track and

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this latest initiative will enable the department to expand its efforts to prevent further introductions of dieback. Fitzgerald River National Park has been targeted because of its high conservation value reflected in the exceptionally high number of plant species in a single national park. By way of example, the park has around 1 750 species of native plants, of which 75—an amazing number—are found nowhere else.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I am very interested in what the minister says, but we are very short of time. We would like to have five minutes with the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority and I note that the member for Cockburn has a follow-up question on this.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I just remind members that we do not have to finish this division at six o'clock. There is no time limit.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We can go on forever! We can go on until nine o'clock, Madam Chair, is that correct?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, until nine o'clock; there is not a time limit, but I suggest to the minister that he wrap this answer up.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The state government, with assistance from the commonwealth, is spending \$40 million on improving access and facilities in the park that will help reduce the risk of the spread of dieback. Notwithstanding that, I recognise that there is still significant community and scientific concern about the threat of the disease in the park and that the EPA's finding is currently subject to the appeals process. The future plan for the walk trail in the central part of Fitzgerald River National Park, which is obviously the main concern of people writing to me, will hinge on my determination of conditions, if any, that will apply to the proposed walk trail.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** There are two parts to my question. Can the government guarantee that the construction of that track will not add to the spread of dieback, which is one of the major complaints about the building of the track; and, how can the government guarantee that?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is a good question. I have some experience with dieback because we used to try to control it when I worked for Main Roads way back in the 1970s by washing down our machines. I do not think it can be guaranteed that dieback will not spread, no matter what is done, because all sorts of things can spread it, not just people. I have made no determination on the track at all yet; I am waiting for the Appeals Convenor's report, and when I get that report and his advice, I will have to weigh up the pros and cons. For the member's information, I get letters appealing to both sides of the argument. I have been on site and I have had experience with dieback. I attended the Syd Shea lecture when I was a young engineer in the late 1970s. I do not know whether it is true, but he told me he discovered dieback and wrote all the papers on it, and I believed him. The member can rest assured.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** The second part of my question is: can the minister, by way of supplementary information, provide us, and probably the member for Eyre as well, with a breakdown of how the \$1 million announced as part of the Turning the Tide with Phytophthora Dieback program will be spent?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That money will basically provide two extra rangers, but we can provide by way of supplementary information a breakdown of the spending.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** They are very expensive rangers!

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The rangers need special gear!

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I know; that is why I ask for the breakdown.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** We will be happy to provide some breakdown of the \$250 000 allocated annually over four years.

[*Supplementary Information No A32.*]

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to service 4, "Environmental Regulation", on page 822 of the *Budget Statements*. The efficiency indicators for the average cost per air monitoring station state allocations of \$363 000 in 2010–11 and in 2011–12 of around \$478 000. The notes referring to the explanation of significant movements state —

The ... average cost per air monitoring station is expected to increase from the 2010–11 Budget as the Yarloop ... Cookernup ... and Gosnells ... monitoring stations were closed down at the conclusion of their respective study periods. The number of staff required to maintain the remaining network remains the same.

My question relates to an application by Alcoa back in 2002 for regulation 14 approval, which is still sitting on the table, as far as I am aware, notwithstanding that Alcoa has been given a two-year hiatus in which time it has been given the task of satisfying a number of the requirements for that approval. First, why would air monitoring

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stations be closed down when examination of the air quality and dust in those areas is still ongoing? Second, if the staff numbers to maintain the network remain the same —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member, given the time, this division will suspend for a dinner break and resume with the ringing of bells.

*Meeting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*

**The CHAIRMAN:** I believe the member for Murray–Wellington was in mid-stride when we departed for dinner. Would the member for Murray–Wellington like to recommence his question?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I refer to service 4, “Environmental Regulation”, on page 822 of the budget papers. In the line item for the efficiency indicator for the average cost per air-monitoring station, the cost increases from an estimated actual of \$456 000 to \$478 000 in 2011–12. The first note at the bottom of the page states that the average cost per air-monitoring station is expected to increase from the 2010–11 budget as the Yarloop, Cookernup and Gosnells monitoring stations were closed at the conclusion of their respective study periods. It also indicates that the number of staff required to maintain the remaining network remains the same. As I understand it, the staff will be retained at fewer monitoring stations; therefore, the average cost will go up. The issue is that the people of Yarloop and Cookernup in my constituency are very interested in the air quality around the Wagerup refinery in particular. In 2002 Alcoa made an application under regulation 14, I think. I wrote to the two previous Ministers for Environment about this issue on behalf of my constituency. It has taken some eight or nine years for a decision to be made. I believe the current minister made a decision recently to give Alcoa an extension of time in which it can fulfil the requirements to satisfy the conditions of that regulation 14 application. I am a bit concerned to see that the budget papers indicate that there will be fewer monitoring stations. I would have thought that those monitoring stations would have been used to monitor the situation at Wagerup on behalf of the local constituency in the absence of a finite decision being made.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Can the member for Murray–Wellington be a bit more succinct with his question?

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** I think I have painted a pretty good picture. The fact remains that Alcoa is not exactly blemish-free as a polluter of the environment. I am interested to know why we have stopped monitoring these stations, given that we are not getting rid of any staff. Obviously, there is a cost involved. In light of the ongoing issues and, as I understand it, the deferral of Alcoa’s expansion wishes at Wagerup until the global financial situation improves, I would have thought those stations would have been viable. I understand that there are probably other monitoring stations in the vicinity, but this is a major concern for my constituents.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will ask Mr Atkins to respond specifically on the issue of performance indicators in a moment. In terms of the question about Alcoa, that is the responsibility of the Environmental Protection Authority. It falls under section 46 in part IV of the Environmental Protection Act. The member might like to ask that question during the division on the EPA and he might get a more detailed response. I think Alcoa has asked for an extension of time, but I will clarify that when we move to the division on the EPA. In terms of the specific efficiency indicator for air-monitoring stations, and given that Alcoa may be expanding, the member’s concern about the reduction in the number of those stations rather than an increase —

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** Or at least maintain the same number.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I ask Mr Atkins to answer that question.

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** Specifically on the monitors around Alcoa, two of what we call the winter campaigns were carried out in 2006 and, I think, 2008—it was certainly 2006—when additional monitoring stations and some special light detection and radar equipment, which traces the effluent plume from the stacks, were put in for that period. Additional stations were put in both to complement that work and to monitor the performance over that time. They were only ever expected to go in for a finite period and then be taken out. That was to produce data for air-modelling exercises, which has been completed. One report has been released and another one is due to be released in the next few weeks. That information has allowed us to better understand the dispersal characteristics of the plume from the tall stacks. It also identified a number of low-level emission sources from around the plant. We are now working towards identifying specifically what those sources are, what their contributions to the overall emissions from the refinery are and what remedial action can be taken to reduce them. The average cost per monitoring station is a performance indicator for the air-quality management branch. It includes the effort that goes into the data processing and modelling work that comes as a result of running the stations. The cost per station is about \$360 000 to \$470 000. It does not cost that sort of money to purchase the station and put it in, but all the support services that go with that station cost the extra amount. It is not just the cost of the monitoring stations; it is the cost of the air-quality work that goes with them.

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In terms of the follow-up work that we are currently doing with Alcoa, the air quality people are still involved, as are the industry regulation people, mainly out of the Kwinana office of the Department of Environment and Conservation. The performance indicator does not reflect what is going on with Alcoa specifically. But, hopefully, I have given the member a sufficient explanation to understand how we are currently dealing with Alcoa.

**Mr M.J. COWPER:** In my correspondence with previous environment ministers over a number of years, the responses I have received indicate that the matter is with the EPA, but when I challenge the EPA, it says that it is a matter for DEC. We seem to be going around in circles a little on this issue. Alcoa made the application in 2002. It has taken nearly 10 years for a decision to be made. I am not across all the sensitivities of it, but I would have thought that either Alcoa complies or it be given clear and concise information on how it can comply. I do not think that having those sorts of issues hanging around for a long time is very helpful to anybody.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** This was well before my time as minister, but I understand that Mr Atkins has some information and can elaborate on the issue.

**Mr R.P. Atkins:** I think the member is referring to the conditions that were set for the Wagerup 3 expansion. Those conditions required additional monitoring to be conducted by Alcoa and some air modelling to be undertaken to verify the claims made in its impact assessment documentation. That work is part of, if you like, the ministerial approval for the Wagerup 3 expansion. That can be taken only so far until Alcoa confirms its final design for Wagerup 3. As we know, Wagerup 3 has been put on the backburner for a period, and Alcoa has received a section 46 approval, as I understand it, to extend the period of its approval. That is around the Wagerup 3 expansion. The work that I was describing in my previous answer to the member is around the performance of the existing refinery; it is not linked to Wagerup 3. It is about improving the performance of the existing refinery and better understanding the impact of the tall-stack emissions on the surrounding community in the member's electorate. Although one obviously will affect the other in terms of the ultimate design of Wagerup 3, they are not contingent on each other. We are barrelling ahead with trying to get improved performance from the current planning, whether or not Wagerup 3 eventually comes to pass.

[7.10 pm]

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would just like to ask a couple of brief questions at this time. I note that there are another five divisions to get through in this section. Given that I have done this for a couple of years now, I do know that I do not often get to see the officers from the Zoo asked a lot of questions. I am just wondering whether members would like to think about whether there is anyone on the program whom we could perhaps allow to go home.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Madam Chair, we definitely have questions for each of the remaining divisions, including the Perth Zoo and the Swan River Trust.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Jolly good.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Not many, though; we can do them very briefly. We would like to be on to the Department of Water, division 73, by 8.20 pm.

**The CHAIRMAN:** By 8.20 pm. All right; so members do have a plan. That is fine. The next question I have is logged in for the member for South Perth.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 820 of the *Budget Statements*, and specifically to the outcome on emissions and discharges halfway down the page. Why has there been a significant increase in the number of exceedences of the national environment protection ambient air quality measure standards?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Certainly. I thank the member for the question. The increase in the number of exceedences from the 2010–11 budget target of 24 to the estimated actual of 35 is primarily associated with fires in the south west contributing to increased particle levels throughout the region. All exceedences of a standard this financial year were associated with particles as at 18 May 2011. Twenty-five of the 33 measured exceedences occurred at a regional monitoring site. It is apparent that emissions from fires in the region contributed to many of the exceedence events. DEC gives consideration to the potential air quality impact of its prescribed burning activities during planning in an attempt to reduce community exposure to elevated particle levels. It is not always possible to predict short and long-term weather patterns, resulting in some smoke from prescribed burning activities impacting on the public. Environmental variations, such as hotter, drier and/or windier conditions, can also affect the number of exceedences of the standards in any given year. Just to clarify, 10 exceedences were measured in Busselton and five each at Bunbury, Collie and Geraldton. That is where the specific exceedences were.

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**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** Given the importance of prescribed burning, is this a balancing act for the department? What type of emissions and discharges can be tolerated if the department is to continue with this very important activity of prescribed burning?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Prescribed burning is a bit of a balancing act. It is a very difficult task to undertake. It requires a lot of planning. The planning also involves a lot of pre-burning. Prescribed burning is more difficult around built-up areas. To protect urban infrastructure, some pre-back-burning is required, which can be difficult, particularly in built-up areas with powerlines. That pre-burning has to be done so that there is a barrier when the prescribed burn is undertaken when the wind is in the right direction to make sure that it burns only what the department wants it to burn. DEC always tries to burn when it knows the wind is right. It is a bit of a balancing act. Sometimes the wind changes. In terms of more specific answers, I will ask the director general to make some comments—and also Peter Dans.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Come on!

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** It is very important.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Remember, this is opposition time. That is what estimates is about. We have been lenient up to now, minister, but come on; play the game.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I have one further question. I really do not need a lot more information. I believe that the Perth Airport was recently shut down because of smog that might have been caused by either prescribed burning or a bushfire. I think the airport was closed for some considerable period. Does the minister have any information on that matter?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I will ask the director general to answer that question.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** Every single day a decision is made early in the morning on a statewide basis about which fires will and will not go ahead in terms of prescribed burning. Weather forecasting is a key consideration in that. There was a significant fog that rolled into Perth on the day in question a couple of weeks ago, and smoke from prescribed burns did get mixed up in that and contributed to the severity of the event on that day, which affected Perth Airport. The Bureau of Meteorology has acknowledged quite explicitly that the fog and the event that occurred were not foreseeable in terms of the weather forecast at that time. That can happen. It is regrettable, but it is not a precise art form to predict the weather in terms of prescribed burns.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** I refer to the fourth line item under the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 820 of the *Budget Statements*, on the proportion of critically endangered and endangered taxa and ecological communities that have a recovery plan. I also refer to the \$1.53 million in offset funding the department received in 2009–10 from Chevron for the Gorgon threatened and priority species translocation and reintroduction program. Is this program ongoing? Can the minister give a complete outline of how the funding was allocated? It is fine to provide the answer to that question by way of supplementary information. Finally, how many FTEs were or are working on this program, and where are they based?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The director general will be able to answer some of those questions.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** In terms of the indicator, we have some 600 threatened plants and animals on the state list under the Wildlife Conservation Act and we also have a number of threatened ecological communities. We are continually making improvements in the coverage of those species by recovery plans. The target reflects a continuing gradual improvement in that area. My recollection of the Gorgon project, to which the member referred, is that the requirement for the threatened species component of the Gorgon offset package was in the order of \$10 million. I could stand corrected on that. It is funding the translocation of a couple of mammal species and a couple of bird species to the Montebello Islands, at least one mammal species to the Cape Range area on the mainland, and also a couple of mammal species to the northern Goldfields at Lorna Glen. The work has been carried out predominantly by existing staff of our science division and regional services areas.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** Is the program ongoing now?

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The program is ongoing for the duration of that funding.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** How long does the director general think that will be?

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** We are committed, of course, to maintaining the populations in those areas on an ongoing basis after that. I would have to come back with further information on how long the program is designed to run. I imagine that the funding probably stretches over six or eight years or thereabouts.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am sorry to be pedantic, but you need to question the minister, member for Cockburn.

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**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** On that basis, through the minister, can I ask that we be given information on the program itself, how that funding of \$10 million was allocated, and how many FTEs were or are employed in the program?

[7.20 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I am happy to provide information on the Gorgon offset threatened species program. The member is specifically after the cost of FTEs and the length of time it runs for.

**Mr F.M. LOGAN:** How much is left, how the funding was allocated and how many FTEs were and are employed in the program.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is supplementary information on the Gorgon offset threatened species program on the funding, where the funding goes and how long it runs for.

[*Supplementary Information No A33.*]

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to page 818 and desired outcomes of the agency. Being mindful that the Department of Environment and Conservation has a strategic review currently underway, I would like to know whether that has been completed and what the results were.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** It is my understanding that the review is being carried out by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Treasury and Finance, and is not yet completed.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** It is yet to be completed?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is what I am advised.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** I refer to page 817. It is a roundabout way of getting an answer to this question, but I refer to the line item “Item 159 Capital Appropriation” under “Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets”.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That is \$8 805 000?

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** Yes. Was the new Western Australian Herbarium part of that appropriation? What has happened with it? I understand that it was a really big project, started by the previous government.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The building is completed; it was actually funded by previous funds. It is quite a nice building; I have been there a number of times for functions. It was started by the previous government. The director general might elaborate a little more on that, or was that sufficient?

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** I just would like to know a little more about it. I understand there were problems with climate control.

**Mr K.J. McNamara:** The building was completed in the latter part of last year. We had to do some extra work to rectify some air conditioning problems because the plant collection needs carefully controlled temperatures and humidity and so on to prevent insect attack. We look like being able to start moving the 750 000 plant specimen collection into the new building over the next couple of weeks. The building was completed at a cost of about \$32 million, and it is a major asset for the state.

**Mrs C.A. MARTIN:** A great investment!

**Dr G.G. JACOBS:** I refer to page 824, under the heading “New Works”, and the line item “Great Western Woodlands”. That is a natural woodlands that occupies most of my electorate, including Yilgarn, Coolgardie and Dundas. The total spend on that line item is \$800 000, and the spend for 2011–12 is \$300 000. What is that spending for? On another point, when I was sitting over there presenting this division last year, I seem to remember a figure of \$800 000 as well. Is this a new spend or is it the same spend?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** This is the capital component of the Great Western Woodlands project. The government has committed \$3.8 million over four years to ensure the long-term conservation of the unique natural and cultural values of the Great Western Woodlands. The biodiversity and cultural conservation strategy for the area was released by the then Minister for Environment in November last year, which the member is probably aware of. For 2011–12, \$2.2 million has been allocated for the Great Western Woodlands, including the capital component of \$300 000. Fire management is among the most important components, with a total of \$1.78 million allocated for upgrading and maintaining access, developing low fuel areas, monitoring the impacts of planned and unplanned fires, studying the interactions between weeds and fire, and a fire research project to investigate the impacts and dynamics of fire, which will be carried out by the Department of Environment and Conservation’s science division. There will be some feral animal control programs, including donkeys at Cave Hill and corellas in the City of Kalgoorlie–Boulder. DEC will also install signage for key entry points throughout the woodlands, and will further develop the special Great Western Woodlands section on its website. The capital amount to which the member refers is for upgrading visitor facilities on DEC-managed lands throughout the

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Great Western Woodlands area, as well as upgrading some tracks for management purposes, especially fire management.

**The appropriation was recommended.**