

NATIVE FOREST — LOGGING — TRANSITION PACKAGE

717. Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS to the minister representing the Minister for Forestry:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Steve Martin, who is absent from the chamber on urgent parliamentary business.

I refer to the minister's media release from Tuesday, 16 August, which states that the newly announced programs were "developed in consultation" with the Native Forestry Transition Group and other stakeholders.

- (1) Will the minister confirm that an outline of the package was only presented to members of the community and the industry development subgroup on the afternoon of Monday, 15 August and is yet to be presented to the Native Forestry Transition Group?
- (2) Will the minister also confirm that he agreed to give members of the group two weeks to provide feedback to the packages in light of the serious concerns they raised?
- (3) Why did the minister publicly announce the packages without waiting for feedback from the group as promised?
- (4) Will the minister commit to returning to negotiations with the group and engaging in meaningful consultation, rather than simply dictating to the industry?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following quite long answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Forestry.

- (1)–(4) Significant consultation with key stakeholders, including members of the Native Forestry Transition Group, has taken place during the development of the support packages for the native forestry transition plan, including the recently announced \$30 million industry and community grants program. Subgroups comprising members of the Native Forestry Transition Group were formed to facilitate the consultation process and the development of the three transition support packages—the business transition program, the native forest workforce transition package and the industry and community development grants program. Each of the subgroups met at least four times, with the industry and community development subgroup also conducting an extensive workshop on 2 June 2022. The three funding streams that make up the government's \$30 million investment to strengthen south west communities was created following this consultation.

The industry and community development subgroup advised that the three areas of need were direct investment to the communities most affected to stimulate regional economies; support for secondary businesses affected by the decision to end native forestry but not direct customers of the Forest Products Commission; and the need to attract new and innovative industries that will bring jobs to the communities most affected, in particular Bridgetown–Greenbushes, Nannup and Manjimup. The \$30 million government investment into the south west will be delivered by three grant streams, with \$15 million towards the small business development and diversification program, \$10 million for a new industry and development attraction program and \$5 million for a community development small grants program.

A consultation draft has been presented to the subgroup to provide feedback on the finer details of the programs and to help inform guidelines and eligibility criteria. The government has received positive feedback from the community in response to the industry and community grants program and has already been contacted by businesses that want to apply for a grant so that they can create jobs locally in the south west.

The PRESIDENT: Thanks, minister. You might like to remind your colleagues of standing order 106 in relation to concise replies.