

PRESCRIBED BURNING

1459. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Environment:

- (1) Are prescribed burning operations conducted in Western Australia (WA) subject to the *The Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC)?
- (2) Does the Department refer Prescribed Burning plans for assessment by the Commonwealth Government under the EPBC Act?
- (3) How many prescribed burns were assessed under the EPBC Act over the last 2 years?
- (4) Are any prescribed burning activities covered under the Regional Forest Agreement (RFA):
 - (a) if so, what features identify burns that are covered by the scope of this agreement?
- (5) Will the Minister provide a list of prescribed burns over the last 2 years that have been covered under:
 - (a) the Regional Forest Agreement; and
 - (b) the EPBC Act?
- (6) With the cessation of native forest logging operations in Western Australia, will the RFA be reviewed?
- (7) What activities will the RFA cover in the future?

Hon Darren West replied:

- (1) National environment law does not generally regulate fire prevention measures taken by State and Territory Governments, and only applies in limited circumstances. Fire prevention activities only need Commonwealth environmental approval if they are likely to have a significant impact on a nationally protected matter, and they are not specifically exempted by national environment law.
- (2) No.
- (3) Nil.
- (4) (a) The Western Australian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA) recognises the Western Australian Government's Forest Management System as the framework to provide for multiple forest uses and the protection of environmental, heritage, economic and social values of Western Australia's south-west forests, consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable forest management. Within this framework, prescribed burning activities on land managed by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions are undertaken for the purposes of:
 - bushfire risk management;
 - biodiversity management;
 - vegetation management;
 - water catchment management;
 - silviculture (including forest regeneration); and
 - research.
- (5) (a)–(b) Not applicable.
- (6) The Western Australian Government will liaise with the Commonwealth Government on whether the Western Australian RFA needs to be reviewed, in light of the cessation of large-scale commercial native forest logging from 1 January 2024.
- (7) The Western Australian Government anticipates that the Western Australian RFA will continue to provide for multiple uses of the State's south-west forests.