

ENVIRONMENT — WETLANDS — RAMSAR CONVENTION

785. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to question on notice 711 asked on 10 May 2022, and I ask:

- (a) considering that a large number of Western Australia wetlands were identified by independent scientists more than 20 years ago as eligible for Ramsar nomination, why have no further Ramsar nominations been made by the State Government in the past 20 years;
- (b) what consultation was carried out in regard to the proposed Ramsar nomination of the Tributaries of the Lower Blackwood and as public input sought, or was consultation confined to discussions with a few vested interest groups;
- (c) what were the grounds of objection to the Ramsar nomination of the Tributaries of the Lower Blackwood that were identified in these consultations;
- (d) in regard to the proposed Ramsar nomination of Lake MacLeod, what form of consultation was carried out;
- (e) does the leaseholder of Lake MacLeod support the Ramsar nomination;
- (f) who does the Government regard as the stakeholders for Ramsar site nominations:
  - (i) does this in (f), include independent scientists, conservation groups and the local community;
- (g) is unanimous stakeholder support required for Ramsar nominations;
- (h) why isn't the decision to nominate a wetland for Ramsar listing based primarily on scientific advice;
- (i) does the Government support the Ramsar nomination for the Greater Brixton Street Wetlands:
  - (i) if no to (i), why not; and
  - (ii) if yes to (i), is a nomination being prepared; and
- (j) were the Cape Range sub-terranean wetlands recommended for Ramsar nomination by independent scientists:
  - (i) if yes to (j), why hasn't this nomination been completed; and
  - (ii) if no to (j), what was the scientific advice?

**Hon Stephen Dawson replied:**

- (a) The process for a Ramsar nomination requires endorsement by the WA Government, then approval by the Australian Government prior to consideration by the International Ramsar Committee. The documentation and consultation required to support a nomination is significant. Each site requires a Ramsar Information Sheet with mapping, an ecological character description, a management plan and a summary of consultative outcomes for the nomination. The nomination process can be lengthy and may require considerable resources to complete.
- (b) The consultation for Ramsar nomination of the Tributaries of the Lower Blackwood was extensive and included targeted and broad public consultation.
- (c) There were concerns that the Ramsar listing would limit or prohibit current and future land management activities.
- (d) The consultation for Ramsar nomination of the Lake MacLeod was extensive and included targeted and broad public consultation.
- (e) At the time of consultation, there were concerns that the Ramsar listing would limit or prohibit current and future land management activities.
- (f) The Australian Ramsar Site Nomination Guidelines provide guidance on consultation. This includes obtaining in-principle support from site managers and landowners and broad consultation regarding the nomination and ongoing management with adjacent landowners, Traditional Owners, relevant Government departments, natural resource management bodies, community, and community interest groups.
  - (i) Yes.
- (g) No.
- (h) The decision to support a Ramsar site nomination is considered by the Australian Government on its merits, to ensure that the site meets the Ramsar criteria for international importance, appropriate consultation with key stakeholders has taken place, suitable management arrangements are in place for the site, ongoing stakeholder engagement arrangements are in place for the site, and whether the site will assist

Australia to meet the requirements of the Ramsar Convention's Strategic Plan and is in accordance with the Australian Ramsar Site Nomination Guidelines

- (i) Government has not received a Ramsar nomination for the Greater Brixton Street wetlands.
  - (i) Not applicable.
  - (ii) Not applicable.
- (j) No.
  - (i) Not applicable
  - (ii) No independent scientific advice was received.