

PRESCRIBED BURNING — ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT REFERRALS

1460. Hon Dr Brad Pettitt to the parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions (DBCA's) prescribed burning operations and the operation of the *Environmental Protection Act 1999*, I ask:

- (a) how many proposed prescribed burning activities undertaken by DBCA outside of the Forest Management Plan have been referred to the EPA for assessment under Section 38 of the *Environmental Protection Act*;
- (b) how many of these referrals were:
 - (i) considered to be valid referrals by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA);
 - (ii) considered significant proposals by the EPA; and
 - (iii) assessed by the EPA;
- (c) will the Minister table the relevant referral documents from (b)(i)–(iii):
 - (i) if not, why not;
- (d) if no referrals have been made, can the Minister provide an explanation of how the requirements of S38(4) of the Act are being fulfilled;
- (e) does the EPA have a bilateral agreement with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions:
 - (i) if not, why not; and
- (f) what authorisation (if any) has been provided under the *Environmental Protection Act 1999* for prescribed burning activities outside of the *Forest Management Plan*?

Hon Darren West replied:

- (a) None.
- (b) (i)–(iii) Not applicable.
- (c) (i) Not applicable.
- (d) Section 38 (4) of the *Environmental Protection Act 1986* requires that a decision-making authority must refer a proposal to the Authority as soon as it has notice of the proposal if the proposal appears to it to be a significant proposal. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attraction (DBCA) does not consider that its operational prescribed burning program is a significant proposal consistent with this legislation.
- (e) (i) No. The Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DBCA that defines respective roles and responsibilities of the parties, outlines the principles that will foster a strong partnership between the parties, collaborative working arrangements that support efficient and effective environmental impact assessment processes, implementation of DBCA's roles and development of environmental policy.
- (f) No authorisations have been sought by DBCA for prescribed burning activities outside of the Forest Management Plan.