

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**ANSWERS QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING**

**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

**Hon Tjorn Sibma MLC asked:**

1. With respect to 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Management' on page 710 and the reference to this function on page 712 under the Key Effectiveness Indicators, for each financial year from 2010-11 until present, please advise how many threatened, endangered and critically endangered species and ecological communities there are in Western Australia?

**Answer:...**

Financial Year	Critically Endangered		Endangered		Vulnerable		Threatened (sum)	
	Species	Ecological Communities	Species	Ecological Communities	Species	Ecological Communities	Species	Ecological Communities
<b>2010-11</b>	186	21	160	17	265	28	<b>611</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2011-12</b>	193	21	156	17	289	28	<b>638</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2012-13</b>	200	21	163	17	290	28	<b>653</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2013-14</b>	206	21	161	17	294	28	<b>661</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2014-15</b>	212	21	165	17	292	28	<b>669</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2015-16</b>	213	21	170	17	287	28	<b>670</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2016-17</b>	211	21	183	17	278	28	<b>672</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>2017-18</b>	213	20	195	17	269	28	<b>677</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	217	20	198	17	263	28	<b>678</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2019-20</b>	217	20	198	17	263	28	<b>678</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2020-21</b>	217	20	198	17	263	28	<b>678</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>2021-22</b>	217	20	198	17	263	28	<b>678</b>	<b>65</b>

Figures for financial years 2010-2011 are as of 30<sup>th</sup> June and for 2012-22 as at 1<sup>st</sup> June.

2. Regarding recovery plans referred to on page 712, what are the top ten recovery plans by funding allocation for critically endangered and endangered species and ecological communities?

**Answer:...**

It is not possible to identify the top ten recovery plans by funding allocation as recovery plans provide guidance to DBCA and other organisations. At DBCA, implementation of actions for the recovery of threatened species and ecological is delivered through funding for scientific research and on-ground operations. Many actions are taken across multiple landscapes and species (e.g. feral animal control) therefore it is not possible to identify funding allocated to specific species or individual plans.

The development and implementation of approved biodiversity management programs, including recovery plans for threatened species and ecological communities, is included in the funding allocation for in Service 6 – conserving habitats, species and ecological communities.

3. Regarding the 'Aboriginal Ranger Program' on page 723, please account for the growth and later decline in the funding attributed to the program over the estimates period?

**Answer:...**

A phased approach is used to allocate funding over the first 1-2 years through 'rounds', and the term of the grants awarded vary depending on the project design and purpose. The funding cashflow has been designed based on demand cycles of the projects being highest at the 2-3-year mark and diminishing after that, as demonstrated in the delivery of the 2017 program.

4. Please provide the details of each specific election commitment funded across the estimates period as listed on page 723?

**Answer:...**

The Department will provide a total of \$12.079 million in grants and subsidies between 2021-22 and 2024-25 in relation to the 2021 Election Commitments.

	<b>Total</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>	<b>2024-25</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Est.</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Outyear</b>	<b>Outyear</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>	<b>\$'000</b>
Swan Canning Riverpark Initiatives	4,348	1,090	1,090	1,088	1,086	1,084
Urban Forest Projects - Swan Canning Riverpark	2,540	300	300	700	700	840
Yellagonga Regional Park	2,235	615	615	170	1,250	200
Artificial Shellfish Reef	1,408	-	-	300	300	808
Small Grants	1,198	1,198	1,198	-	-	-
Dwellingup Gap Trails	350	350	350	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,079</b>	<b>3,553</b>	<b>3,553</b>	<b>2,258</b>	<b>3,336</b>	<b>2,932</b>

5. What is the 'Net Conservation Benefit' line item listed on page 723?

**Answer:...**

The Net Conservation Benefits program refers to additional funds contributed by the Gorgon Joint Venture in relation to their natural gas project on Barrow Island.

Net Conservation Benefits are defined in schedule 1 of the Barrow Island Act 2003 as "demonstrable and sustainable additions to, or improvements in, biodiversity conservation values of Western Australia targeting, where possible, the biodiversity conservation values affected or occurring in similar bio-regions to Barrow Island."

The Gorgon Joint Venture (GJV) participants have agreed to pay \$60 million (indexed) in instalments to fund Net Conservation Benefits. Funding is indexed from 1 January 2004 and paid by the GJV into a special purpose account administered by the Department of Biodiversity Conservation and Attractions. Funds are paid in instalments over approximately 30 years, until a total of \$60 million is reached.

The line item listed on page 723 refers to the milestone payments for a current project under the Net Conservation Benefits program: 'Delivering Broad Conservation Benefits by Controlling a Threatening Transformer Weed in the Pilbara that is led by CSIRO.

6. What are the details of the \$400,000 to be spent annually against the 'Wildlife Conservation' line item on page 723?

**Answer: ...**

Perth Zoo's Wildlife Conservation Action (WCA) Program raises funds from the community for annual disbursement to support in-situ conservation activities conducted by non-government partner organisations around the world.

Funds are generated through fundraising activities, including on-site public donations and animal interactions.

WCA funds are allocated to programs that support the conservation of species represented by the animals housed at Perth Zoo, with the larger goal of supporting conservation of habitat associated with those species.

Minister's initials



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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**ANSWERS QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING**

**Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions**

**The Committee asked:**

1. For each project identified in your asset investment program, was it subject to cost-benefit analysis and, if so, what was its ratio?

**Answer: ...**

No. A cost-benefit analysis was not undertaken for every project identified in DBCA's asset investment program. A business case which includes financial analysis is required for those projects valued above \$5 million. WA Recovery Plan projects were designed to meet government and community needs whilst also generating economic activity across the state in response to COVID-19. A considered approach to each project was made however, many of the outcomes were indirect, intangible, or difficult to estimate/measure in terms of calculating an economic benefit and deriving a ratio. For several of the line items that exceed \$5 million, these relate to standard asset replacement/refurbishment programs made up of many smaller projects, which are not subject to the cost benefit analysis rather a risk-based assessment.

Minister's initials



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## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

### ANSWERS QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING

#### Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

##### Hon Steve Martin MLC asked:

1. I refer to page 710 of Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, Paragraph 13:

(a) What activities have already been undertaken as part of the next Forest Management Plan (FMP);

**Answer:...**

Stakeholder engagement and consultation activities have been undertaken including meetings with key stakeholders and peak bodies, a series of stakeholder focus groups and release of an online survey to capture public feedback on the future of forest management.

An Independent Silvicultural Review Panel was convened to review current and proposed silvicultural guidelines and practices, with its report published on 20 May 2022.

Preparation of a draft document has commenced and is ongoing. This includes significant review and collation of information held within and external to the Department.

(b) How many FTE staff are currently employed to work on preparation of the FMP;

**Answer:...**

Currently fourteen FTEs are dedicated to preparation of the next FMP, or work specifically to support preparation of the FMP. A number of additional staff throughout the Department contribute to the project as a component of their existing roles.

(c) Will the Department please table which, if any, stakeholders have already been consulted in preparing for the FMP?

**Answer:...**

The Department has undertaken engagement with industry, government, traditional owner and peak bodies and other key stakeholders as well as the broader community to inform the planning and drafting of the FMP. A total of 74 people participated in focus groups representing conservation, ecologists and scientists, industry and professionals, land managers, local government authorities, mining, and tourism and recreation sectors. A total of 2277 individuals responded to the online survey. A total of 1002 individual contacts are on the FMP stakeholder register.

2. I refer to page 713 of Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, Paragraph 5:

(a) What are the current market conditions referred to in paragraph 5;

**Answer:...**

The market conditions referred to in paragraph 5 relate to the full period 2014-2021, during which there has been considerable fluctuation in demand for sawlogs. Fluctuations have arisen in particular years from market volatility, structural adjustments within the sawmilling sector, and COVID-19 disruptions to supply chains.

(b) Has low annual rainfall impacted the budget targets or is it due to changes in rainfall;

**Answer:...**

The budget target figure is the cumulative total of the annual allowable harvest of jarrah and karri sawlogs. The average annual allowable harvest of jarrah and karri sawlogs has remained the same each year, so the cumulative total is unrelated to rainfall.

(c) Are the market conditions affected by the annual rainfall in forest areas?

**Answer:...**

The Department is unaware of a direct correlation between annual rainfall and market conditions for sawlogs.

3. I refer to page 713 of Budget Paper 2, Volume 2, Paragraph 5:

(a) Was any scientific modelling or research specific to Western Australia undertaken when making the decision to end native hardwood forestry, and: (i) If yes, will the Department please table the modelling and research used; and

(ii) If no, why not;

**Answer:...**

The WA Government's decision to cease large-scale commercial timber harvesting in south-west native forests from 2024 will provide for a renewed focus on the ecological health of forests in the face of climate change. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on Climate Change states that human-induced climate change is already affecting many weather and climate extremes in every region across the globe. The impacts of the changing climate are already being seen in Western Australia.

(b) Was the environmental impact of importing timber in order to meet local demand considered in the modelling

**Answer:...**

There has been a steady reduction over the past 20 years in the use and availability of jarrah timber. It is no longer commonly used as a structural timber and is being replaced by other flooring and decking products, including engineered products. The introduction of the Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) rating for construction in bushfire prone areas has also limited the use of native timbers in houses and other buildings in recent years in WA.

There are lots of Australian grown plantation alternatives already available in WA.

The WA Government is investing a record \$350 million in the expansion of softwood plantations to create and secure jobs for the State's timber and construction industries and ensure sustainable supply.

(c) Was the environmental impact of forcing Simcoa to import and utilise Colombian coal considered in the modelling?

**Answer: ...**

I refer the Member to the Minister for Forestry's answer to a similar question in the Assembly Estimates hearing, and note that this is a business decision for Simcoa who already imports and utilises coal from Colombia

Minister's initials



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