

CONSERVATION AND LAND MANAGEMENT

Division 36: Conservation and Land Management

Division 38: Department of Environmental Protection

Division 41: Water and Rivers Commission

Question on Notice: Hon Jim Scott asked -

- (1) *What funding has been allocated to the Cockburn Sound Management Council and how does this compare with the past three years?*
- (2) *What funds have been allocated for the implementation of Perth's Air Quality Management Plans?*
- (3) *Why is so little funding allocated to the management of Regional Parks compared with King's Park?*
- (4) *What funds have been allocated to implement the State Sustainability Strategy?*

Answer:

- (1) The following five-year budget was approved when the Cockburn Sound Management Council was established.

	2000/2001	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005
Administration	\$190,340	\$190,000	\$184,000	\$154,000	\$154,000
Members Fees	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000	\$46,000
Development and Implementation of EMP	\$210,000	\$90,000	\$50,000	\$40,000	\$0
Total	\$446,340	\$326,000	\$280,000	\$240,000	\$200,000

- (2) \$1,142,000 for the financial year 2003/04.
- (3) The annual budget allocated to the Department of Conservation and Land Management for recurrent expenditure and the maintenance of Perth's eight regional parks (ie excluding capital and revenue) is \$2.3 million, which equates to approximately \$200 per hectare.

Other parks managed by State Government agencies, such as Kings Park, Whiteman Park and Araluen, do spend a larger amount per hectare on management.

The funding for other parks is a result of historically different management structures and funding arrangements.

The maintenance budget for Perth's regional parks is based on the original allocations as determined by the Coalition Government in 1997. The annual cost to maintain the regional parks has increased as a result of:

the Department of Conservation and Land Management has undertaken a major capital works program within the regional parks, which raises the annual maintenance costs;

the community has become more aware of the conservation and recreation values within the regional parks and expects these values to be enhanced and protected; and

as residential and industrial expansion continues in the metropolitan area, there is increased pressure on the integrity of the regional parks.

- (4) Funding for the State Sustainability Strategy will be determined when the Strategy is finalised.

Supplementary Information No 42.

Question: Hon Peter Foss asked -

- (1) *Does the Department have any GEHA housing in Manjimup?*
- (2) *What has been the effect on the department's requirements for GEHA housing as a result of the implementation of the Protecting Old Growth Forests Policy?*

- (3) *If any of this housing has become surplus to CALM's requirements as a result of the implementation of this policy, are you aware of what has happened to that housing?*

Answer:

- (1) Yes. The Department currently uses 9 GEHA houses in Manjimup.
- (2) The Protecting Our Old-Growth Forests policy has had no effect on the Department's requirements for GEHA housing. However significant change is occurring to housing requirements in Manjimup and elsewhere for several other reasons.

Firstly, 24 of the staff who transferred to the Forest Products Commission (FPC) when it was formed in 2000 were occupying GEHA houses, including 6 staff at Manjimup. The GEHA now supplies houses direct to the FPC.

Secondly, forestry settlements such as the houses at Manjimup were originally designed many decades ago to ensure that fire fighters could be quickly assembled for suppression of forest fires. Modern telecommunications and widespread private ownership of reliable vehicles have eliminated the requirement for fire fighters to live in compact settlements. Modern community attitudes support free choice for people about their lifestyles and the neighbourhood in which they live, which has reduced the demand for housing in forestry settlements such as the Manjimup settlement.

Finally, many of the forestry settlement houses are old and basic and do not meet modern standards for amenity value nor community standards for roads and drainage. It is not cost effective to bring the Manjimup settlement and many other settlements up to modern community standards.

Department policy is to reduce the number of GEHA houses used by the Department in Manjimup and other south-west towns where employees can obtain housing from the local private sector market at prices below Perth market prices.

- (3) Surplus housing is re-used wherever possible. In some cases GEHA places tenants from other agencies or the private sector in forestry houses that are surplus to CALM's requirements. Some surplus houses are re-used for offices and stores, including two houses at Manjimup. One house at Manjimup is used for short-term accommodation for visiting scientists and volunteers during field surveys. One house has been relocated from Manjimup to Pemberton for use as an office and another is currently being relocated.

If State government agencies have no further use for surplus forestry houses they are sold either with the land or for removal. Some houses with land on the north side of Brain Street, Manjimup have been sold but houses on the south side of Brain Street are on a Crown reserve that is not economic to subdivide, and most of the houses are too close to operations areas for sale or occupation by the general public. A number of houses on the south side of Brain Street Manjimup have been sold and removed.

Supplementary Information No 44.

Question: Hon Peter Foss asked: Does the Department of Conservation and Land Management have a definition for the purposes of fire protection of fire hazard by reference to fuel loads? If so, what is that definition; what is the percentage area of national parks and state forest that has this defined fuel load; and how many hectares of these lands are within the metropolitan area or within 50 kilometres of the metropolitan area?

Answer: Fire hazard depends on many factors of which fuel load is one. "Standard fuel quantity" is 8 tonnes per hectare in jarrah forest and 12 tonnes per hectare in karri forest. When fuel quantity exceeds these levels, the difficulty of fire suppression is significantly increased. Fuel accumulation rates vary in different ecosystems, soil types and rainfall zones but on average, standard fuel quantities are reached after a period of around six years of fuel accumulation in south-west forest ecosystems.

A table and a map containing information requested, current as at June 2002, are attached (see Attachments 1 and 2). Fuel age data have not been updated to account for prescribed burning and wildfires in the 2002/03 fire season. The time since last burn data presented in the table and the map indicate when burning last occurred within a block and assume the whole block was uniformly burnt, however it is known that this is not the case.

Attachment 1

1. For land categories vested in the Conservation Commission within 50 km of Perth -

Existing and proposed tenure category as contained in the Draft Forest Management Plan	Total Area	Years since last burn			
		Less than 7 years		Greater than 6 years	
		area (hectares)	% of total	area (hectares)	% of total
National park	40,100	11,400	28%	28,700	72%
Nature reserve, Conservation park, 5g reserve	13,200	900	7%	12,300	93%
Total conservation reserves	53,300	12,300	23%	41,000	77%
State forest, timber reserve, freehold miscellaneous reserve	97,700	34,900	36%	62,800	64%
Total land vested in the Conservation Commission	151,000	47,200	31%	103,800	69%

2. For land categories vested in the Conservation Commission within the Swan, South West and Warren Regions

Existing and proposed tenure category as contained in the Draft Forest Management Plan	Total Area	Years since last burn			
		Less than 7 years		Greater than 6 years	
		area (hectares)	% of total	area (hectares)	% of total
National park	981,500	332,500	34%	649,000	66%
Nature reserve, Conservation park, 5g reserve	248,000	58,900	24%	189,100	76%
Forest Conservation Area (FCA)	21,800	11,800	54%	10,000	46%
Total conservation reserves and FCA	1,251,300	403,200	32%	848,100	68%
State forest, timber reserve, freehold miscellaneous reserve	1,226,000	420,200	34%	805,800	66%
Total land vested in the Conservation Commission	2,477,400	823,400	33%	1,654,000	67%

Supplementary Information No 45.

Question Hon John Fischer asked: I note that the budget increased from \$117 million to \$121 million. However, since 2001-02 the increase has been close to 20 per cent. Is this increase mainly due to capital increases: and, if not, what is the main component of these increases?

Answer: The increase is mainly in the operations budget, not the capital budget.

The Expenditure Review Committee approved new financial arrangements for forest management work for the 2002-03 financial year. CALM's Consolidated Fund budget was increased by \$10.6 million for 2002-2003

relative to 2001-2002 to pay for work in forests that was previously recouped from the Forest Products Commission.

The Salinity Strategy budget funded from the proceeds of the sale of AlintaGas was \$0.366 million in 2001-02 and was increased by \$4.13 million (total \$4.496 million) in 2002-03. The budget for 2003-04 remains at \$4.496 million.

The following increases and decreases to the operating budget funded from the Consolidated Fund account for the remaining \$2.233 million of the difference between actual expenditure of \$104.177 million in 2001-02, and the budget of \$121.140 million in 2003-04.

Increases:

1. Payroll increases, \$2.3 million,
2. Protecting Our Old-Growth Forests policy funding provided for the management of newly established national parks, \$2 million,
3. Transfer to CALM of management of lands previously the responsibility of the Department of Land Administration, \$0.95 million,
4. Accrual appropriation for increased depreciation, \$0.9 million,
5. Capital user charge increase, \$0.737 million,
6. Prescribed burning increase, \$0.5 million,
7. Establishment and management of Jurien Bay (proposed) and Ningaloo marine parks, \$0.43 million,
8. Native vegetation clearing controls increase, \$0.32 million.

Decreases:

9. One-off funding was provided in 2001-02 for a public liability settlement. This funding was subsequently removed in 2002-03, minus \$1.75 million,
10. Budget reduction for priority and assurance dividend and other miscellaneous items, minus \$1.339 million,
11. Reduction in Capital Contribution due to changed accounting arrangements implemented by Treasury. In addition to the Capital Contribution Account, the Department also has access to a Holding Account managed by Treasury for the purchase of assets. Reduction in the Capital Contribution Account was \$2.815 million, however this has been offset by an increase to the Holding Account of \$3.214 million.

Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked -

- (a) *Why has the budget for the Conservation Commission been reduced?*
- (b) *How are services provided to the Conservation Commission whilst protecting the Commission's independence?*

Answer:

- (a) The budget for the Conservation Commission of WA has increased from \$556,000 in 2002/03 to \$561,000 in 2003/04. As noted in the Budget Statements the estimated actual expenditure for 2002/03 is expected to exceed the budget because of additional expenditure related to the preparation of the Forest Management Plan.
- (b) The Conservation Commission's independence of the Department is established through its membership and statutory functions which include being the vested body for the State's conservation lands, the ability to provide advice to the Minister and its monitoring and auditing role with respect to the performance of the Department in implementing management plans. The principal direct services provided to the Commission are financial, human resources and other corporate service functions. Such services are provided on an agreed basis and are not considered to affect the Commission's independence. Management planning is also undertaken by the Department as provided for in the Conservation and Land Management Act.

Question: Hon Christine Sharp asked -

Key effectiveness indicators – Threatened Species Management

- (a) Have any flora species or subspecies been newly listed as threatened during 2002/2003?
- (b) *If yes to (a), which ones?*

- (c) *If yes to (a), what are the main causes of those additions?*
- (d) *Have any fauna species or subspecies been newly listed as threatened during 2002 / 2003?*
- (e) *If yes to (d), which ones?*
- (f) *If yes to (d), what are the main causes of those additions?*
- (g) *What other changes were made to the above lists?*
- (h) *Why doesn't the list of indicators include threatened ecological communities?*
- (i) *How many threatened ecological communities are there, and where are they located?*
- (j) *How does the answer to (i) compare with the list of threatened ecological communities provided to Giz Watson MLC during Estimates hearings last year?*

Answer:

- (a) Yes – one species was transferred from the Presumed Extinct list to the Declared Rare Flora list, and three species were added to the Declared Rare Flora list.
- (b) *Stachystemon nematophorus* – was transferred from list of Presumed Extinct to Declare Rare Flora.

Calectasia cyanea, *Dryandra pseudoplumosa* and *Eucalyptus recta* - were added to the list of Declared Rare Flora.

- (c) *Stachystemon nematophorus* – was rediscovered in Kalbarri National Park.

Calectasia cyanea, *Dryandra pseudoplumosa* and *Eucalyptus recta* were recommended for addition to the list following adequate surveys being undertaken to confirm their conservation status. All were found to only occur in a few populations on lands that are not secure and are threatened by wildfire, clearing and in the case of *Eucalyptus recta*, with grazing.

- (d) Yes.
- (e) Four species of terrestrial land snail were added to the list of fauna 'presumed to be extinct':

Helicarion castanea
Occirhenea georgiana
Bothriembryon praeceus
Bothriembryon whitleyi

Thirty-three species were added to the list of fauna that are considered to be 'rare or likely to become extinct' (i.e. threatened fauna). Thirty-two are caemaenid land snails and one is a native terrestrial millipede:

<i>Cynotelopus notabilis</i> , WA Pill Millipede	<i>Ningbingia australis australis</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus opiranus</i>
<i>Amplirhagada astuta</i>	<i>Ningbingia australis elongata</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus pagodula</i>
<i>Carinotrachia carsoniana</i>	<i>Ningbingia bulla</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus tanmurrana</i>
<i>Cristilabrum bubulum</i>	<i>Ningbingia dentiens</i>	<i>Cristilabrum isolatum</i>
<i>Cristilabrum buryillum</i>	<i>Ningbingia laurina</i>	<i>Cristilabrum spectaculum</i>
<i>Cristilabrum grossum</i>	<i>Ningbingia octava</i>	<i>Ordtrachia elegans</i>
<i>Cristilabrum monodon</i>	<i>Ningbingia res</i>	<i>Mouldingia occidentalis</i>
<i>Cristilabrum primum</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus christenseni</i>	<i>Mouldingia orientalis</i>
<i>Cristilabrum rectum</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus costus</i>	<i>Westraltrachia alterna</i>
<i>Cristilabrum simplex</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus depressus</i>	<i>Westraltrachia inopinata</i>
<i>Cristilabrum solitudum</i>	<i>Turgenitubulus foramenus</i>	<i>Westraltrachia turbinata</i>

- (f) Sufficient scientific investigation has been undertaken into the conservation status of these species to allow an assessment of their conservation status to be made.

Two of the snails listed as presumed extinct are believed to have become so due to land clearing, while the other two are believed to have become extinct due to the introduction into southwest WA of a predatory snail from Europe and due to land clearing.

The Pill millipede is threatened because of altered fire regimes in its restricted habitat, while the 32 camaenid land snails that are restricted to the north Kimberley region are all threatened by altered fire regimes and cattle grazing.

- (g) One species of flora, *Eucalyptus olivacea* ms, was deleted from the Declared Rare Flora list as it was determined to be incorrectly named, and is in fact the same as a common species.
- (h) Threatened ecological communities (TECs) do not have legislative standing under State legislation (the *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*).
- (i) The Minister for Environment and Heritage has endorsed the informal listing of 69 threatened ecological communities. These TECs are distributed from the Kimberley region in the north to the Esperance sand plains in the south.
- (j) One additional TEC (up from 68 to 69) has been approved by the Minister from the number provided to Giz Watson MLC during the Estimates Committee hearing in 2002.