

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO.5
QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE PORTFOLIOS OF
CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT
17 SEPTEMBER 2010, 9:15am – 1:00pm

Questions from Mr Lynn

DECCW Investigation of BMG Environmental Group

QUESTION 1

Is the Minister for DECCW aware that the DECCW investigation of the business known as BMG Environmental Group has been ongoing for approximately 12 months and is financially crippling a regional business with a loss of 5 jobs at this point in the investigation

QUESTION 2

Is the Minister aware that both the previous BMG Environmental Group investigation which concluded without charges, and the current investigation are being carried out by a local investigator with a known personal grievance for a director of BMG Environmental Group Pty Ltd. What steps has DECCW taken to ensure the decision to investigate and the conduct of the investigation is made on reasonable grounds and not a personal crusade by individual officers?

QUESTION 3

Is the Minister for DECCW aware that investigators interviewing customers of BMG Environmental Group have advised customers to deal elsewhere as BMG is operating illegally and will probably not be in business for long? Is this normal practice or acceptable conduct by DECCW officers?

QUESTION 4

Is the Minister for DECCW aware that prior to issuing Clean Up Notices and Prevention Notices to BMG Environmental Group which were ultimately met with an Audit Report clearing BMG Environmental Group of environmental harm, that BMG had requested to meet with DECCW investigators and this was declined in favour of the heavy handed approach which has resulted in devastating financial affects for this small regional business.

ANSWERS

(Questions 1- 4) I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has been investigating the alleged unlawful transport and disposal of waste activities by several companies and individuals, including BMG Environmental Group Pty Ltd. As this matter relates to an ongoing criminal investigation, it is not appropriate for the Government to comment at this time.

However, DECCW follows publicly available prosecution guidelines in conducting investigations. Investigations require senior level approval for any regulatory action taken, such as the issuing of notices.

I am advised that the investigation is nearing completion.

I am also advised by DECCW that its officers have not advised BMG customers to “deal elsewhere”.

Questions from Mr Cohen

QUESTION 5

The 'Draft Ecological Harvesting Plan Guidelines for Endangered Ecological Communities' (in accordance with the Private Native Forestry Code of Practice Guideline No. 6) is a document that provides substantial discretion to the Department to be able to approve industrial scale logging within Endangered Ecological Communities. Will the Minister provide the scientific basis and objective standards that underpin this document?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The draft Guideline is based on a range of scientific studies and expert opinions by Emeritus Professor Ross Florence, Professors David Lindenmayer and Jerry Franklin, and Doctors Ian Lunt, Tom Spies and Chris McElhinny. References are listed at the end of this response.

Scientific objectives

An Ecological Harvesting Plan is designed, in the majority of circumstances, to assist nature to improve the diversity and structure of a native forest under three situations:

- i) Stagnated growth, or where growth is significantly slowed: ecological thinning is used to diversify stand structure by removing some smaller trees and allowing remaining dominant trees to grow faster and larger. Older, larger trees have hollows and features which provide crucial habitat for many birds and mammals. Reducing tree competition and opening the canopy can also increase flora diversity in the forest understorey.
- ii) Invasive native plants: Dr William Jackson, Deputy Director General of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUNC), recently stated that after broadscale clearing, invasion of pest species is the second greatest threat to biodiversity. Removing invasive species can therefore enhance condition of endangered ecological communities (EECs).
- iii) Modified forests: due to past management practices, these forests have become so modified that they do not provide the full range of ecosystem services; e.g. lack of regeneration. Removing nominated trees in this case can therefore enhance the condition of EECs.

Two leading, independent forest ecologists, Dr Ian Lunt, Senior Lecturer Associate in Vegetation Ecology and Management, Charles Sturt University and Dr Chris McElhinny, Lecturer in Forest and Woodland Ecology, Australian National University, provided expert advice and reviewed the development of the draft.

Scientific basis

The broad aim of ecological thinning is to facilitate successional processes in regrowth stands. Widely accepted and cited models of stand development by Oliver and Larsen (1996) and Franklin et al. (2002) indicate that regrowth stands pass through an early successional stage, termed stem exclusion. This stage follows the establishment of the new stand after a disturbance, such as intense wildfire or clearing.

As the stems in the regrowth stand increase in size, they progressively occupy more of the available site resources until a point is reached where all available resources are utilised by the dense regrowth.

Further growth is only possible if some stems die and free up resources. Death is usually achieved by larger, faster growing stems out competing weaker, slower growing stems. This process of stand differentiation depends on differences in growth rates between the regrowth trees.

In many dry communities where stems are slow growing, these differences may be very small and take a long time to be expressed. As a result, the process of competition is poorly expressed and the weaker trees are not killed. This not only prevents the freeing up of site resources to allow the stronger trees to keep growing, but also prevents the creation of dead standing trees which are a valuable habitat component for a range of fauna (McElhinny et al. 2006).

In some communities, stand development may appear to stop altogether, with very little growth on individual trees. The stands can remain as poorly differentiated, dense regrowth for many decades, and in some cases, such as the dry sclerophyll forests of the southern tablelands or the cypress pine forests of the western slopes, the condition may endure for 100-plus years. These long periods of stagnation may reflect the suppression of fire from these environments, which would have acted as a natural thinning event in the past.

The stagnation of stand development at the stem exclusion stage has serious ecological consequences. In terms of structure and composition, the stem exclusion stage is the simplest stage of stand development.

The dense overstorey monopolises soil, water and light resources so that understorey species are virtually absent from these stands. Furthermore, because the overstorey trees do not grow, large trees are limited to the few that were present before the stand regenerated. The lack of growth in the young trees prevents their crowns from expanding to a point where branches fail and fall to the ground as valuable inputs of coarse woody debris. Branch failure is also critical for initiating hollow development in the new stand.

In short, these regrowth stands can become locked in a state where there is virtually no understorey, very little coarse woody debris, few hollow bearing trees and few dead trees. Without active intervention this condition is likely to endure.

Although low in structural complexity, the stem exclusion stage is, of course, a normal part of stand development, and so will be important to some biota. It is therefore important that patches of dense regrowth are left within treated stands.

References

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QUESTION 6

Will the Minister or Department outline and itemize the allocation of funds from the Private Native Forestry Program since the Environmental Trust started administering the program including the names of recipients of funds, which local government area they reside in and obligations attaching to funds?

ANSWER

To support implementation of the Private Native Forestry (PNF) Code of Practice, the Government provided a funding package from July 2007 to; assist those who are adversely

affected to exit the industry, provide training to improve silvicultural and environmental outcomes, and accelerate implementation of the Code.

Industry assistance

The PNF Industry Assistance program provided assistance to those PNF businesses and their workers unable to continue in the industry as a result of the implementation of the PNF Code of Practice. The program is administered by the Environmental Trust with advice from the PNF Conservation Council, which is a body made up of the Directors General of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), and the Department of Primary Industries.

There are two main types of assistance under the PNF Industry Assistance program: Business Exit Assistance and Worker Assistance.

The objectives of Business Exit Assistance are to:

- assist businesses to exit the industry, where they have been made unviable as a direct result of the introduction of the PNF Code of Practice in the immediate to short term; and
- help business owners who are bona fide employees make the transition to new jobs and improve their options for re-employment.

To be eligible for Business Exit Assistance, a business must:

- be a sawmill or other primary processor of forest products operating in the NSW PNF timber industry; or
- conduct harvesting or haulage operations providing NSW PNF forest products to a primary processor; and
- have been actively engaged in the NSW PNF industry as at 1 August 2007 and for at least six months in each of the three previous financial years 2004/05, 2005/06 and 2006/07; and
- have been made financially unviable (or will be made financially unviable) within the period 1 August 2007 to 31 December 2010; and
- demonstrate to the satisfaction of the PNF Conservation Council that the business is, or will be made, unviable as a direct result of resource or sawmill harvesting and/or haulage capacity constraints arising as a result of the commencement of the PNF Code of Practice ; and
- be able to demonstrate that it has taken all reasonable measures to secure resource supply.

The objectives of Worker Assistance are to:

- assist those workers made redundant as a direct result of the introduction of the Code in the immediate to short term to reduce the impact on their families and the local community; and
- provide training opportunities for redundant workers to assist with the transition to new jobs and improve their options for re-employment.

To be eligible for Worker Assistance, an applicant must have been employed in the NSW PNF timber industry (either full-time, part-time or casual) as at 1 August 2007 and for at least six months of the preceding twelve month period as one of the following:

- a sawmill worker;
- an employee of a harvesting or haulage contractor;
- a self-employed harvesting or haulage contractor;
- an employee of a non-mill business that is a primary processor of timber resource (e.g. posts, firewood, etc.); or
- an employee of a business approved for Business Exit Assistance under PNF Industry Assistance;

and have been made redundant as a consequence of the introduction and impact of the PNF Code of Practice.

Advice from DECCW

Allocations under the PNF Industry Assistance Program

Ten applications for industry assistance were received from businesses and seven from individuals. Three sawmills that were immediately affected by the regulation of the industry were provided with early exit assistance. To date, \$545,922 has been paid to businesses wanting to exit the industry, \$285,000 for support to business owners, \$6,847 for re-training and \$21,305 to assist workers to exit the industry. The details of these funding allocations is summarised in the following tables.

Business Exit Assistance	Exit Assistance Payments	Owner Assist Payments	Training Assist Payments	Local Government Area
Bendemeer Sawmills	\$250,560	\$90,000	\$0	Tamworth
T & G Timbers Pty Ltd	\$57,150	\$30,000	\$4,985	Tamworth
Peter Mark McCauley	\$197,312	\$25,000	\$1,862	Shoalhaven
Neville Morrarsey	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$0	Kempsey
Tindarra Timbers	\$10,000	\$50,000	\$0	Gloucester
J.G. Williamson	\$10,000	\$30,000	\$0	Northern Tablelands
Bago Haulage Pty Ltd	\$10,900	\$30,000	\$0	Port Macquarie/ Hastings
TOTAL	\$545,922	\$285,000	\$6,847	

Worker Assistance	Special Redundancy Payment	Local Government Area

Lucas Mathers	\$8,575	Shoalhaven
Ray Elmes	\$7,416	Tamworth
Dallas Thrift	\$5,314	Tamworth
TOTAL	\$21,305	

Advice from DECCW

Training

The Private Native Forestry (PNF) training program is targeted at landholders and logging contractors to assist them in complying with the PNF Code of Practice. Its overarching goal is to help bring about a stronger culture of sustainable practice in private native forestry in NSW. The PNF training program commenced in mid-2007 and is funded by the Environmental Trust until 30 June 2012.

The PNF training program consists of accredited courses delivered by TAFE, and of PNF Awareness Field Days delivered by the Department of Industry and Investment NSW. The program also includes preparation and publication of PNF materials.

Expenditure on Training to 30 September 2010	
TAFE	\$501,500
I&I field days	\$538,000
DECCW staff to assist with training	\$633,000
Preparation and publication of PNF information materials	\$132,000
Advertising, staff training, steering committee costs	\$98,000
TOTAL	\$1,902,500

Accelerated implementation

Funding is provided to ensure that current service levels to the industry are maintained for issuing PNF property vegetation plans, undertaking property assessments of old growth and rainforest, auditing, compliance and administration of the industry assistance program.

Expenditure on Accelerated Implementation to 30 September 2010	
Assessments/PVP services/audits/administration	\$2,788,000
Enforcement	\$150,000
TOTAL	\$2,938,000

QUESTION 7

Will the Minister or Department outline and itemize the allocation of funds from the Native Vegetation Assistance Package (Sustainable Farming Grants and Farmer Exist Assistance Program) since the Environmental Trust started administering the program including the names of recipients of funds, which local government area they reside in and obligations attaching to funds?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Central West Catchment Management Authority (CMA) administered funding for the Sustainable Farming Grants and Offsets Pool of the Native Vegetation Assistance Package (NVAP). The following is a breakdown of funds received and administered by the Central West CMA and the projects funded. Note: \$506,577 was paid to the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) to administer the Private Native Forestry Sustainable Farming Grants.

Sustainable Farming Grants administered by Central West CMA

Grantee	Project	Funding	LGA
Alan Clive and Evelyn Ruth Woodley	Value-adding to existing beef enterprise	\$211,970 (\$120,000 grant and \$91,970 landholder contribution)	Parry
Peter and Elizabeth Dowling	Adoption of best practise conservation farming (zero till farming), and incorporation of Dorper sheep into the enterprise	\$220,000 (\$120,000 grant and \$100,000 landholder contribution)	Cobar
Patrick and Michael Bunyan	Value adding to existing irrigation project to increase options and flexibility of the grazing and farming enterprise	\$185,000 (\$120,000 grant and \$65,000 landholder contribution)	Hay and Balranald
Max and Marilyn Boyd	Undertake pasture cropping to improve pasture with minimum disturbance machinery and the installation of hay and grain storage and feeders to assist with maintenance of ground cover	\$232,000 (\$120,000 grant and \$112,000 landholder contribution)	Bombala

Landholder obligations:

- Completely expend the provided project funds by 30 June 2010;
- Provide an expense report, a statutory declaration certifying that all activities for the funded project were completed and evidence of having completed a relevant sustainable farm management course; and

- Make information from the funded project available for use in a case study or other promotional material.

Sustainable Farming Grants administered by DECCW – Private Native Forestry

Grantee	Project	Funding allocation	LGA
Deborah Willis	Set up portable Lucas Mill	\$30,000	Greater Taree
Ron and Charlotte Stahl	Regrowth thinning over four years and prune young, healthier trees to encourage growth	\$120,000	Wingecarribee
Peter Mark McCauley	Implementation of drought proofing measures with bushland water catchment areas to increase livestock numbers	\$120,000	Shoalhaven
Graham Syer	Development of farmstay and ecotourism on property	\$120,000	Upper Hunter
Robert Dyason	Silvicultural treatment, tea tree plantation expansion and infrastructure improvement	\$120,000	Richmond Valley

NOTE: \$510,000 was allocated to fund projects; \$506,577 was spent.

Farmer Exit Assistance program administered by Nature Conservation Trust and Rural Assistance Authority

The Nature Conservation Trust (NCT) initially received \$12 million for direct and administrative costs associated with the purchase and sale of properties from landholders who were assessed to be eligible under the program by the NSW Rural Assistance Authority. The NCT received a further \$5.6 million in November 2008 to fund an additional property purchase, Hartwood Station, under the scheme.

Nine applications were received under the program, resulting in four acquisitions: Kewilpa near Casino, Estuary Creek near Grafton, Hartwood Station near Conargo, Carwell Station near Quambone. All available funds were spent purchasing properties from approved applicants.

When sufficient funds are generated from future sales, funds will be used under the revised Native Vegetation Assistance Package until the end of June 2012. Under the revised package, the NCT will deliver the Farmer Exit Assistance component for landholders that have been significantly impacted by the introduction of the Private Native Forestry Code of Practice, or changes to native vegetation clearing laws.

The following properties were assessed as eligible by the Rural Assistance Authority under the Farmer Exit Assistance program:

Property	Owners	LGA	Valuation amount	Offer made on valuation	Accepted
Kewilpa	B. Blunden	Richmond Valley Council	\$1,200,000	Yes	Yes
Estuary Creek	P. Ostenfeld	Clarence Valley Council	\$1,700,000	Yes	Yes
Saarahnlee	N/A	Cooma-Monaro Shire	\$2,167,000	Yes	Rejected
Carwell Station	Wandani Pty Ltd	Coonamble Shire	\$7,670,000	Yes	Yes
Stanley	N/A	Warren	\$1,523,000	No	Withdrawn
Hartwood Station	S. Doble (Afie Pty Ltd, Jinlia Pty Ltd, Dooney Pty Ltd, Gemof Pty Ltd)	Conargo Shire	\$5,600,000	Yes	Yes
Elmsleigh	N/A	Booroorban	TBA	No	N/A

QUESTION 8

How does DECCW determine which local councils will receive Waste Performance bonuses?

- a. Is the philosophy to aid underperforming councils or reward effective waste and resource recovery managers?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment program is available to the 72 councils in the regulated area, as outlined in Part 5A of the *Protection of the Environment Operations (Waste) Regulation 2005*.

The program requires councils to meet waste and sustainability standards, which are published annually, to be eligible to receive payments. The standards may be viewed on the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water website at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/waste/lcwpip.htm.

The “philosophy” of the payments is twofold. Firstly, they provide financial support to enable councils to invest to raise standards, and secondly, operate as an incentive to ensure that councils do so. Payments may be withheld and redistributed if one or more councils do not meet the required waste and sustainability standards.

QUESTION 9

Which local councils in NSW subject to the Waste and Landfill Levy have not received a waste performance bonus?

ANSWER

I am advised that all 72 councils in the regulated area received a Waste and Sustainability Improvement Payment in 2009/10.

QUESTION 10

For the 2010-11 financial year, what percentage of the waste and landfill levy will be reinvested in waste programs administered by the Department?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the levy is a waste and environment levy, rather than a waste and landfill levy.

In 2010/11, levy funds will underpin the delivery of \$135.4 million in waste and environment programs, with \$65.2 million allocated to waste and sustainability expenditure. This represents approximately 18.3 per cent of waste and sustainability related expenditure.

QUESTION 11

How many current proposals before the Department of Planning for new or re-opening landfill sites are DECCW providing advice to the Department of Planning on?

ANSWER

I am advised that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water is providing advice on six proposals being considered by the Department of Planning for new or re-opening landfill sites:

- 1) Orchard Hills Waste Management Facility at Paton Lane, Orchard Hills – construction of a waste recycling and management facility.
 - 2) Tomerong Quarry at Tomerong – general solid waste landfill to be built at the quarry.
 - 3) Woodlawn Bioreactor Expansion at Woodlawn – increased waste disposal from 400,000 tonnes per annum to 1.2 million tonnes per annum.
 - 4) Light Horse Business Centre at Eastern Creek – construction of landfill and waste recycling centre at the former Boral Quarry.
 - 5) Environ Road Quarry and Landfill Proposal at Tweed Shire Council – proposed new landfill in existing quarry and a new quarry.
 - 6) Cessnock City Council Landfill at Cessnock – expansion of solid waste landfill.
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QUESTION 12

How many meetings has the Expert Reference Group on Extended Producer Responsibility had in the last 2 years?

ANSWER

NSW published its latest Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) priority list in 2007. Since then, no meetings of the Expert Reference Group have been held. NSW has concentrated its attention on progressing EPR at the national level, including participating in the National Framework for Product Stewardship.

This has helped to lead to the successful negotiation of an agreement at the national level to provide overarching extended producer responsibility legislation. The first scheme to operate under this legislation will be the computer and television recycling scheme, which was co-chaired by NSW with the Commonwealth.

QUESTION 13

When was the last EPR Priority Statement issued or published?

ANSWER

I'm advised that it was published in December 2007.

QUESTION 14

How many staff members are currently working on Product stewardship and extended producer responsibility within the department?

ANSWER

I am advised that there are seven full-time equivalent positions.

QUESTION 15

Who formulates policy advice to the Minister on NSW's position on EPR and product stewardship proposals before the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC)?

- a) Do representations or agreements to EPHC proposals need to go to NSW Cabinet before they can be agreed to at EPHC meetings?

ANSWER

I am advised that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water formulates policy advice on NSW's position on extended producer responsibility and product stewardship proposals before the Environmental Protection and Heritage Council (EPHC).

- a) Generally, NSW positions at Ministerial Councils, such as EPHC, must be considered by NSW Cabinet before agreement.
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QUESTION 16

What funding allocation has the DECCW budget given to programs to increase recycling and reuse of organic material?

- a) Why haven't we seen greater recovery of organic material over the last three years?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

In the three financial years from 2007/08 to 2009/10, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water invested \$3,907,569 (excluding GST) with local government or industry to develop programs to promote market development initiatives for recycled organic products and to avoid, reduce and recover organic waste at the household and business level in NSW.

Records of organic material diverted for recycling commenced in 2002/03. Materials diverted that year amounted to 1.26 million tonnes and increased to 1.75 million tonnes by 2009/10.

Recent diversion figures are as follows:

- 1.74 million tonnes in 2007/08;
- 1.80 million tonnes in 2008/09; and
- 1.75 million tonnes in 2009/10.

The recent decrease in the amount of organic materials recovered is a result of:

- a significant reduction in manures being processed, due to reduced levels of business activity in the feedlot industry caused by the general downturn in the global economy; and
 - a reduction in the volume of biosolids recovered.
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QUESTION 17

What was the cost of running the Chemicals CleanOut program last financial year?

- a) What was the recovery cost per kilogram of waste collected by the Chemical CleanOut program in 2009-10?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The total cost of the Household Chemical CleanOut program for 2009/10 was \$1,931,770.18 (excluding GST).

- a) The recovery cost of waste collected by the Chemical CleanOut program in 2009/10 equated to approximately \$1.73 per kilogram of waste collected (excluding GST). Due to the variety of household waste being collected, costs range from \$1.04 per kilogram of paint to more than \$40 per kilogram for disposal of the most dangerous chemicals, such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and organochlorines.
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QUESTION 18

What percentage of environmental protection licence holders have current pollution reduction programs with the DECCW?

ANSWER

I am advised that as of 29 September 2010, six per cent of environment protection licence holders had at least one pollution reduction program attached to their licence. All licences have conditions governing the operations of licencees.

QUESTION 19

In Chapter 4, p 12 \$27.3 million is allocated to natural resource management investment funding for Catchment Action NSW. Will you explain the investment strategy of the fund in the context of achieving individual Catchment Management Plans and the need to complement not overlap with the Federal Government's Caring for Country program?

ANSWER

I am advised that the intent of the \$27.3 million Catchment Action NSW program is to support effort directed toward the thirteen State-wide natural resource management (NRM) targets in the NSW State Plan. A total of \$23.2 million is allocated to implementing CMAs' Catchment Action Plans, which aim to achieve the NRM targets at a regional level.

Catchment Action NSW and Caring for our Country are separate, but complementary, programs. Each year, CMAs prepare their annual works program for all sources of funds in their Investment Program, which is approved by the NSW Minister for Climate Change and the Environment.

QUESTION 20

Can you please identify where the \$ 4.1 million in natural resource funding in Chapter 4, p 12 is being used for?

ANSWER

I am advised that the \$4.1 million funding comprises \$2.7 million allocated to State-wide programs to implement state-significant projects, such as Market Based Instruments for Soil Carbon – Achieving Soil Carbon Targets, managed by Industry and Investment NSW, and \$1.4 million allocated for program management and governance improvements, such as the

development of the Finance Policy Manual, Corporate Governance Manual, and occupational, health and safety products across the 13 CMAs.

QUESTION 21

What proportion of Catchment Management Funding is dedicated to supporting CMA officers establish Property Vegetation Plans under the Native Vegetation Act and the Private Native Forestry Code?

ANSWER

I have been advised that an estimated 16.2 per cent of NSW Catchment Management Authority funds are being spent on Property Vegetation Plans in the 2010/11 financial year.

QUESTION 22

Will you provide a full itemisation of the establishment costs, administration costs and associated program costs to the DECCW of the NSW Biobanking Scheme since its creation?

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

The estimated establishment, administrative and associated program costs of the NSW Biobanking Scheme, over five years, are as follows:

- total salaries, including on-costs, are estimated to be \$3,260,000;
- total other operating costs are estimated to be \$1,241,000; and
- total capital costs are estimated to be \$1,332,000. This covers the development of databases and information systems, including support for managing financial transactions, reporting and training.

QUESTION 23

How much capital does the current NSW Biodiversity Offset Program hold?

- a) How are the funds held in trust currently invested?
- b) Are the dividends or interest reinvested into the NSW Biodiversity Offset program?
- c) Who is the trustee manager for acquired land, the Environmental Trust or DECCW?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset program does not hold any capital funds. Managed by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), the program receives an

annual grant from the NSW Environmental Trust in accordance with the biodiversity certification of the State Environmental Planning Policy for the Sydney Region Growth Centres.

The program will receive \$1,930,000 from the Environmental Trust in 2010/11, which will be received by DECCW as recurrent funding. The majority of it will be used to establish biobank sites in western Sydney.

- a) As indicated, DECCW does not hold any funds in trust for the Growth Centres Biodiversity Offset program.
- b) There are no dividends or interest accrued by DECCW through the operation of the program.
- c) Land acquired by the program's funds is vested with the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment for reservation under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

QUESTION 24

Will you please provide a breakdown of the planned expenditure of \$25.8 million on national park infrastructure identified on Chapter 4, page 13?

ANSWER

I am advised that \$25.8 million has been budgeted to meet the costs of maintaining essential infrastructure in 2010/11 to facilitate management of, access to and enjoyment of the reserve system by the community.

The majority of funding is allocated for routine, responsive maintenance tasks across the whole parks system of 6.87 million hectares, such as repairing fences, picnic shelters, toilets and walking tracks.

Infrastructure and Maintenance Funding by the National Parks and Wildlife Service		
	Amount (\$)	Percentage
Metropolitan Branch	9,636,300	37.35
Coastal Branch	7,538,760	29.22
Western Branch	5,258,040	20.38
Park Management Division	3,366,900	13.05
TOTAL	25,800,000	100.00

QUESTION 25

How much wilderness under the Wilderness Act is Crown Timber Land?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

There are two types of wilderness areas: identified wilderness and declared wilderness.

Identified wilderness are those lands formally recognised by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water's Director General as having qualities consistent with all the wilderness criteria under the *Wilderness Act 1987*, without any further action being taken.

Wilderness is declared by the Minister administering the Act, with the landowner's consent.

It is estimated that less than eight per cent of identified wilderness occurs on Crown timber land.

No declared wilderness occurs on Crown timber land.

More than 90 per cent of identified and declared wilderness occurs on national parks and reserves estate.

QUESTION 26

Have all wilderness areas been legally nominated, assessed, identified and declared under the Wilderness Act 1987?

- a) If no, how many years has this situation been known to the Department?
- b) What will the Government ensure that these areas are legally protected as a high priority in the first half of this financial year?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Some areas of Crown timber land that were identified and declared after the commencement of the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals for the Upper North East and Lower North East Regions still need to be resolved.

- a) This was brought to the attention of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) soon after it occurred, with the identification of wilderness areas in the Upper North East and Lower North East Regions.
- b) DECCW and Forests NSW are currently considering options for resolution of this matter.

QUESTION 27

How many of these wilderness nominations has the Director-General considered and then advised the Minister within the two year statutory time limit?

- a) How many is the Minister still awaiting advice on that are beyond the two year time limit?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

None were advised within the two year timeframe.

All outstanding wilderness nominations cover some Crown timber lands affected by the application of an Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA), thereby prohibiting those lands from wilderness nomination, assessment, identification and declaration. Five wilderness nominations were made in 2006, and are affected by this issue, including the Giro, Curracabundi, 'The Moors' (Myall Lakes), Sandon River and Wooli River nominations.

- a) The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has progressed some of the nominations where Crown timber lands could be readily excluded from the assessment area, such as Curracabundi, Giro and the southern renominations. DECCW is working to have the Curracabundi and Giro completed in 2010/11, while 'The Moors' (Myall Lakes), Sandon and Wooli Rivers are scheduled for further attention in 2011, subject to available resources.

QUESTION 28

What is the total funding that has been allocated to the Department to meet its obligations under the Wilderness Act 1987?

- a) Of this funding, how much is specifically allocated to wilderness education, promotion and research?

ANSWER

I am advised that there is no separate funding allocated for the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) to meet its obligations under the *Wilderness Act 1987*. Wilderness responsibilities and functions are carried out across the state within existing DECCW resources.

QUESTION 29

How many equivalent full-time staff in the Department are allocated to fulfilling the responsibilities under the Wilderness Act 1987?

- a) What proportion of staff is this within the overall staffing levels of the Department?

ANSWER

I am advised that wilderness responsibilities and functions are integrated with the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water's management of the entire national parks and reserves estate. One officer who is specifically allocated to wilderness work coordinates this effort.

QUESTION 30

Will the NSW Government declare all 60 properties, covering over 76,934 hectares, under the Dunphy Wilderness Fund program and if not, why not?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Government has already declared as wilderness 32 of the 60 properties purchased under the Dunphy Wilderness Fund. Declaration of a further 14 is scheduled to occur this financial year.

There is one property in Deua National Park that cannot be declared as wilderness as it is not adjacent to existing declared wilderness and is too small to meet the criteria for a 'stand-alone' wilderness area. However, another land parcel in Morton National Park was identified as a replacement for that property and was declared as wilderness on 20 August 2010.

A further six properties have substantial impediments to their declaration which are unlikely to be resolved for several years. These impediments include mineral interests, or that the properties occur within a reserve that is less than 8,000 hectares and, therefore, too small to be declared wilderness under existing Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water policy.

QUESTION 31

Is it correct that the Park Service is being supplied with new uniforms?

- a) What was the reason behind the new uniforms?
- b) What was the total cost of re-equipping the Service with new uniforms?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has been working with its supplier to improve the already available range of National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) uniform items and personal protective equipment, to ensure that they are suited for their purpose and cost-effective. This has included the roll-out of high-visibility work wear to address occupational, health and safety requirements and industry standards.

There is no intention to replace existing uniform items with new stock in a bulk order. Current garments will be replaced with new items at the end of their working life (as would be the normal practice). However, NPWS spent \$50,101.21 in 2009/10 on the purchase of around 1,700 high-visibility shirts in order to initiate the uniform upgrade process, particularly to meet occupational, health and safety requirements.

QUESTION 32

In the recent National Parks and Wildlife Service restructure the number of regions has been reduced from 19 to 14. How many officers have been;

- a) transferred or;
- b) taken voluntary redundancy; or
- c) retired;

due to this restructure?

ANSWER

I am advised that during 2009/10, minor changes were made to reduce administrative regions in the Parks and Wildlife Group from 18 to 14. As part of the restructure process:

- (a) 8 staff transferred
- (b) 33 staff accepted a voluntary redundancy package
- (c) no staff retired.

QUESTION 33

Were any additional posts or positions created in head office at Hurstville following the restructure?

- a) If yes, what sections gained additional staff and how many staff members did the gain as a result of the restructure?

ANSWER

I am advised that 3 new positions have been created in Hurstville since the restructure was announced on 31 March 2010.

- (a) None of these positions were created as a result of the restructure.

QUESTION 34

When will the NSW Government put into effect the 2003 recommendations of the Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation Taskforce?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation Taskforce, a multi-agency taskforce first convened in around 2000, recommended that approximately 3,600 hectares of high conservation bushland contiguous with Blue Mountains National Park be added to the national park. The outcome from this process was not formally endorsed by Government.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) continues to work closely with Blue Mountains City Council to ensure that pest and fire management processes are integrated across all public land in the Blue Mountains region. The high conservation reserves in question continue to be managed by Council with the aim of retaining and protecting natural values.

DECCW has focused on other acquisition priorities in the Greater Blue Mountains region, including recent high conservation additions to Blue Mountains, Gardens of Stone and Marrangaroo National Parks.

QUESTION 35

For the lands identified under the Blue Mountains Public Lands Rationalisation as not suitable for addition to the national park, when will the Government improve the management arrangements that are currently in place between Blue City Mountains Council, Lithgow City Council and the Department of Lands?

ANSWER

This question should be referred to the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Lands for consideration.

QUESTION 36

There are a number of Cabinet decisions about national parks that have not yet been honoured, for example, the Goulburn Comprehensive Regional Assessment outcomes, and the North Coast and Brigalow Vacant Crown Land reserves. Will these decisions be honoured before Parliament rises in three months time?

- a) If so, when will this occur and what areas of each will be protected in the new national parks?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The NSW Government has made significant progress transferring high conservation Crown lands into the national park system. In addition, a number of the areas subject to these assessments are currently the subject of Aboriginal Land Claims and, therefore, would not be considered for transfer until these are decided.

Almost 58,000 hectares of north coast Crown land reserves have been transferred, including 590 hectares at Goolawah, south of Crescent Head. Additional north coast lands for transfer are the subject of ongoing discussions between the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) and the Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA), which includes determining which lands are subject to an Aboriginal land claim.

11,794 hectares of high conservation land has been transferred to DECCW as a result of the Goulburn Crown Lands Comprehensive Regional Assessment. Much of the remainder of land is subject to Aboriginal land claims and/or mineral interests.

DECCW has assessed the Brigalow Crown lands and advised the LPMA of those lands that are considered high conservation value and transferable to the reserve system. DECCW is awaiting advice from LPMA, including regarding the extent to which these lands are under Aboriginal land claims and expects to have a response in October 2010.

QUESTION 37

Will the Minister implement the recommendations of the National Resources Commission in relation to the South-West Cypress Forests?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The NSW Government is currently considering the Natural Resources Commission's report on the South-West Cypress Forests and its position on the Commission's recommendations, both individually and collectively. The Government will be looking to achieve a balance between the continuation of a sustainable cypress industry and the protection of the conservation values of these forests, which occur in an over-cleared landscape.

QUESTION 38

Has the budget for Lane Cove National Park (LCNP) been reduced?

- a) If so, by how much?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Lane Cove National Park is part of Lane Cove River Area within the Metropolitan North East Region of the Parks and Wildlife Group. The Area is responsible for the management of Lane Cove National Park, Dalrymple Hay Nature Reserve and Wallumatta Nature Reserve, as well as exercising wildlife licensing responsibilities in the surrounding Local Government Areas.

Budgets are allocated at a Regional, and then Area level, rather than to the individual park. Metropolitan North East Region was established in early 2010, as part of a State-wide restructure of Parks and Wildlife Group regions.

In 2010/11, Lane Cover River Area has been allocated a total recurrent budget of \$2,247,800. This represents a reduction of approximately \$100,000 on the 2009/10 budget within the previous regional structure, consistent with Government savings targets.

QUESTION 39

What will the specific LCNP budget allocations for 2010/2011 be for:

- a) Bush regeneration?
b) Fire trail management?
c) Dalrymple Hay and Wallumatta Nature Reserves?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

- a) \$90,000 for environmental restoration works within LCNP.
b) \$38,000 for fire trail maintenance and \$35,000 for the maintenance of Asset Protection Zones.

- c) \$9,000 and \$3,000 for environmental restoration works within Dalrymple Hay and Wallumatta Nature Reserves respectively.
-

QUESTION 40

What has happened to the recurrent additional funding of \$600,000 pa promised by the NSW State Government to LCNP following the incorporation of the additional lands from Hornsby Council (Pennant Hills Park and Thornleigh Park)?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

All funding sources for the Lane Cove River Area are incorporated into the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) base budget allocation for national parks and have been adjusted in accordance with DECCW savings targets over time. The total allocation for Lane Cove River Area for 2010/11 is \$2,247,800.

QUESTION 41

Is it true that while these budget cuts are being made to conservation related activities, that approximately fifty additional tourism related roles are proposed to be created in DECC?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

There is no proposal to create 50 new tourism-related positions in the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW).

As part of the recent restructure of DECCW's Parks and Wildlife Group, there was a reduction of one position from the Tourism and Partnerships Branch, leaving 32.9 equivalent full-time positions within this branch as of 30 June 2010 (including temporary and permanent positions).

These roles cover a wide range of responsibilities, including the State-wide coordination of the *Discovery walks talks and tours* and *Aboriginal Discovery* programs, volunteer programs, interpretation, promotion of parks and management of DECCW's existing leasing and licensing portfolio.

QUESTION 42

To date what greenhouse gas reduction, energy and water savings can be attributed to the Home Power Savings Program?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The following savings can be attributed to the Home Power Savings Program:

- 8.7 mega litres of water per year;
- 2,400 tonnes of carbon pollution per year; and
- 2.2 GWh of electricity per year.

These figures are based on the installation of power saving kit items in 2,570 homes.

QUESTION 43

Has DECCW provided funding from Climate Change Fund to private golf courses?

- a) If yes, how much in funding has been provided and what is the cost effectiveness of water savings?

ANSWER

I am advised that the Climate Change Fund does not require businesses to specify whether they are privately or publicly operated.

- a) The total funding allocated from the Climate Change Fund for water and energy savings measures in golf courses is \$3,678,352, particularly because currently golf courses are significant users of potable water.

Under the Climate Change Fund assessment criteria, the cost effectiveness of a project is calculated by dividing the funding sought by 10 years worth of savings. These projects will save an estimated 3,884,230 kilolitres of potable water over the next ten years. The cost effectiveness of water savings is the \$0.95 per kilolitre.

QUESTION 44

What is the current budget allocation for the Energy Efficiency Community Awareness Program?

- a) How is this programs effectiveness and performance measured?
 b) What are the daily average hits/visits to the government website www.savepower.nsw.gov.au? How many people in NSW have taken part in the 'the power pledge' program?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

\$6,469,452 million has been allocated for the Energy Efficiency Community Awareness Program in 2010/11.

- a) The program's effectiveness and performance is measured through:
- regular quantitative research to monitor and evaluate the mass media campaign for each activity phase. The research tracks changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around energy saving and level of public engagement;
 - qualitative research to inform design and test effectiveness; and

- evaluation of specific, targeted education and training programs including:
 - i) pre and post-program surveys reporting energy efficiency behavioural changes and barriers for change at home;
 - ii) pre and post-bill data detailing kilowatt hour savings at the household level for program participants; and
 - iii) energy efficient appliance sales data and changes in provision of energy efficiency information to customers by participating retailers.
- b) Since the www.savepower.nsw.gov.au website was launched in May 2009, there has been a total of 364,011 page views; an average of 725 page views per day. The 2010 July-September Quarter saw the daily average page views double since the previous quarter.

	May-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct- Dec 2009	Jan- Mar 2010	Apr- Jun 2010	Jul-Sep 2010	Total
Page views total	20,609	48,805	18,593	80,091	67,871	128,042	364,011
Average per day	458	530	202	890	746	1,392	725

Since the www.savepower.nsw.gov.au website was launched, there has been a total of 91,948 visits; an average of 183 visits per day. The 2010 July-September Quarter saw the daily average number of visits nearly triple those of the previous quarter.

	May-Jun 2009	Jul-Sep 2009	Oct- Dec 2009	Jan- Mar 2010	Apr- Jun 2010	Jul-Sep 2010	Total
Visits total	4,941	8,562	3,589	24,273	12,995	37,588	91,948
Average per day	110	93	39	270	143	409	183

As at 27 September 2010, 249 Save Power website members had chosen use the Power Pledge tool to make an action plan for their households.

QUESTION 45

What decision making processes does the Department and Minister undertake when making funding allocation decisions across the Climate Change Fund? Is energy saving or emission reduction cost effectiveness the most important indicator or criteria?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Funding allocation decisions across the Climate Change Fund carried out by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) and the Minister involve a number of steps, including:

- establishment and approval of guidelines and criteria for each program approved by the Minister in accordance with the *Energy Utilities Administration Act 1987* (EUA Act);

- preliminary assessment of all applications to check they are complete and comply with eligibility rules;
- internal DECCW technical assessment to review the technical and financial aspects of the project against the selection criteria;
- Independent Evaluation Panel assessment of all eligible applications against the selection criteria and any identified risks before recommending the projects to receive funding for Ministerial approval;
- Ministerial approval of projects to receive funding; and
- individual grant agreements are entered into by all recipients.

The selection criteria vary, depending on the particular program. For example, under the Public Facilities Program (Demonstration stream), the project's demonstration or educational value was the main selection criteria.

Other important criteria used in the decision making process, include the certainty of the water or energy savings being realised once the project is executed, how long these savings will be sustained over time, the innovation and market transformation elements of the project, collaboration with other programs and any other identifiable benefits.

The criteria used for each funding program are selected to align with the aims of the specific program and the objectives of the Climate Change Fund. They are made publicly available and all programs are approved by the Minister in accordance with the EUA Act.

QUESTION 46

According to the budget papers DECCW provides \$25 million to Industry and Investment NSW for the Clean Coal Fund. What oversight and input does DECCW and the Minister have in fund expenditure and funding allocations?

- a) Is there concern about the integrity of Fund administration or its funding allocation decisions?

ANSWER

The NSW Clean Coal Fund was established by the *Clean Coal Administration Act 2008*, and is administered by the Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon Steve Whan MP.

I am advised as follows:

The NSW Government has committed \$100 million over four years to the Clean Coal Fund. \$25 million per annum is provided over four years from the Climate Change Fund to Industry and Investment NSW, for the purposes of the Clean Coal Fund, as stated in the last Climate Change Fund Annual Report, which can be found on DECCW's website at: www.environment.nsw.gov.au/grants/ccfannualreport.htm.

Actual expenditure from the Clean Coal Fund in 2009/10 was \$4,633,468.

The NSW Clean Coal Council provides advice and makes recommendations to the Minister for Primary Industries concerning the funding of projects under the Clean Coal Fund that encourage the development of low emissions coal technologies, and the administration of the Fund.

Expenditure from the Clean Coal Fund is approved by the Minister for Primary Industries, who is required to submit an annual report to Parliament detailing expenditure and evaluating the effectiveness of projects that received funding, according to the reporting obligations under the *Clean Coal Administration Act 2008*.

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and DECCW have no role in the funding allocations or expenditure decisions of the Clean Coal Fund.

QUESTION 47

In the Budget Papers on Chapter 4, page 12, \$81 million is allocated for environmental protection, regulation and compliance activities. Why can't DECCW fund regulation and compliance costs on a cost recovery basis through environmental protection licensing fees and successful prosecutions?

Note: For example why doesn't DECCW raise its licensing fees for Environmental Protection Licences, Threatened Species Licences and Aboriginal Heritage Permits to fully cover the compliance and enforcement costs?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Statutory five year reviews of the legislation that DECCW administers often include a review of fee structures, in addition to cost-benefit analyses that examine compliance costs, administrative costs, and economic and environmental impacts. These reviews also take into account the Better Regulation Principles, and specifically ensure that revised fee structures are effective and proportional.

QUESTION 48

In how many Land and Environment Court proceedings has DECCW sought cost recovery of enforcement and compliance costs?

- a) In how many has it been successful and what is the total sum recovered by DECCW for the last financial year?

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) can seek to recover reasonable legal costs where it has successfully prosecuted an offender. It can seek to recover investigation costs if samples were taken, an inspection was conducted, tests were undertaken, measurement or analysis, or of transporting, storing or disposing of evidence. In some circumstances, the cost of clean up or remediation can be sought.

In successful prosecutions, in accordance with the polluter pays principle, DECCW's policy is to routinely seek to recover its legal costs, investigation costs and any clean up costs.

It is completely within the discretion of the court as to whether it will make such cost orders and, even where orders are made, it is often a negotiated amount to encourage payment from the offender, and payment is not always made.

In 2009/10, the courts awarded DECCW \$473,479 in legal costs in 102 of its 126 successful prosecutions, \$67,139.63 in investigation costs for ten prosecutions, and \$45,988.40 in clean up/remediation costs for five prosecutions.

QUESTION 49

How many of the Urban Sustainability grants over the lifetime of the scheme initiated in 2005 have been used for climate change adaption or mitigation focused projects?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Almost all of the 112 projects across 121 councils funded by the Urban Sustainability Program have components that relate to climate change mitigation or adaptation; however, their focus has been primarily water, waste and energy.

30 projects, representing around 40 per cent of funds allocated, specifically include climate change benefits as part of their rationale.

Climate change benefits can be derived in many ways. For example, projects that increase the resilience of ecosystems, or induce behavioural change which results in reduced waste or consumption or increased active transport such as cycling or walking, all have climate change related benefits.

QUESTION 50

How does the Department intend to address the policy gap and market failure of the non-introduction of a Federal emissions trading scheme?

ANSWER

The NSW Government continues to support the development of a national emissions trading scheme as the most cost-effective way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In the absence of a national scheme, the NSW Government has active programs in place to support the efforts of households, community groups, industry and local government to reduce emissions through a range of education, incentive and rebate programs.

In addition, NSW brought forward strong legislation in the Energy Savings Scheme in 2009 to set and require targets of energy retailers. It has initiated and funded a \$150 million

Energy Efficiency Strategy; supported the NSW bidders for the Solar Flagships program and established its own Renewable Energy Fund.

QUESTION 51

Has the Department or the Minister sought additional funding to run additional climate change mitigation and adaptation programs to 'plug the market and policy gap' left by the Federal Government?

ANSWER

NSW provides substantial funding through the Climate Change Fund of \$700 million over five years. NSW also funds Coastal and Floodplain Grants, which assist in managing coastal erosion. NSW has also initiated and funded new research, such as providing \$750,000 over three years for the Eastern Seaboard Climate Change Initiative.

QUESTION 52

Is it within the regulatory capacity of the Minister and Department to create a load based licensing fee for greenhouse gas emissions produced by NSW's 30 biggest greenhouse gas emitters? In other words is it possible under the current Protection of the Environment Operations Act and associated regulations to create a state based emissions trading scheme?

ANSWER

The legislation is sufficient for creating a state-based emissions trading scheme. However, amendments would be required to the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 2008*. NSW does, however, support a national approach to greenhouse gas emission reduction.

QUESTION 53

Has DECCW done any modelling or regulatory investigation into such an approach?

- a) If yes, what has the findings been?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water sought information from the US EPA on its regulatory approach for greenhouse gas reduction, but has not done modelling into such an approach, as NSW supports a national scheme.

QUESTION 54

Would the regulation and management of greenhouse gas emissions using DECCW's Load Based Licensing Scheme be a more cost effective way of funding climate change programs?

ANSWER

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has not analysed the cost-effectiveness of load based licensing compared to other options for funding climate change programs. See answer to previous question.

QUESTION 55

What impact would establishing a load based licensing fee on greenhouse gas emissions have on the Department's financial position and income?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

None. Although the load based licensing fees are collected by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), they are remitted to the Consolidated Fund. Additional fees for greenhouse gas emissions would, therefore, not affect DECCW's financial position.

QUESTION 56

Will the Minister or Department advise if there has been an increase or decrease in the rate of issue of Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIP) over the last 2 years and are permit applications still approved at a rate of 95-100%?

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

Based on full calendar years, there has been a decrease in the number of Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIP) issued by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) over the last two years. Fewer AHIPs were issued per year in 2008 and 2009 compared with 2006 and 2007. Information for 2010 to date suggests that the decreasing trend will continue this year.

Approximately five per cent of AHIP applications have been declined since 1 January 2008.

QUESTION 57

What percentage of AHIPs were issued to individuals or companies that had made political donations to the NSW Branch of Australian Labor Party?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water does not hold data on political donations of companies.

QUESTION 58

Has the Department issued any permits where an ‘unacceptable impact’ on Aboriginal heritage has been identified?

- a) When does the department decide that destruction of an Aboriginal object is an ‘unacceptable impact’ or an acceptable impact?

ANSWER

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water’s (DECCW) internal *Operational Policy: Protecting Aboriginal Cultural Heritage*, which has been in use since April 2008, states that Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits (AHIP) will be refused where there are serious heritage conservation or protection issues, i.e. where there is potential for unacceptable impacts to significant Aboriginal objects or places.

This is an overarching policy statement that is supported by DECCW’s internal processes and guidance.

The Guide to Determining and Issuing Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permits outlines the circumstances in which DECCW may refuse to issue an AHIP or limit impacts through the use of conditions. These circumstances include where:

- the project design is unsympathetic to the Aboriginal cultural heritage values of an Aboriginal object(s) or place(s) and will involve extensive damage to significant Aboriginal object(s) or place(s);
- impacts could be avoided by the adoption of other reasonable and practical measures;
- the loss of an Aboriginal object would irreversibly diminish the ability of Aboriginal communities to exercise cultural practices within the region, or irreversibly impact on cultural identity;
- an identified Aboriginal object is known to be of national, state or regional significance;
- an identified Aboriginal object is of a type that is rare or cannot be readily accessed in the wider region;
- the Aboriginal object is of a type that is known to be poorly conserved in the reserve system; and
- proposed works are inconsistent with the reasons for declaring an Aboriginal Place.

These circumstances are always determined and documented on a case-by-case basis.

QUESTION 59

Who has been invited to join the Working Group for broader Aboriginal heritage reform?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The statutory Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee has been asked to provide advice on the broader Aboriginal cultural heritage reforms. Membership is specified in the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

The Terms of Reference for the Working Group have recently been determined. Invitations to join the Working Group will be sent in the near future.

QUESTION 60

Has any advice from Aboriginal groups been sought about the makeup of this group? Will the Minister commit to ensure that peak Aboriginal groups will be guaranteed a position on this working group?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment Climate Change and Water has briefed the statutory Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee on the proposed composition of the Working Party.

The Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee, the NSW Aboriginal Land Council and NTSCORP are expected to be invited to have a representative on the Working Group.

QUESTION 61

Given that the Opposition has offered support for the establishment of separate heritage legislation, will the Minister commit to making this a bi-partisan committee?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Working Party does not include political representation; however, the Opposition support for reform is welcomed.

The Opposition indicated its support for the proposed composition of the Working Party during the passage of the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment Act 2010* through Parliament.

QUESTION 62

Does the Department or the Minister have legal or other advice as to whether the standard of due diligence outlined in the National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Aboriginal Objects and Aboriginal Places) Regulation 2010 meets the same standard as other environmental protection legislation, or a lower standard as suggested by NSWALC and NTSCORP? Will this advice be available to the public?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The due diligence requirements outlined in the *National Parks and Wildlife Amendment (Aboriginal Objects and Aboriginal Places) Regulation 2010* set an appropriate standard of care for the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW. A comparison with environment protection legislation was not undertaken as these different pieces of legislation cover substantially different subject matters.

QUESTION 63

Does the Department of Environment and Climate Change and Water have advice as to how many or what percentage of current development, farming, mining, land management and forestry activities will be captured by the new 'low impact' and 'due diligence' defences under the new heritage regulations? What advice does the Minister have regarding how effective the new laws will be as a deterrent, given the broad nature of the new defences?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The new laws significantly improve the protection of Aboriginal heritage in NSW. Previously, there were no requirements under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* for people to take precautions to ensure their activities did not harm Aboriginal objects.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water does not yet have figures on the number or percentage of activities captured by the new provisions, which took effect on 1 October 2010.

The significant increase in penalties for the new Aboriginal heritage offences and the introduction of a strict liability Aboriginal objects offence should be a major deterrent to people carrying out activities that may harm Aboriginal objects without taking appropriate precautions. The defences available for the new strict liability offence provide a balance between the need to take appropriate precautions and allowing activities that are less likely to cause harm to proceed unhindered.

QUESTION 64

How many officers in DECCW are available and assigned to undertake compliance checks in State Forest logging operations?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

During the 2009/10 financial year, three Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water officers were assigned on a full-time basis to audit Forests NSW compliance with the four Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals. An additional 15 staff, including threatened species experts and specialists investigators, were also available to assist in compliance audits of Forests NSW operations.

QUESTION 65

How many complaints have been made to DECCW about breaches of the Threatened Species Conservation Act by State Forest logging operations?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

During 2009/10, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water received 43 complaints regarding threatened species matters under the four Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals. Several of these complaints were made by different stakeholders, but related to the same matter.

QUESTION 66

Will you provide details of water purchased and held by the NSW Riverbank program? Specifically what proportion of holdings are high security and general security in which regulated rivers and groundwater systems?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Total Water Purchased and Held by NSW RiverBank as of 30 September 2010			
Regulated Water Source	High Security (ML)	General Security (ML)	Supplementary Access (ML)
Gwydir	0	17,092	441
Macquarie & Cudgegong	0	48,154	1,442
Lachlan	1,000	24,575	N/A
Murrumbidgee	0	15,617	5,679

Murray	0	0	0
Total	1,000	105,438	7,562

The above figures include water purchased under the NSW Rivers Environmental Restoration Program and NSW Wetland Recovery Program.

In addition, NSW manages 2,027 ML of High Security and 30,000 ML of General Security adaptive licence water in the Murray Valley, which was initially secured by the Murray Wetlands Working Groups.

NSW Riverbank also manages the water recovery process for NSW under The Living Murray (TLM) program, which recovered 221,487 ML within NSW. TLM water is managed through the Murray-Darling Basin Authority.

No groundwater entitlements have been purchased under NSW RiverBank.

Growth Centre Biodiversity Offsetting

QUESTION 67

What percentage of the DECCW mapped Priority Lands outside of the Sydney Growth Centres are considered Matters of National Environmental Significance?

ANSWER

I have been advised that approximately 31 per cent of the Priority Lands are vegetation considered Matters of National Environmental Significance.

QUESTION 68

What percentage of area of the DECCW mapped Priority Lands outside of the Sydney Growth Centres are not considered Matters of National Environmental Significance?

ANSWER

I have been advised that approximately 69 per cent of the Priority Lands are vegetation not considered to be Matters of National Environmental Significance, but are considered to be a priority for future recovery efforts for state-listed threatened biodiversity.

QUESTION 69

What percentage of area of the DECCW mapped Priority Lands outside of the Sydney Growth Centres considered Matters of National Environmental Significance does DECCW intend to protect?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water mapped Priority Lands are the focus for investment under the draft Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan, biocertification of the Sydney Growth Centres and draft Strategic Assessment. It is too early to quantify the percentage area that may be protected in the Growth Centres.

QUESTION 70

Of the \$397.5 million Growth Centres Conservation Offset fund to be spent outside of the Sydney Growth Centres within DECCW mapped Priority Lands how much is dedicated to protecting Matters of National Environmental Significance?

ANSWER

I have been advised that a decision on allocation of the full funding over the 30 year period has not yet been made.

QUESTION 71

Of the \$397.5 million Growth Centres Conservation Offset fund to be spent outside of the Sydney Growth Centres within DECCW mapped Priority Lands how much is dedicated to protecting non Matters of National Environmental Significance?

- a) What is that per hectare?

ANSWER

See response to question 70. A decision has not yet been reached.

QUESTION 72

Does the Strategic Assessment mount an argument for spending the Growth Centres Offset fund outside of the Cumberland Plain but contained within the Sydney Bioregion?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Yes. The draft Strategic Assessment proposes that the Growth Centres Offset Fund be spent consistent with the order conferring biodiversity certification on the Growth Centres State

Environment Planning Policy by the Minister for Environment in December 2007 under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*. As set out in the biodiversity certification, the first preference for spending the fund is within the Cumberland Plain.

QUESTION 73

Does the Strategic Assessment find that the endemic flora and fauna of Western Sydney can be offset with flora and fauna found hundreds of kilometres outside of Western Sydney?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

No. The Sydney Growth Centres draft Strategic Assessment and draft Program Reports, which were publicly exhibited in June 2010, do not propose to offset the impacts of development of the Sydney Growth Centres on endemic species of flora and fauna, which are matters of National Environmental Significance (“listed”), with other listed species outside the Cumberland Plain. The proposed offsets for these impacts are within the Cumberland Plain.

The species making up Cumberland Plain Woodland are not generally endemic, and occur beyond the Cumberland Plain. Cumberland Plain Woodland falls within the Grassy Woodland native vegetation formation of Keith (2004), the most recent classification of native vegetation for all of NSW. This formation aligns similar types of vegetation across the state, based on species composition and ecosystem function and environmental characteristics. The draft reports do propose that offsets of impacts on Cumberland Plain Woodland, which is an assemblage of plant species legally termed an ecological community, be secured either within the Cumberland Plain if they are cost-effective, or within other listed grassy woodlands in the Sydney Basin Bioregion or Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchments. Some other areas where such offsetting could be found include the Capertee Valley, 90 kilometres to the northwest of Richmond, and in the Burragorang Valley, 45 kilometres to the southwest of Picton.

The draft reports conclude that the approach of only allowing offsets for impacts on ecological communities within the Cumberland Plain would have a worse outcome for animal populations, protect a much smaller area of land, and be much more expensive to manage.

QUESTION 74

Where is the scientific evidence that the flora and fauna endemic to the Cumberland Plain is identical to that found outside of Western Sydney?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The draft reports do not state that Cumberland Plain Woodland and other grassy woodlands are identical. The draft reports state that Cumberland Plain Woodlands are very similar in floristic structure and ecological function to some other grassy woodlands. This was based on analysis of 10,000 vegetation plot data sets within the Sydney Basin.

The similarities between different types of grass woodlands are also reflected in the composition of vertebrate fauna found within them. “The Fauna of Greater Southern Sydney” (DECC 2007) recognised that grassy box woodlands between the Burratorang Valley and the Cumberland Plain supported very similar assemblages of woodland birds. The status of these bird species is well recognised as a group of species known as “declining woodland birds”, and many are listed as threatened under the *NSW Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995*.

QUESTION 75

How does the Strategic Assessment ensure the success of the Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan when the success of that plan is centred on the protection of DECCW Priority Lands within Western Sydney?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The draft Cumberland Plain Recovery Plan priority conservation lands are identified in the draft Strategic Assessment reports as the first preference for NSW investment in voluntary private land management of Cumberland Plain Woodland and other threatened species and communities.

The Strategic Assessment will be underpinned by the Growth Centres Biodiversity Certification, which will provide \$580 million over 30-40 years to establish biobank agreements and new reserves, with the Cumberland Plain priority conservation lands being the first preference. The Offset Fund was recently used to establish the first Biobank Agreement, 80 hectares of private land to be managed in perpetuity for conservation, including more than 30 hectares of Cumberland Plain Woodland. Without such a fund, it is uncertain how Cumberland Plain Woodland could be protected into the future, given that where it occurs on private land it is generally highly fragmented and in poor condition.

The Strategic Assessment negotiations have strengthened ties between NSW and the Australian Government, which should support greater protection of Cumberland Plain Woodland on Australian Government defence lands, where the largest and best remnants not already protected in NSW reserves are found.

QUESTION 76

How much and what types of native vegetation have been destroyed or is proposed to be destroyed as a result of Delfin Lend Lease ADI Site development?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Of the estimated 1,000 hectares of native vegetation mapped on the entire ADI site, approximately 249 hectares are proposed to be cleared. The majority of the 249 hectares is mapped as “lower condition” and consists of the following vegetation types:

Vegetation Types	Moderate/good	Lower	Total
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	condition (ha)	condition (ha)	(ha)
Shale Plains Woodland	34.6	91.8	126.4
Shale Gravel Transition Forest	1.6	48.6	50.2
Alluvial Woodland	25.8	35.5	61.3
Cooks River Castlereagh Ironbark Forest	8.7	1.4	10.1
Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Woodland	0.0	0.8	0.8
Freshwater Wetlands	0.9	0.0	0.9

Reference: NPWS (2002) Native Vegetation Maps of the Cumberland Plain

QUESTION 77

How many threatened species (flora and fauna) have been destroyed as a result of Delfin Lend Lease ADI Site development?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

No entire threatened species genre has been destroyed on the ADI site.

Populations of the threatened plant species *Dillwynia tenuifolia*, *Grevillea juniperina juniperina*, *Micromyrtus minutiflora*, *Pultenaea parviflora* and *Pimelea spicata*, as well as the endangered population of *Marsdenia viridiflora* subspecies *viridiflora*, are known to occur within the area of the site that is to be developed. Populations of all of these are also known to now be protected within the regional park being established on the site.

Based on records of threatened animal species that have been found at the site, development will remove current or historical habitat for Eastern Bent-wing Bat, Greater Broad-nosed Bat, Black Bittern, Southern Myotis or Fishing Bat, Eastern Free-tail Bat, Square-tailed Kite, Speckled Warbler and the Cumberland Land Snail. Some of these species may have used the habitat for foraging only, while others may have nested and/or foraged in these areas. The majority of habitat on the ADI site is to be conserved in the regional park there.

QUESTION 78

Does the clearing of Critically Endangered vegetation need to be offset?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

No. The 900 hectares Regional Park was the outcome of the rezoning process for the ADI site that was completed in 2000. This predates the listing of the Cumberland Plain Woodland as a critically endangered community and the development of the biobanking methodology and associated offset calculator. As the ADI site is not subject to a biobanking agreement, it does not require an offset.

QUESTION 79

Are offsets required to be supplementary being that areas already managed by the government, such as national parks, flora reserves and public open space cannot be used as offsets?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

As stated in the response to question 78, the site does not require an offset. It is correct, however, that areas already managed by the Government, such as national parks and nature reserves, cannot be used as offsets.

QUESTION 80

Who was the Landowner that decided that 900 ha of the ADI Site would be set aside as a Regional Park and that ownership would be transferred to the NSW Government?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

ADI Limited was the landowner at the time that the Regional Environmental Study and assessment process (that established the initial regional park concept) was undertaken.

When the Regional Environmental Plan, Environmental Planning Strategy and Development Agreement were implemented, the landowner was St Marys Land Limited.

The decision to establish the 900 hectare-regional park was an outcome of the Regional Environmental Study and other processes, in accordance with both the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, including a planning and development implementation framework for the site, and Commonwealth environmental legislation. That framework comprises a Regional Environmental Plan, Environmental Planning Strategy and Development Agreement, which provides for a 900 hectare-regional park to be established, and owned and managed by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water.

QUESTION 81

What document states that Delfin Lend Lease provided the Regional Park as its offset mechanism?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the Development Agreement establishes the arrangements for transfer of the 900 hectares to the NSW Government for reservation as a regional park. It does not use the term “offset”.

QUESTION 82

How does DECCW calculate the area required to offset the clearing of Critically Endangered vegetation?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water's current approach to assessing land use planning offset proposals is to assess each one based on its merits, having regard to a set of guiding principles that include:

- avoiding impacts first, by using prevention and mitigation measures;
- sound ecological principles that consider structure, function and compositional elements of biodiversity, including threatened species and the conservation status of ecological communities;
- ensuring long term viability and functionality of biodiversity;
- a net improvement in biodiversity over time;
- impacts and benefits must be quantifiable and reliably estimated; and
- offsets should be permanent and secured by a conservation agreement, or reservation and management for biodiversity.

QUESTION 83

Of all the vegetation and species proposed to be cleared by Delfin Lend Lease at the ADI Site what would be the total offset area required by them or the financial contribution they would have to make?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

As noted above in response to previous questions, an offset is not required in this case as the ADI site is not the subject of an existing or proposed biobanking agreement. The land use planning outcome of the site provided for a 900 hectare-regional park to mitigate the impacts of development of urban land on the site.

QUESTION 84

Why has DECCW not insisted on the need for a Species Impact Statement for any of the Development Applications lodged by Delfin Lend Lease at the ADI Site?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, it is the relevant planning authority (in this case, either Blacktown or Penrith Council) that decides whether a development is likely to have a significant effect on threatened species, population or ecological community, thus warranting preparation of a species impact statement.

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has a role once that decision is made. This role includes issuing Director General's requirements for the Species Impact Statement and determining whether to grant concurrence to development applications that the Species Impact Statement concludes will still have a significant effect on a threatened ecological community.

QUESTION 85

Is DECCW going to review the ADI Site development to protect further areas of Critically Endangered Cumberland Plain Woodland?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

No. The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) does not have an overall "review" role of planning for the site. However, DECCW will continue to provide input and advice on environmental issues to the relevant planning authorities to assist in their assessment of future development proposals at the ADI site, if requested.

DECCW is also now focussed on finalising the plan of management and subsequent planning requirements, such as the Conservation Management Plan and Master Plan, for the regional park, which will outline on-going arrangements for the protection of conservation values and sustainable visitor use and enjoyment of the park.

Questions from Mr Brown

QUESTION 86

Given that the taxpayers of NSW already fund national parks, when will the Government follow Victoria's lead and abolish entrance fees to National Parks?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Parks Victoria is funded from three major sources: payments from the Victorian State Government Budget, an annual charge based on a property rate levied on all metropolitan properties and user fees, which make up a very small part of total income.

The Parks Charge is levied annually on residential and commercial properties throughout greater Melbourne. It has been included on the water, sewerage and drainage bills issued to domestic and non-domestic properties since 1958.

The Parks Charge ranges from \$62.75 to \$481.25 per dwelling per annum and generated over \$120 million in 2009/10.

The NSW Government has no plans to replicate the Parks Victoria funding model through the introduction of a NSW equivalent to the Parks Charge.

QUESTION 87

I noted in July the fact that "recruitment had begun for dozens of jobs resulting from the creation of new national parks in the Riverina Murray region". The jobs are apparently in pest control, maintenance of visitor facilities and water management.

How many of these "dozens" of jobs have been filled, have any of the appointees started work yet, how many jobs will be required this year and is any preference being given to local people impacted by the Government decision to lock up more than 100,000 hectares of River Red Gum forests?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

In July 2010, 45 full-time positions were created, of which 28 are permanent and 17 are temporary. Seven of these positions are identified Aboriginal positions.

As of 29 September 2010:

- nine permanent positions filled, and appointees have commenced;
- two permanent positions filled, and appointees are yet to commence;
- six temporary positions filled, and appointees have commenced;
- two temporary positions filled, and appointees are yet to commence;

- 12 positions are part way through recruitment action; and
- for the remaining 14 positions, recruitment actions will commence before 2011.

All positions are initially matched with locally displaced Forests NSW staff. If they are not successfully matched, then the positions will be advertised externally and available to local people.

QUESTION 88

Does the Minister agree with the Rural Fire Service Association claim that this State's hazard reduction program needs millions of dollars in extra funding to match improvements recommended for Victoria by the Bushfires Royal Commission?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The NSW Government has provided record funding to fire and land management authorities for hazard reduction and other fire management initiatives in recent years. The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water received approximately \$30 million of this funding.

The 2009 Victorian bushfires were a tragedy, and following the release of Interim Reports from the Royal Commission in 2009, many new initiatives were implemented in NSW.

However, the NSW Government will be developing its own response for enhanced hazard reduction, which is in response to the Royal Commission's Final Report recommendations, released on 31 July 2010.

The bushfire history, bushfire environment and bushfire coordination arrangements in Victoria are very different to those in most of NSW; Government funding has been greatly increased in recent years; and the NSW Government does not support the adoption of a simplistic target for hazard reduction on public lands only. NSW has instead adopted a holistic approach involving both public and private lands and one which focuses on life and property protection, rather than just on the size of burnt areas.

QUESTION 89

Is the Minister also aware of claims by veteran volunteer fire-fighter Jim Crowther that some bushland areas adjoining properties in the Blue Mountains, which have not been burned since the 1950's, now have fuel loads of 50 tonnes per hectare, and pose massive fire threats this summer?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water is aware of Mr Crowther's claims, but is not aware of the specific areas to which he is referring, which could be either on or off park.

From July 2007 to June 2010, DECCW undertook hazard reduction burns on approximately 46,500 hectares of land in the Blue Mountain Region.

Annual hazard reduction works programs are undertaken in accordance with the agreed priorities of the Blue Mountains District Bush Fire Management Committee as set out in its bush fire risk management plan. The Committee has recently revised its plan within the Blue Mountains local government area. Bushfire management zones are identified in the plan and will be treated in accordance with the zone objectives, including treatments to reduce accumulated fuel.

QUESTION 90

Does the public of this state have any reason to fear the coming bushfire season because of perceived insufficient hazard reduction burns in recent years, particularly in some of our National Parks?

ANSWER

I am advised that the public can be assured that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has significantly reduced fuel loads on its parks and reserves. Over the past three years, DECCW has completed hazard reduction burns on more than 200,000 hectares, undertaking nearly 600 burns. This represents an increase of more than 100 per cent in the area treated and a 50 per cent increase in the number of burn treatments over the previous three-year period.

In 2009/10, 269 hazard reduction burns were undertaken on a record 93,000 hectares of parks and reserves.

Since 1 July 2010, DECCW has undertaken more than 50 hazard reduction burn operations treating more than 10,000 hectares, with more than 130,000 hectares of parks and reserves scheduled for prescribed burning during 2010/11.

QUESTION 91

The Department announced earlier this year they expected a large-scale ecological boost from the widespread flooding in north western New South Wales, particularly fish, frog and bird numbers being set to explode. Has the department made any arrangements for a similar explosion in the number of feral animals in this area because of the flooding, in particular, in relation to pigs and foxes?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) plans and operates its pest management programs via Regional Pest Management Strategies.

These strategies rank pest species in a priority order within each respective NPWS region, to provide strategic and adaptable control of those pest species for the life of the plan.

NPWS has completed a range of integrated pest management operations this year, including an aerial shooting program in August at the property 'Toorale' in Western NSW, which resulted in over 1,500 feral pigs being culled. Further operations have been scheduled for the remainder of 2010, and include targeted fox and pig programs over a range of reserves in western NSW.

NPWS collaborates closely with other government authorities, namely the Livestock Health and Pest Authority and neighbouring landholders, in joint planning and on-ground operations to contribute to a landscape approach to pest management.

QUESTION 92

Can the minister provide details of specific extra programs and their timings that the department has planned to cope with this explosion of feral animals?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The ongoing and strategic coordination of integrated pest management programs through the Regional Pest Management Strategies and established joint planning arrangements enables the National Parks Wildlife Service to not only capitalise on drought stressed pest populations but also respond to population increases during better environmental conditions.

One of the programs planned is a further cull of feral pigs at Toorale in October. The need for additional operations to those already planned will be considered as the season progresses.

QUESTION 93

Pillicawarrina is a well known Lower Macquarie property which has apparently been quietly bought, in part, by the National Parks and Wildlife Service for a reported \$10 million. When was the property bought, how much land did it involve, what price was actually paid for the wetland area, what price was paid for the 8,600 mega litres of Macquarie Water entitlements, and what will the Parks Service be doing with the property?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

In January 2009, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) purchased part of a Pillicawarrina property, which had not been cleared or developed for irrigated cropping. The total price paid was \$10.5 million and the Federal Government contributed \$9.341 million. Specifically, the land (2,387 hectares) cost \$2.118 million and the water entitlements cost \$8.382 million.

The goal of this combined land and water acquisition is to improve management of the adjoining Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve (an internationally significant wetland, listed under Ramsar Convention) by securing more reliable water allocations and to help restore the broader hydrodynamics of the floodplain.

The property will be managed as a component of the adjacent Macquarie Marshes Nature Reserve and DECCW has commenced environmental restoration and water and pest management programs on the property including:

- planning and implementing on-ground works to remove impediments to water movement over the floodplain of Pillicawarrina;
- upgrading in-stream and floodplain structures to make them more friendly to the movement of fish;
- commencing revegetation strategies for previously disturbed parts of the land;
- installing water measuring and monitoring equipment; and
- completing numerous pest animal control programs, initially targeting feral pigs.

QUESTION 94

How many pastoral or farming properties has the Department purchased to be converted into National Parks since March 2007, in hectares and location, and how many properties are currently under negotiation, and how many (in hectares and location) are likely to be finalised before March 2011?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Since March 2007, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW) has purchased nine pastoral properties on the Upper Darling River floodplain in the Bourke-Moree region (133,733 hectares), one property in the Cobar region (18,122 hectares), four properties on

the lower Lachlan River floodplain (16,207 hectares total) and one property on the NSW South West Slopes (980 hectares).

When negotiating the purchase of properties that contain significant areas of land previously cleared or developed for agriculture and intensive grazing, DECCW may discuss with the vendor the feasibility of excluding such areas from the sale. Where this is not possible, and the whole property is subsequently purchased, DECCW may then on-sell such lands, where practical, to enable their continued use for agriculture or grazing.

For example, Yanga Station was purchased by the Government in 2005. 6,891 hectares of land was on-sold in 2007 and there are plans to auction a further 3,143 hectares this month.

DECCW is currently negotiating the purchase of three pastoral properties in western NSW. As is established practice, information on such negotiations is treated as Commercial-in-Confidence until any sale that may result is legally completed.

The outcome of a property negotiation is dependent on many variables such as the expectations of the vendor and the actions and capacities of other prospective buyers. Therefore, it is not possible to advise how many property negotiations will be finalised by March 2011.

QUESTION 95

How many people are now working on Yanga National Park – and what contribution, financially, does it make to the local community, and how many people visited the Park in the last year?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Seven locally based staff work on Yanga National Park. In addition, up to two area staff, who are based at Hay, frequently work at the park.

Since acquisition in late 2005, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has sourced over \$5 million worth of goods and services from local and regional towns to assist in establishing and maintaining Yanga National Park.

Between 1 October 2009 and 30 September 2010, 3,489 people have visited the Yanga Homestead. Visitor numbers are currently unavailable for the recently established day use areas, but visitation is increasing following local and regional media promotions.

QUESTION 96

How much has the department spent in 2009-10 on:

- a) feral animal control programs
- b) weed programs
- c) How much does the department expect to spend on these programs in 2010-11?

ANSWER

I am advised that the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water spent an estimated \$17.1 million on feral animal control programs and \$14.9 million on weed programs in 2009/10. A similar amount is budgeted for these programs in 2010/11.

QUESTION 97

What was the total number of feral and wild animals culled in national parks in 2009-10, specifically:

- a) pigs
- b) foxes
- c) goats
- d) cats
- e) dogs
- f) deer

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water's (DECCW) objective in control programs on its parks and reserves is to reduce the impacts of pests on biodiversity and other park values. Accordingly, DECCW does not collate data on the numbers of pest animals culled in national parks as the total numbers of animals removed is not a reliable measure of the success of control programs. As well, it is not possible to accurately estimate the number of animals removed by some of the control techniques frequently used. For example, the number of animals removed by poison baiting, fencing, closing of artificial watering points and off-park education and awareness programs cannot be estimated readily.

QUESTION 98

Will the department really take two years, as announced by the Minister recently, to draw up a plan to remove feral goats from our National Parks?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

New techniques that will underpin the new plan are being implemented now in national parks. However, it will take about two years to finalise the plan for western NSW due to community consultation requirements and analysis of priorities required to ensure effective implementation.

QUESTION 99

Is it a fact the department removed 46,000 goats in the past year. What proportion of the total number of goats in the parks does this represent, and how much did it cost per goat to get them out?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Approximately 46,000 goats were removed from the Far West Region in 2009/10 using mustering and aerial shooting programs. This resulted in a noticeable decrease in goat activity on parks across the region. These efforts were budget neutral as costs were offset by the sale of the goats mustered. A per cent figure is not able to be calculated.

QUESTION 100

How many goats do they see themselves removing after taking two years to draw up this new removal plan?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Goat control programs such as those in the Far West Region will continue to be implemented as the new plan is developed. The goal of the plan is to reduce the impacts of feral goats on biodiversity at priority sites across western NSW. While the emphasis of the plan is not on the number of goats to be culled, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water will remove as many goats as necessary to achieve a significant reduction in their impact on the environment.

QUESTION 101

The Environmental Trust has again been allocated about 100 million this year to be distributed against grants and subsidies.

When was this expenditure last audited, and did it reveal any anomalies?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The Environmental Trust is subject to a financial audit undertaken by the NSW Audit Office every year. The financial statements for the 2009/10 financial year are currently being audited and this should be completed in October 2010. The last completed financial audit of the Environmental Trust's financial statements was for the 2008/09 financial year, which was completed on 20 October 2009. This audit did not reveal any anomalies and an unqualified audit

opinion was given. The Audit Office also undertook a performance audit of the Environmental Trust grant program in 2009, and found many best practice approaches being implemented.

QUESTION 102

Can the Minister provide the committee with a copy of that audit?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the Auditor-General's Statutory Audit Report for the year ending 30 June 2009 is available online at www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/reports/financial/2009/vol7/pdf/11_fa1122_environmental_trust_2009_volume_7_2009.pdf.

QUESTION 103

The NPWS has just released a discussion paper on mountain bike riding opportunities in national parks, in a bid to "make mountain biking sustainable in our parks".

ANSWER

I have been advised that the mountain biking discussion paper released on 10 September 2010 for public comment will inform development of a NSW Cycling Policy and Mountain Biking Strategy. More than 450 comments have been received to date via the online forum.

QUESTION 104

They apparently see this "consultation" in the same light as "the consultation" that got horse riders and 4WD users out of parks, and fishers out of their favourite fishing spots.

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The discussion paper is not part of a plan to reduce legal opportunities for mountain biking in national parks and reserves. Cycling and mountain biking are currently allowed on all public access roads managed by the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, and on most management trails, subject to specific requirements in a reserve's plan of management or signage.

QUESTION 105

Are the fears of mountain bike riders that this is really a plan to get them out of national parks valid?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Mountain biking on narrow tracks (known as 'singletrack') is currently allowed in Yellowmundie Regional Park, Livingstone National Park and State Conservation Area, Kosciuszko National Park, Glenrock Conservation Area and on a trial basis in Royal National Park. There are no plans to reduce the current access arrangements.

QUESTION 106

About 12 months ago, the Government acquired Toorale, near Bourke as another National Park. What work has been done during the last year, have the dams that have been across the Warrego for more than 100 years yet been removed, what will the impact be of their removal, and when will the Park be opened for the first visitors?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Since the National Parks and Wildlife Service assumed management of Toorale in December 2008, the following work has been undertaken:

- nine full-time staff were recruited;
- over 3,000 pigs and more than 50 foxes have been removed, and 9,500 goats were mustered off the reserve for sale through local markets, encouraging the recovery of native groundcovers;
- pest plant control measures have been undertaken;
- maintenance has been undertaken on infrastructure, including roads and trails;
- maintenance to staff housing and workshops has been carried out and will continue in accordance with the 2010/2011 Far West Region Operations Plan;
- a Fire Management Strategy for Toorale was approved and adopted in 2009;
- the historic Toorale Homestead underwent building stabilisation and weatherproofing works;
- archaeological surveys of cultural heritage have been carried out, including investigating many Aboriginal and European heritage sites; and
- community engagement activities have been organised, including an Aboriginal 'back to country' gathering of the local Baarkindji people and a gathering over the October long weekend of Aboriginal people with a cultural association to Toorale.

There has been no water storage decommissioning of the dams across the Warrego River. The water control infrastructure is operated to maximise flows from the Warrego River to the Darling River.

Any proposal to carry out dam decommissioning works will first require environmental assessment and approval, and must seek to achieve environmental outcomes as well as maximise Warrego River flows to the Darling River. Irrigation entitlements have not been utilised on Toorale since the purchase was finalised by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

An Interim Management Guideline is being prepared to direct park management until a full Plan of Management has been approved. This includes:

- development of a Visitation Strategy for interim use, as well as detailed analysis to inform the Plan of Management;
- placement of signs at entrances and other sites to clearly define reserve boundaries; and
- analysis of visitor safety needs and interpretive visitor information.

It is expected that the above preparations will be complete during 2011.

Visitors to the area currently have limited access to Toorale, although anyone can drive through the reserve via Bourke Louth Road. Several groups have visited Toorale in a guided tour capacity, including via the National Parks and Wildlife Service Discovery Program. Individuals that are associated with Toorale, and their families, are welcome to visit. The development of visitor facilities is expected to begin in 2011/12.

QUESTION 107

I refer to use by NPWS of sodium monofluoroacetate, or 1080 poison, to control feral animals. I preface my comments by stating that Tasmania has admitted having used 15 kilograms of the poison in 1999-2000, but has now reduced that amount to slightly less than 1 kilogram last year.

Will the Minister tell the Committee the weight amount, rather than the number of baits, used by NPWS last year?

ANSWER

I have been advised that the total weight of 1080 used by the National Parks and Wildlife Service on park for the year 2009/10 was approximately 1005 grams (1.005 kilograms).

QUESTION 108

Does NPWS consider 1080 poison more humane than shooting?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Not always. For example, shooting may be more humane if the shooting is undertaken by trained marksmen and any injured animals can be quickly euthanised. However, 1080 baiting is more effective than shooting in many situations. It should be noted that the use of 1080 baits on park is in accordance with the Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures for Humane Pest Animal Control which has been endorsed by the RSPCA. Further, the RSPCA acknowledges “that in many circumstances there is currently no alternative effective control method available”.

QUESTION 109

Is it a fact that NPWS, particularly in the high country in southern New South Wales, is lacing salt blocks with poison in an effort eradicate wild deer?

ANSWER

No.

QUESTION 110

Further, is there any trial program in place related to poison laced salt blocks, and is it the intention of NPWS to run an extensive program next year to eradicate wild deer in National Parks using poison salt blocks?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

No. However, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water is undertaking trials to examine the efficacy and target-specificity of salt blocks (without poison) to attract deer. How salt blocks may be used to manage deer populations is yet to be determined and approved.

QUESTION 111

What ecology risk factors have been taken into account, and is the RSPCA involved in this or any similar program?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The RSPCA is already involved in assisting with deer management programs on national parks. The trials will help identify risk factors and develop procedures to mitigate the risks to non-target animals and to the environment. The RSPCA will be involved in the development of standard operating procedures if and when salt blocks are introduced to help manage deer.

QUESTION 112

Why is the Marine Parks Authority publishing such biased advertising in the Coffs Harbour area, in relation to the Solitary Islands Marine Park?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The NSW Government's advertising guidelines clearly state that advertising can be used for "encouraging public involvement in Government decision making" and "raising awareness of a planned or impending initiative and reporting on performance in relation to NSW Government undertakings".

QUESTION 113

The Advertising purports to say that "submissions are closing soon" – but then adds "some facts to Consider" and runs a very pro-marine park agenda, without offering any of the counter arguments.

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

On 11 September 2010, a Marine Parks Authority advertisement was placed in the Coffs Harbour and Grafton newspapers highlighting that the submission period on the proposed draft zoning plan for the Solitary Islands Marine Park was closing on 17 September. This advertisement followed public notices appearing in local and State-wide media at the commencement of the submission period. The advertisement clarified facts about the key proposals contained in the draft zoning plan and addressed issues raised in stakeholder consultation and local media coverage.

QUESTION 114

Do you think this is fair use of public money?

ANSWER

Yes.

QUESTION 115

In relation to Ms Corbyn's answer thatThe Environment Trust has a program that provides for what we call lead environment groups to access a base level of money and this year it was \$600,000 spread across a number of non-government organisations.....

What groups shared in this \$600,000 and how much did each get?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Payments under the Environmental Trust's Lead Environmental Community Groups program for 2009/10 are as follows:

Organisation Name	Amount Funded
Australian Association for Environmental Education (National)	\$15,000
Australian Network for Plant Conservation Inc.	\$15,000
Conservation Volunteers Australia	\$25,000
Australian Conservation Foundation Inc	\$40,000
Bicycle New South Wales Inc	\$25,000
Earthwatch Institute Australia	\$5,000
Environmental Defenders Office Ltd	\$60,000
Greening Australia NSW	\$5,000
Inland Rivers Network (IRN)	\$10,000
Keep Australia Beautiful (NSW)	\$45,000
Landcare NSW Inc	\$25,000
Nature Conservation Council of NSW Inc	\$80,000
National Parks Association of NSW Inc	\$70,000
WIRES, NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service Inc	\$20,000
Sydney Metropolitan Wildlife Services	\$12,500
Total Environment Centre Inc	\$80,000
Australian Seabird Rescue Inc	\$10,000
Community Environment Network Inc	\$12,000
Friends of the Koala Inc	\$10,000
Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife	\$27,500
The Wilderness Society Sydney Inc	\$25,000
TOTAL	\$617,000

QUESTION 116

What reporting requirements are there on each of these groups to ensure the funds are used appropriately?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

Each grantee is required to provide yearly reports. They are required to submit their organisation's audited financial statement on a yearly basis to the Environmental Trust, and this is reviewed along with the project report. The following year's funding is only allocated subsequent to a satisfactory review of the submitted report and financial statement, to ensure it is consistent with the grant agreement.

QUESTION 117

What audits are done by the Department, and are they done annually?

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

There have been no specific audits undertaken (i.e. beyond the review of each organisation's audit statement) on projects under the Lead Environmental Community Groups program. The Lead Environmental Community Groups program as a whole will undergo an independent program evaluation prior to 2012.

However, the NSW Audit Office audited the Environmental Trust grant program in November 2009.

QUESTION 118

Can the minister provide the Committee with details of these recent grant audits for the last three years

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

As stated above, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water has not undertaken any specific audits of these groups beyond the review of each organisation's audit statement.

However, the Audit Office report of the Environmental Trust grant program audit is available at: www.audit.nsw.gov.au/publications/reports/financial/2009/vol7/pdf/11_fa1122_environmental_trust_2009_volume_7_2009.pdf

Questions from Ms Cusack

QUESTION 119

What was the initial budget allocation by WSN for the installation and commissioning of the Arrow Bioplant Plant at the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park?

- a) What was the actual cost of the installation and commissioning of the Arrow Bioplant?

ANSWER

I am advised that the figure for the approved initial capital expenditure is \$ 53 million, based the 2006 Board decision, CPI adjusted.

The capital expenditure for the installation and commissioning of the Plant as of 30 June 2010 was \$61.3m. The 09-10 figure is not yet audited.

QUESTION 120

What was the volume of waste processed by the Arrow Bioplant Plant in 2009/10?

ANSWER

I am advised that the plant processed 39,900 tonnes of waste in 2009/10.

QUESTION 121

What has been the actual emission rate of odours from the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park?

ANSWER

I am advised that a recent study was conducted by an independent consultant as required by the DECCW under WSN's licenses for the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park. This study identified potential odour sources, and evaluated their emission rates.

37 points were tested across the site. It was reported that the control measures in place are working for most of the potential odour sources on-site; three sources showed emission rates that were identified as having potential off site impact and requiring additional controls. The maximum calculated emission rates for these three sources ranged from 916 OU/m³/s to 4,289 OU/m³/s.

QUESTION 122

What additional measures has WSN taken to mitigate odours from the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park given the large number of odour complaints from the local community?

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

WSN has worked closely with DECCW and the local community to identify and eliminate odour sources.

Odour management at Macarthur Resource Recovery Park is being managed in accordance with the Environment Protection Licence which governs the site operations.

WSN has developed immediate and longer term approaches for reducing the odours including committing over \$1m in additional projects to prevent and treat odour.

As a result of these measures, odour complaints have significantly reduced from the spike of 234 between March to May to 17 complaints in June 2010.

QUESTION 123

What has been the actual noise impacts of the plant, during both day time and night time, on the following areas: Henrietta Drive, Tea Tree Place, Cotula Place, Glenlee House, Spring Farm (access road, adjacent area and middle area)

ANSWER

I am advised that WSN is not aware of any noise impacts from the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park that have affected these areas, and WSN has not received any noise complaints since the plant was opened in 2008.

QUESTION 124

How many vehicle movement are there into the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park each day? In answering this question, please provide the type of vehicle (eg cars, vans, light trucks and heavy trucks) and the breakdown of vehicle movements by 1 hourly intervals (i.e. 9:00am to 10:00am, 10:00 am to 11:00am etc.).

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

On average there are 182 vehicle movements across the weighbridge per day at the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park. (This calculation was taken from an average week March 1- March 5 2010).

WSN does not record the type of vehicles that enter the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park.

TIME	VEHICLE MOVEMENTS	TIME	VEHICLE MOVEMENTS
6-7am	4.2	12-13 pm	24.2
7-8 am	9	13- 14pm	20
8- 9 am	22.8	14- 15pm	19.8
9-10 am	18.8	15- 16 pm	15.2
10-11 am	22.4	16 – 17pm	2.6
11-12 am	22.8		

QUESTION 125

What was the planned and preventative maintenance budget for Macarthur Resource Recovery Park in 2009/10?

- a) What was the actual expenditure on maintenance in 2009/10? In answering the second part of this question please include the cost of unplanned maintenance.

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

The planned maintenance budget for Macarthur Resource Recovery Park in 2009/10 was \$778,000.

- a) The financial results for 2009/10 have not been audited by the Auditor General's Office and are not yet available. They are expected to be available later in the year and will be published and tabled in the parliament.
-

QUESTION 126

How much electricity was produced by the biogas generated at the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park?

- a) Of this how much was used on-site and how much was sold into the electricity grid?

ANSWER

I am advised that in the 2009/10 financial year 547 mega watt hours of electricity was produced from the biogas generated at the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park

- a) All of the 547 mega watt hours were sold to the electricity grid.
-

QUESTION 127

Why have the overall resource recovery rates been lower than expected?

ANSWER

I am advised as follows:

The Plant was in commissioning during 09/10.

The recovery rate to date has not met expectations because of the need to:

- adapt to regulatory changes,
- temporarily reduce the total tonnes processed while addressing odour problems,
- address difficulties with marketing recovered plastic, and
- address some engineering issues.

QUESTION 128

Why have the rates of production of stabilised sludge/soil conditioner and garden compost been lower than anticipated?

ANSWER

I am advised that the garden compost has not been lower than expected.

The production of sludge/soil conditioner has been lower than expected because of the lower than expected tonnes being processed in the plant, and the need to adapt to regulatory changes.

QUESTION 129

How much non-putrescible waste at the Macarthur Resource Recovery Park has been disposed of to landfill on the site?

ANSWER

I am advised that 35,471 tonnes of non-putrescible waste have been disposed in the landfill at Macarthur Resource Recovery Park.

QUESTION 130

How much money was collect from local government in 2009/10 in the form of waste levies? In answering this question please provide the amount collected from each local council/shire in NSW.

- a) Of these funds, how much was returned to local government to fund environmental programs? In answering this question please provide the amount returned to each local council/shire in NSW.

ANSWER

I have been advised as follows:

The NSW Government collects the waste and environment levy from licensed landfill operators, and not all NSW landfills are operated by local government.

Landfills can be operated by a state owned corporation, private waste companies or councils. The Government collects the levy from landfill operators; however, the levy is charged to landfill users, such as residents, industry and councils, which pay a gate price, including the levy fee.

Many councils send their waste to privately owned or state owned corporation landfills and are not required to provide information on how much they pay to dispose of waste at those facilities.

However, the Government can provide information on the amount collected from council operated landfills, noting this is not the amount of levy paid by councils, but rather the levy collected from the users of the landfill. See the table below.

2009/10 TOTAL LEVY COLLECTED	
Local Government Landfills	\$
Ballina Shire Council	\$319,610.00
Bellingen Shire Council	\$30,398.00
Bankstown City Council	\$1,071,074.95
Blue Mountains Council	\$541,274.50
Byron Shire Council	\$219,602.20
Cessnock City Council	\$4,011,068.88
Clarence Valley Council	\$362,547.20
Coffs Harbour Council	\$617,452.20
Dungog Shire Council	\$25,618.50
Gloucester Shire Council	\$21,764.20
Gosford City Council	\$4,671,162.90
Great Lakes Council	\$353,216.40
Greater Taree Council	\$299,729.10
Hawkesbury City Council	\$1,230,216.41
Holroyd City Council	\$22,340.35
Kempsey Shire Council	\$178,830.20
Kyogle Shire Council	\$35,461.30
Lake Macquarie City Council	\$5,159,167.50

Lismore Shire Council	\$234,677.40
Maitland City Council	\$3,355,694.59
Muswellbrook Council	\$246,158.50
Nambucca Shire Council	\$47,165.10
Newcastle City Council	\$11,296,935.80
Port Macquarie-Hastings Council	\$395,512.20
Pt. Stephens Council	\$62,112.66
Richmond Valley Council	\$281,772.25
Shellharbour City Council	\$2,177,390.67
Shoalhaven City Council	\$3,281,963.19
Singleton Shire Council	\$358,843.91
Tweed Shire Council	\$512,231.70
Wollondilly Shire Council	\$59,755.99
Wollongong City Council	\$7,348,716.80
Wyong Shire Council	\$9,311,426.43
TOTAL	\$58,140,891.98

- a) More than \$42.2 million was paid to local NSW councils in 2009/10 to fund environmental programs. See the tables below.

2009/10 WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENT PAYMENTS	
Sydney Metropolitan Area/Extended Regulated Area Councils	\$
Ashfield	\$158,327
Auburn	\$277,960
Bankstown	\$689,003
Baulkham Hills	\$646,595
Blacktown	\$1,102,885
Botany Bay	\$146,092
Burwood	\$125,824
Camden	\$201,938
Campbelltown	\$563,791
Canada Bay	\$273,297
Canterbury	\$529,427
Fairfield	\$721,070
Holroyd	\$369,270
Hornsby	\$602,141
Hunters Hill	\$53,296
Hurstville	\$295,134
Kogarah	\$214,029
Ku-ring-gai	\$408,970
Lane Cove	\$119,656
Leichhardt	\$201,268
Liverpool	\$669,052
Manly	\$150,022

Marrickville	\$291,750
Mosman	\$107,243
North Sydney	\$237,012
Parramatta	\$612,356
Penrith	\$683,662
Pittwater	\$215,644
Randwick	\$488,529
Rockdale	\$378,229
Ryde	\$391,807
Strathfield	\$132,840
Sutherland Shire	\$816,419
Sydney	\$653,100
Warringah	\$535,861
Waverley	\$252,836
Willoughby	\$257,208
Woollahra	\$203,723
Cessnock	\$188,678
Gosford	\$620,090
Hawkesbury	\$237,617
Kiama	\$76,616
Lake Macquarie	\$739,610
Maitland	\$255,745
Newcastle	\$577,361
Port Stephens	\$247,587
Shellharbour	\$248,052
Shoalhaven	\$355,133
Wingecarribee	\$171,772
Wollongong	\$750,067
Wyong	\$554,404
TOTAL	\$19,800,000

2009/10 WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPROVEMENT PAYMENTS	
Regional Regulated Area Councils	\$
Ballina	\$76,562
Bellingen	\$24,163
Blue Mountains	\$140,936
Byron	\$57,872
Clarence Valley	\$93,702
Coffs Harbour	\$129,274
Dungog	\$15,517
Gloucester	\$9,187
Great Lakes	\$64,026
Greater Taree	\$87,776
Port Macquarie-Hastings	\$135,702
Kempsey	\$53,010
Kyogle	\$17,788

Lismore	\$82,654
Muswellbrook	\$29,606
Nambucca	\$34,759
Richmond Valley	\$41,649
Singleton	\$43,093
Tweed	\$159,516
Upper Hunter Shire	\$25,324
Wollondilly	\$77,885
TOTAL	\$1,400,000

ABORIGINAL LANDS CLEANUP PROGRAM	
Council	\$
Nambucca	\$50,000
Tumut	\$50,000
Lake Macquarie	\$50,000
Great Lakes	\$50,000
Wollongong	\$50,000
Wyong	\$50,000
Lismore	\$44,514
Ballina	\$42,375
TOTAL	\$386,889

REGIONAL ILLEGAL DUMPING SQUADS	
Council	\$
Bankstown, B Hills, Fairfield, Holroyd, Liverpool, Penrith	\$348,000
Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Wingecarribee	\$175,187
TOTAL	\$523,187

VOLUNTARY WASTE GROUPS	
Voluntary Waste Group (Councils)	\$
North East Waste Forum (NEWF) (Ballina, Byron Bay, Clarence Valley, Richmond Valley and Tweed)	\$215,000
Northern Inland Regional Waste (NIRW) (Armidale Dumaresq, Glen Innes/Severn, Gunnedah, Guyra, Gwydir, Inverell, Liverpool Plains, Moree Plains, Narrabri, Tamworth Regional, Tenterfield, Uralla and Walcha)	\$285,000
Midwaste (Great Lakes, Gloucester, Greater Taree, Port Macquarie Hastings, Kempsey, Nambucca, Bellingen and Coffs Harbour)	\$180,000

Netwaste (Bathurst, Blaney, Blue Mountains, Bogan, Bourke, Brewarrina, Broken Hill, Cabonne, Central Darling, Cobar, Coonamble, Cowra, Dubbo, Forbes, Gilgandra, Lithgow, Lachlan, MidWestern, Narromine, Oberon, Orange, Parkes, Walgett, Warren, Warrumbungle, Weddin and Wellington)	\$560,000
RAMROC Murray Waste Group (Albury City, Balranald, Berrigan, Conargo, Corowa, Deniliquin, Greater Hume, Hay, Jerilderie, Murray, Urana, Wakool , and Wentworth)	\$100,000
RAMROC Riverina Waste Group (Carrathool, Griffith, Hay, Jerilderie, Leeton, Murrumbidgee and Narrandera.)	\$90,000
REROC Waste Forum (Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra, Corowa, Greater Hume, Gundagai, Junee, Lockhart, Temora, Tumbarumba, Tumut, Urana and Wagga Wagga)	\$152,000
South East Resource Recovery Regional Organisation of Councils (SERRROC) (Bega Valley, Boorowa, Bombala, Cooma-Monaro, Eurobodalla, Goulburn-Mulwaree, Harden, Palerang, Queanbeyan City, Snowy River, Upper Lachlan, Yass Valley and Young.)	\$235,000
TOTAL	\$1,817,000

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANTS	
Council	\$
Armidale Dumaresq	\$1,000,520
Ashfield	\$545,140
Auburn	\$845,700
Ballina	\$33,006
Bankstown	\$659,060
Bathurst	\$87,455
Blacktown	\$50,470
Blue Mountains	\$329,380
Bombala	\$31,354
Cabonne	\$90,647
Campbelltown	\$130,000
Centroc	\$250,000
Canada Bay	\$17,243
Lithgow	\$170,431
Sydney	\$665,000
Clarence Valley	\$1,763,211
Coffs Harbour	\$751,113
Cooma-Monaro	\$6,075
Cootamundra	\$589,915
Eurobodalla	\$96,924
Fairfield	\$68,636

Gloucester	\$43,500
Gosford	\$98,050
Great Lakes	\$395,806
Greater Taree	\$62,351
Griffith	\$19,000
Hawkesbury	\$14,550
Holroyd	\$20,000
Hornsby	\$101,150
Hunters Hill	\$31,570
Kempsey	\$17,574
Kiama	\$73,826
Kogarah	\$12,450
Ku-Ring-Gai	\$809,000
Lake Macquarie	\$1,423,606
Lane Cove	\$1,015
Leichhardt	\$90,000
Liverpool	\$88,365
Manly	\$1,000,000
Marrickville	\$115,922
Mid-Western	\$18,405
Mosman	\$9,500
Muswellbrook	\$82,246
Orange	\$645,080
Parkes	\$50,000
Parramatta	\$203,311
Penrith	\$205,392
Pittwater	\$37,373
Port Macquarie Hastings	\$20,000
Port Stephens	\$159,412
Randwick	\$625,000
Rockdale	\$1,045,431
Rous Water	\$403,700
Ryde	\$43,894
Shoalhaven	\$45,717
Singleton	\$25,455
Strathfield	\$69,487
Sutherland	\$25,090
Camden	\$88,666
The Hills	\$13,762
Tumbarumba	\$36,520
Tweed	\$996,747
Wagga Wagga	\$504,722
Warringah	\$576,470
Willoughby	\$817,164
Wingecarribee	\$71,990
Wollondilly	\$100,000
Wollongong	\$415,679
Woollahra	\$198,250
Yass Valley	\$86,700

WSROC	\$589,250
SHOROC	\$50,000
REROC	\$397,500
LGSA	\$162,392
Hunter Councils Inc	\$874,603
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANTS	\$22,293,924

TOTAL TO COUNCILS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS

\$46,221,000

QUESTION 131

How many meetings have taken place between officers of the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water and Better Place Australia?

- a) Who attended these meetings, what matters were discussed, were the meetings minuted?

ANSWER

Based on the advice I have received I can advise as follows:

Over the last two years DECCW has met with representatives from a range of companies associated with the production or supply of Electric Vehicles. This was mainly in the consultation undertaken by the EV Taskforce. These include ChargePoint Australia (with which an agreement for the installation of a charging station is to be signed shortly), Mitsubishi (with which a leasing agreement for an i-MiEV electric vehicle was signed at the beginning of September 2010), Better Place, ECotality and E-Green Technologies.

In addition to individual meetings, various representatives of these companies have been in contact with DECCW staff at various industry and stakeholder functions. There are no agreements between DECCW and Better Place. In fact, there have been no meetings between DECCW and Better Place since July 2010 and no agreements are being considered.

DECCW staff who have met with BetterPlace Australia include the Deputy Director General, Climate Change, Policy and Programs; the Director, Climate Change, Air and Noise Branch; and the Emissions Reduction Transport Team.

Matters discussed relate to the potential of electric vehicles to significantly reduce NSW transport sector greenhouse gas emissions and to improve air quality, and the required infrastructure to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

QUESTION 132

How many meetings have taken place between the Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and/or members of the Minister's staff or electoral office, and Water Better Place Australia?

- a) Who attended these meetings, what matters were discussed, were the meetings minuted?

ANSWER

The Minister for Climate Change and the Environment and/or members of the Minister's staff have met with BetterPlace Australia on one occasion.

Matters discussed relate to the potential of electric vehicles to significantly reduce NSW transport sector greenhouse gas emissions and to improve air quality, and the required infrastructure to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Sartor". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'F'.

Frank Sartor MP
Minister for Climate Change and the Environment