

22 JUNE 2001

(GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5)

PORTFOLIO

ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

1. **Mr Moppett asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—**

(Relevant area in Hansard: p2)

With reference to the purchase of 168 new fire engines for country New South Wales, can you advise where they will be based?

Answer:

The program to provide 168 new and upgraded fire engines in country NSW commenced in 1999. To date 88 appliances have been installed. The currently proposed locations of the remainder of the program are shown on the following table. As pointed out during the hearing, these locations are subject to variation during the life of the program as operational circumstances change:

Build No.	Station Name.	Forecast Delivery
89	Doyalson	00/ '01
90	Wellington	01/ '02
91	Mulwala	01/ '02
92	Barham	01/ '02
93	Trangie	01/ '02
94	Scone	01/ '02
95	Jerilderie	01/ '02
96	Alstonville	01/ '02
97	Dorrigo	01/ '02
98	Macksville	01/ '02
99	South West Rocks	01/ '02
100	Gloucester	01/ '02
101	Dungog	01/ '02
102	Bellbird	01/ '02
103	Hillston	01/ '02
104	Junee	01/ '02
105	Wee Waa	01/ '02
106	Muswellbrook	01/ '02
107	Warragamba	01/ '02
108	Moruya	01/ '02
109	Bangalow	01/ '02
110	Branxton	01/ '02

BUDGET ESTIMATES—ENVIRONMENT & EMERGENCY SERVICES

111	Woolgoolga	01/ '02
112	Coonamble	01/ '02
113	Young	01/ '02
114	Narromine	01/ '02
115	Brewarrina	01/ '02
116	Eden	01/ '02
117	Canowindra	01/ '02
118	Ulladulla	01/ '02
119	Urunga	01/ '02
120	Narooma	01/ '02
121	Condobolin	01/ '02
122	Coraki	01/ '02
123	West Wyalong	01/ '02
124	Blayney	01/ '02
125	Kyogle	01/ '02
126	Guyra	01/ '02
127	Tocumwal	01/ '02
128	Leura	01/ '02
129	Glenbrook	01/ '02
130	Terrigal	02/ '03
131	Morisset	02/ '03
132	Teralba	02/ '03
133	Saratoga	02/ '03
134	Boolaroo	02/ '03
135	Lawson	02/ '03
136	Wentworth Falls	02/ '03
137	Narrabri	02/ '03
138	Weston	02/ '03
139	Ballina	02/ '03
140	Byron Bay	02/ '03
141	Kiama	02/ '03
142	Mittagong	02/ '03
143	Cowra	02/ '03
144	Moree	02/ '03
145	Raymond Terrace	02/ '03
146	Lithgow West	02/ '03
147	Broken Hill Sth	02/ '03
148	Casino	02/ '03
149	Murwillumbah	02/ '03
150	Moss Vale	02/ '03
151	Bourke	02/ '03
152	Blackheath	02/ '03
153	Wauchope	02/ '03
154	Kearsley	02/ '03
155	Crookwell	02/ '03
156	Leeton	02/ '03
157	Deniliquin	02/ '03

158	Tenterfield	02/ '03
159	Merimbula	02/ '03
160	Batemans Bay	02/ '03
161	Corowa	02/ '03
162	Yass	02/ '03
163	Sth Grafton	02/ '03
164	Tumut	02/ '03
165	Narrandera	02/ '03
166	Bega	02/ '03
167	Wingham	02/ '03
168	Coonabarabran	02/ '03

2. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p6)

How much is the Rural Fire Service spending on training Rural Fire Service personnel in the principles of ecologically sustainable bushfire management, including the amounts allocated to permanent Rural Fire Service staff and volunteer members of the bush fire brigades?

Answer:

The NSW Rural Fire Service employs an Environmental Officer who, among other things, educates volunteers and brigade officers on environmental issues.

Since 1996 the NSW Rural Fire Service has been conducting two-day training sessions for Service personnel covering ecological principles and the impact of fire. Each of these courses costs approximately \$2,000 to run.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has also engaged the University of Western Sydney to develop a formal three-day *Fire And Ecology Course* which will, upon completion, form a compulsory component of the qualifications required by Fire Control Staff.

This course will be conducted for the first time this year as part of the Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Public Safety (Firefighting Management). The cost of conducting this course for 24 officers is \$10,000 and it is planned to conduct two courses per year from 2002 onwards.

3. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

(Relevant area in Hansard: p13)

- (1) [In relation to the acquisition of floor space by Waste Service NSW within the Zenith Centre, Chatswood] Are you able to tell the Committee how much this additional space cost to enable a better team spirit?
- (2) How many breaches of environmental standards or licences have been levied against any State government agencies or authorities by the EPA during the past financial year? Could you give us some indication of some of the larger penalties that have been levied?
- (3) Could you give us details of the projects that have received funding through the Environmental Trust in the year 2000-01?

Answer:

- (1) The cost of the additional floor space now occupied by Waste Service NSW at Chatswood is \$83,844.00 per annum rental.
- (2) The EPA issued infringement notices and prosecuted a number of breaches of its legislation during the year against private and public agencies, including the Waste Recycling and Processing Service of NSW, Australian Water Technologies P/L and the Sydney Water Corporation (SWC). For example, on 21 July 2000, the Land and Environment Court fined SWC \$40,000 for polluting waters. All prosecutions are conducted in the courts and are a matter of public record. They will be listed in the forthcoming Annual Report of the EPA.
- (3) The details relating to the majority of the Environmental Trust grants (142 in total) have been available to the public for some time on the EPA's website. Some projects are awaiting data-entry onto the website. This will be completed shortly.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

(Relevant area in the budget papers: [13-8, Budget Paper No. 3 – Vol 2])

4. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Ministerial Office]

- (1) Are any staff from the Environment Protection Authority, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Sydney Catchment Authority or the Waste Service of NSW seconded to the office of the Minister for the Environment on either a full or part time basis? If so, how many, and what are the positions of those staff?
- (2) What are the positions and salaries of the current staff of the Minister for the Environment? Is any of these staff eligible for bonus payments in addition to salary? Has any ministerial staff been paid performance bonus payments since 1995? If so, how much and to whom?
- (3) Has the Minister for the Environment undertaken overseas travel in the financial year 2000/2001? If so where did the Minister travel, on what dates, what was the purpose of the travel?
- (4) If the Minister undertook travel during the financial year 2000/2001 what was the cost for each of the following categories: fares, accommodation, food and expenses.
- (5) Did any staff from the Minister's office travel overseas during the year 2000/2001? If so, what are the positions of the officers who travelled and what were the associated costs?

Answer:

- (1) Departmental Liaison Officers from the Environment Protection Authority and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are located in the office of the Minister for the Environment.
- (2) Ministerial staff are employed by the Director General of the Premiers Department in accordance with the provisions of the Public Sector Management Act 1988.
- (3) to (5) No.

5. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to SES Salaries]

Can the Minister provide details of the total remuneration of the following senior executive service officers employed within his environment related portfolio agencies; for the years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 respectively:

- (a) Director General of the Environment Protection Authority?
- (b) Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service?
- (c) General manager of the Waste Service of NSW?
- (d) C.E.O. of the Sydney Catchment Authority?

Note the information requested has not as yet been published in any Annual Report of the agencies concerned.

Answer:

Salary packages for the Senior Executive Service are set by the Statutory and Other Offices Tribunal. Current Bands for each level are:

Level 8	\$258,000 to \$318,315
Level 7	\$218,615 to \$276,135
Level 6	\$181,960 to \$219,510
Level 5	\$158,840 to \$194,770
Level 4	\$145,350 to \$169,420
Level 3	\$132,410 to \$155,575
Level 2	\$118,675 to \$137,145
Level 1	\$109,225 to \$127,130

Recent amendments to annual reporting legislation require public sector agencies to publicly report on total remuneration in relation to SES Level 5 and above. Agencies within my portfolio will, of course, comply with this legislation.

6. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

- (1) How much did it cost to produce the Environment Protection Authority's report which was prepared for the priority sewerage program?
- (2) Why will compliance staff for the EPA be reduced by 2, from 240 in 2000/01, to 238 in 2001/02?
- (3) Why is the number of compliance audits expected to remain static from 50 last year and 50 for this coming year? How will this be achieved with 2 less staff?
- (4) How many VET stations will be built, and where will they be located? Have tender documents been drawn up yet? If not, why not and when will the tender documents be released?

Answer:

- (1) Staff-related costs are met from the EPA's existing budget.
- (2) The EPA's environmental compliance program is closely linked to other EPA programs such as Air and Noise, Waters and Catchments and Waste. It is to be expected that resourcing will vary with changing emphasis in program development and program delivery, particularly when such a significant environmental legislative reform program has been brought forward by the Government over the last three years.
- (3) The EPA has a planned program for conducting detailed compliance audits within targeted industry sectors each year. This is in addition to a significant program of other types of compliance activities such as inspections, investigations, prosecutions, issuing legal notices and negotiating pollution reduction programs.
- (4) This is a matter for the Minister for Transport and Minister for Roads.

7. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Sydney Catchment Authority]

- (1)
 - (a) Which roads in Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) areas have been allocated funding for resealing and upgrading?
 - (b) Which council areas are these roads in?
 - (c) How much has been allocated in each case?
- (2) Will the Wombeyan Caves Road upgrade be addressed with Sydney Catchment Authority road funding? If so, by what amount?

Answer:

The SCA has allocated around \$1.25 million in the 2000/01 financial year to reduce sediment run-off from unsealed roads and improve water quality in the catchment area. Grants will be provided to Crookwell Shire, Goulburn City, Gunning Shire, Mulwaree Shire, Tallaganda Shire, Wollondilly Shire and Wollongong City Councils. I am advised that Wingecarribee Shire Council has submitted an application for the sealing of a 10km section of Wombeyan Caves Road. The application is currently being assessed

8. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Waste Service NSW]

- (1) What was the value of the profits lost to the Waste Service of NSW during the year 2000/2001 as a result of the closure of the liquid waste plant at Lidcombe?
- (2) How much did the Waste Service of NSW pay for fuel during the year 1999/2000?
- (3) How much did the Waste Service of NSW pay for fuel during the year 2000/2001?
- (4) What was the allocation from the Waste Planning and Management Fund to each metropolitan waste board?
- (5) What was the allocation from the Waste Planning and Management Fund to community and other environment projects? Could the Minister provide a list of the projects detailing the name and location of each project and the amount allocated?
- (6) What was the allocation from the Waste Planning and Management Fund to the consolidated fund?

- (7) How many staff have been made redundant in the recent restructure of Waste Service?
- (8) What was the total of a) SES staff and b) non-SES staff for the Waste Service in the years 1998/1999, 1999/2000, 2000/2001.
- (9) How many square metres of space does the Waste Service now occupy in the Zenith Tower in Chatswood? How many floors does this represent?
- (10) What was the cost of the refurbishment undertaken when the office space for the Waste Service in the Zenith Towers was expanded? What was the cost of this refurbishment? Is the refurbishment complete? Was new office furniture acquired? If so, at what cost?
- (11) What was the cost of redundancy payments for staff exiting the Waste Service?
- (12) Were consultants used to advise on the restructure of Waste Service, if so, who were the consultants and what was the cost of the consultancy?
- (13) Is the consultancy for the restructure of the Waste Service concluded, and if not what further work is being undertaken and at what estimated cost?

Answer:

- (1) As a result of the closure of the liquid waste plant at Lidcombe during the Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games Waste Service NSW lost \$1.5 million in profits.
- (2) Waste Service's fuel costs during 1999/2000 were \$97,771 for the operation of the motor vehicle fleet. Fuel costs for operating the transport fleet at transfer stations and operation of the landfill machinery are part of the contract with private sector contractors.
- (3) Waste Service's fuel costs during 2000/2001 were \$101,882 for the operation of the motor vehicle fleet. Fuel costs for operating the transport fleet at transfer stations and operation of the landfill machinery are part of the contract with private sector contractors.
- (4)

Waste Board	Allocation in 2000-01 (\$)
Central Coast	1,775,300
Hunter	1,556,400
Illawarra	1,862,100
Inner Sydney	2,676,400
Macarthur	1,710,700
Northern Sydney	2,391,600
Southern Sydney	2,973,350
Western Sydney	2,554,150
TOTAL:	17,500,000

- (5) I am advised that \$12.2 million was allocated from the Waste Planning and Management Fund in 2000-01 to support community and other environment projects. Examples include \$23,900 community waste reduction grant to Mumballa school to showcase itself as a zero waste school, \$160,000 to the north east waste forum for its rural waste management programs and \$1.4 million for the rural waste chemical collection program throughout rural NSW. A list of grants is published in the EPA Annual Report.
- (6) Allocations are not made from the Waste Planning and Management Fund to the consolidated fund.
- (7) There were no forced redundancies resulting from the restructure.
- (8) Information on staffing is contained in Waste Service NSW's Annual Report.

- (9) Waste Service NSW currently occupies 2061 square metres in the Zenith Centre, Chatswood. This represents two floors.
- (10) All expenditure is in accordance with the guidelines for office refurbishments.
- (11) Voluntary redundancy payments totalled \$1.376 million.
- (12) The consultants engaged for the organisational restructure include the NSW Department of Public Works and Services, Central Corporate Service Unit, Mercer Cullen Egan & Dell, Diplomacy Management Consulting, and Morgan & Banks. The cost of consultants is reflected in the Annual Report.
- (13) The consultancy for the organisational restructure has concluded.

9. Mr Ryan asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service]

- (1) (a) How many staff have been made redundant in the recent restructure of National Parks and Wildlife Service?
(b) What was the cost of redundancy payments for staff exiting the service in 2000/2001?
- (2) What was the total of a) SES staff and b) non-SES staff for the National Parks and Wildlife Service in the years 1998/1999, 1999/2000, 2000/2001.
- (3) Of these staff, how many were based at Hurstville during those periods?
- (4) What was the amount of floor space used by the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Hurstville in each of those years?
- (5) Is the office space used by the National Parks and Wildlife Service at Hurstville owned or leased?
- (6) Has refurbishment been undertaken at the National Parks and Wildlife Service Hurstville office and if so, what was the cost of this refurbishment? Is the refurbishment complete? Was new office furniture acquired, if so, at what cost?
- (7) What is the annual revenue to National Parks and Wildlife Service from all entry fees?
- (8) What is the estimated annual revenue in 2001/2002 from the recently announced group of coastal national parks that will be subject to entry fees?
- (9) What is the estimated annual revenue from entry fees to each of the following; Thirlmere Lakes National Park, Fitzroy Falls visitor centre and the Morton National Park?
- (10) How many aircraft does National Parks and Wildlife Service have and what types of aircraft are they?
- (11) Are the aircraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service owned or leased?
- (12) How many flying hours did each aircraft undertake in the years 1999, 2000, 2001 (to 30 June)
- (13) What is the maintenance cost the aircraft?
- (14) What staff is allocated to the maintenance and operations of the aircraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service?
- (15) Where are staff and aircraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service based?
- (16) How many watercraft does National Parks and Wildlife Service have and what types of craft are they?

- (17) Is the watercraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service owned or leased?
- (18) What is the maintenance cost the watercraft?
- (19) What staff is allocated to the maintenance and operations of the watercraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service?
- (20) Where are staff and watercraft operated by the National Parks and Wildlife Service based?
- (21) What was the value of financial returns received from the operation of Fort Denison for the year 2000/2001?
- (22) What if any facilities and infrastructure at Fort Denison were paid for by the lessee?
- (23) Why are all visitors to Fort Denison forced to use NPWS-run ferry transport?
- (24) Does NPWS own or lease the craft used for Fort Denison tours?
- (25) What is the annual revenue to NPWS for the Fort Denison Tours
- (26) What is the passenger capacity on the tour boat?
- (27) What proportion of each tour is filled on average?
- (28) What was the cost of restoration of the 2 shearing sheds at Mungo National Park and what portion of those costs were met by either State or Federal, funding?
- (29) What allocation if any has been made to auditing dunnart or other marsupial numbers in the Mungo National Park?
- (30) How many claims have been made for compensation as a result of the Thredbo Landslide?
- (31) How many claims have been settled and what is the value of each of those claims?
- (32) What was the cost of the enquiry by Professor English into to the cull of Brumbies in the National parks and Wildlife Service's Brumby cull?
- (33) Why was there no mention of the presence of brumbies in the Wildness Nomination Assessment report on this area in 1997?
- (34) Has RSPCA or any other organisation been recompensed or paid for consultancy and other services provided in the period after the brumby cull? If so, how much and to whom?
- (35) What is the extent of legal costs to date in representing the NPWS in legal or other issues related to this incident?
- (36) Which parks and reserves and SRAs have been acknowledged as requiring sewage system upgrade for environmental protection purposes?
- (37) Which parks and reserves and SRAs will receive funding for sewage upgrades in the years 2001/2002, 2002/2003, 2003/2004, 2004/2005?
- (38) Exactly what projects will the \$1.6m allocated to further initiatives in fire management and pest species management pp 4-21, and 4-115 of Budget Paper 3 for include? Where will these projects be located and how much in each location? Will independent pest species controllers be invited to tender for any contracts?
- (39) Why have you reduced the number of pest control programs undertaken in collaboration with neighbours from 331 in 1999/00, down to 300 in 2000/01, and projected for 300 in 2001/2002?
- (40) I notice you have indicated on page 4-117 of BP3 that a 7080 area off park (I presume this means hectares) is to be covered by conservation agreements in last year's budget. I also notice that this amount will not

increase in the coming 2001/2002 year. Why do you not plan to increase the number the off-park conservation agreements in the coming year?

- (41) What accounts for the projected increase in licenses issued for dealing in and keeping native animals from last year to next financial year? (12,100 licenses in 2000/01, projected to be 12,500 in 2001/2)
- (42) Have the licences been issued in order to enable the animals to be traded or kept?
- (43) What was the cost of preparation of the Walker Report into the Thredbo Landslide?

What has been the cost of legal representation of the National parks and Wildlife Service and its officers in the a) Coronial Enquiry into the Thredbo Landslide and b) the Walker Report?

Answer:

- (1) There were no forced redundancies resulting from the restructure.

(2) and (3)	<u>Year</u>	<u>SES</u>	<u>Non-SES</u>	<u>based at Hurstville</u>
	1998/99	9	1593	390
	1999/00	9	1649	404
	2000/01	9	1826	445

- (4) 8,574 square metres.
- (5) Leased.
- (6) All expenditure is in accordance with the guidelines for office refurbishments.
- (7) \$9.5 million for 2000/01.
- (8) More than \$300,000.
- (9) \$77,000 for Morton National Park (which includes the Fitzroy Falls Visitor Centre) and none for Thirlmere Lakes National Park
- (10) to (15) NPWS owns one helicopter and two fixed wing aircraft based at Bankstown Airport. Flights are undertaken for official NPWS business including fire suppression and pest species management. Trips are conducted according to public sector guidelines and air safety regulations. All maintenance is carried out by licensed contract engineers.
- (16) to (20) I am advised that NPWS owns 67 watercraft for use in park-related activities across the State. Maintenance is integrated into officers' overall duties and other contractors are used as required.
- (21) Fort Denison has not been operational for a full 12 month period since re-opening in September 2000. The base rental for the café is set at \$12,000 per annum. A percentage of gross annual receipts will also be realised in accordance with the lease.
- (22) Tables, chairs, coffee servery, café umbrellas and kitchen items, including all utensils, small electrical appliances, crockery and cutlery.
- (23) Transport is provided during the hours of 9am to 5pm by Sydney Ferries as the contract holder. Visitors to the Fort outside these hours may use other licensed operators such as water taxis.
- (24) No.
- (25) \$43,607.
- (26) The Sydney Ferries transport vessel has a capacity of 400 passengers.

- (27) The actual number varies.
- (28) \$25,000, which was met from State funding.
- (29) No specific funding has been provided.
- (30) There have been 42 claims for compensation made by relatives of the deceased. There are 29 commercial claims for compensation made by lodges in Thredbo village.
- (31) In accordance with usual legal practice, the terms of settlement of the claims signed by the parties may not be disclosed.
- (32) See question 17.
- (33) There was no wilderness assessment in 1997.
- (34) \$10,068 was paid to Jelliffe Environmental and \$28,940 was paid to private helicopter companies for the provision of helicopter services.
- (35) \$13,767.
- (36) and (37) The National Parks and Wildlife Service has been implementing a \$26 million major Sewerage Upgrade program over the past few years. Improving sewage treatment in our national parks was something the Coalition never achieved during its seven years in office. Over the next three years, funding for sewerage upgrade programs (excluding Perisher) will total \$18 million. A further \$12 million will also be spent specifically upgrading the treatment facility at Perisher Valley in Kosciuszko National Park.
- (38) \$1.077m for fire management capital projects across the State will be allocated among regional offices for slashing fire breaks, trail construction and plant and equipment purchases. Each region will determine the exact location and cost of each project.
- \$540,000 for pest management capital projects including the purchase of significant items to assist in pest management programs.
- (39) I am advised that NPWS conducts an average of 700 weed and pest management control programs every year. It is estimated that around half of these involve programs undertaken with park neighbours.
- (40) Voluntary Conservation Agreements are being entered into with private landholders all the time. The 100th agreement was signed in July 2001 and further agreements will be made in the course of the financial year.
- (41) Anticipated growth in interest in the keeping of certain categories of native animals, e.g., reptiles and frogs.
- (42) The licences issued allow the licensees to acquire certain native animals (certain species of birds, reptiles, frogs and mammals) and to dispose of the progeny of their animals or excess animals that have been held for a period of not less than 6 months.
- (43) National Parks and Wildlife Service did not pay for the Walker report.
- (a) The cost of legal representation for the NPWS for the 161 days (August 1998 until December 1999) of the Thredbo Coronial Inquest was in the order of \$1.5 million. No individual NPWS officers were separately represented.
- (b) Nil.

10. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) – Thermal Pollution from Dams]

- (1) In light of breaches of Schedule 3 Clause 10 of the *Protection of the Environment Operations (General) Regulation 1998* (regarding the prohibition of the addition of water to rivers which is more than 2°C colder than ambient temperature) by up to 17 publicly owned dams (NSW State of the Environment Report 2000), what costs has the EPA incurred in undertaking legal action against the Department of Land & Water Conservation over these breaches? If none, why hasn't the EPA taking legal action?
- (2) What resources have gone into the implementation of the EPA's RFO's and Water Quality O's?
- (3) The Department for Mineral Resources and Fisheries received \$2.8 million dollars of Environment Trust funding to restore and rehabilitate the Conrad Mine near Inverell, the CSA excised areas at Cobar, the Yerranderie silver mines in the Blue Mountains and the Woodsreef asbestos mine near Barraba.
 - (a) The stated availability of funds under the Environmental Trust Funding Priorities for 2001 for Restoration and Rehabilitation programs for local and other relevant government agencies was \$1million. How was the Department able to obtain \$2.8 million dollars for rehabilitation works?
 - (b) In the case of the Yerranderie silver mines in the Blue Mountains, which are in Sydney's inner water catchment, why aren't funds from the Sydney Catchment Authority being used instead of Environment Trust funds?

Answer:

- (1) The EPA has not incurred legal costs in relation to cold water pollution this year. An inter-agency taskforce convened by NSW Fisheries and involving the Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Land and Water Conservation is developing appropriate operational and capital works strategies to effectively deal with cold water pollution.
- (2) The EPA is spending approximately \$1,150,000 for 2001/02 for its activities on the water reform program, which includes the interim environmental objectives (RFO's and WQO's) and participating in the River Management Committees which are developing plans to implement the objectives.
- (3)
 - (a) The \$1 million referred to under the Environmental Trust Funding Priorities for 2001 is for the Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program for local and state government projects. The Department of Mineral Resources received \$2.86 million from a separate Environmental Trust program, the Rehabilitation of Abandoned Mines Program. A total of \$3 million is allocated to this program.
 - (b) The Environmental Trust's Rehabilitation of Abandoned Mines Program provides funding for mine sites that are identified as 'derelict'. The Trust's Abandoned Mines Program was specifically established to build on the activities of the Derelict Mines Committee for this high priority environmental issue. Funds were provided for restoration and rehabilitation works on identified high priority derelict mines. The Derelict Mines Interdepartmental Committee and the Environmental Trust Restoration and Rehabilitation Technical Review Committee agreed that the Yerranderie site met the program's assessment criteria, and subsequently recommended it for funding.

11. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Environment Protection Authority (EPA) – Genetic Engineering]

- (1) What budget allocation is planned for protection of the environment and native fauna against contamination by the release of genetically engineered organisms?
- (2) How will any contamination arising from genetically engineered organisms and excessive use of chemicals be assessed and managed in the:
 - (a) soil;
 - (b) crops and weeds;

- (c) waterways; and
 - (d) transfer to beneficial insects especially bees?
- (3) What insurance is in place against contamination of ecosystems?
- (4) Has the Minister allowed for an Environment Impact Statement (EIS) to accompany each application for the release of genetically engineered organisms into the environment and what data will be used to assess the impact of genetically engineered organisms?
- (5) Is there provision in the budget for setting up independent research into the potential impact of the release of genetically engineered organisms in NSW' ecosystems? If not, why not?

Answer:

Genetically modified organisms are regulated under Commonwealth legislation - namely, the *Gene Technology Act 2000*. This Act has set up the Gene Technology Regulator, an independent organisation, to regulate gene technology research and development across Australia, in accordance with the legislation. The Gene Technology Regulator will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment for each application for a licence to deal with Genetically Modified Organisms. Currently a three year, \$3 million research program, to assess the ecological risks of genetically modified organisms, is being conducted by the CSIRO.

12. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Fees and Charges]

- (1) What has been the total revenue collected for entry into national parks, broken down for each region?
- (2) What has been the cost of collecting this revenue, broken down for each region?
- (3) Do these costs include the loss of time from conservation activities of officers who collect fees? If so, how much time is lost? If not, why not?
- (4) If the fees are collected by agents, what is the cost of supervising these collectors by Park staff and have these costs been included in the costs of fee collection?
- (5) In a number of Parks where self registration has been attempted the stands for receiving the funds have been vandalised. What has been the cost of repairing these?

Answer:

- (1) The breakdown of vehicle entry fees in 2000/01 by Directorate was as follows:

Central \$'000s	Northern \$'000s	Southern \$'000s	Western \$'000s	Total \$'000s
3,186	348	5,239	83	8,856

In addition, annual entry passes which are managed centrally totalled \$744,000

- (2) to (5) Costs associated with revenue collection and maintenance (including the supervision of collection agents) are integrated within the broad function of park management.

13. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – 4WD and horse riding]

- (1) The NPWS is permitting some 4WD activity and horse riding in certain national parks.
 - (a) Have the costs of repairing damage done by these activities been taken into account?
 - (b) If so, what is the annual cost and how has it been assessed?
 - (c) If not, why not and who will meet the extra costs of controlling any erosion or weed infestation caused by these activities?
- (2) Have the cost of personnel to supervise and check on any damage been assessed? If so, what is that cost? If not, why not?
- (3) What measures are in place to monitor the impact on biodiversity caused by these activities?

Answer:

All visitor activities (such as horseriding, 4WD activities, bushwalking etc.) within national parks can have some form of impact. It is not always possible to isolate or quantify the precise impact caused by one specific type of use. The costs of supervision are integrated with general park management costs.

14. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Land Acquisitions]

- (1) For land acquisitions proposed by NPWS from its own funds and the Environmental Trust, can the Minister provide the following information:
 - (a) the purposes of each type of land acquisition program (eg. NE leasehold lands, Dunphy Wilderness Fund etc)?
 - (b) the budgeted spending during 01-02 from each type of land acquisition program?
 - (c) how much of the budgeted spending during 01-02 is carried over from the last financial year and how much is a new allocation on each land acquisition program?

Answer:

The land acquisition funding programs, purposes, funds and budgeted spending for 2001/02 are:

General fund: Available for priority acquisitions anywhere in the State and for any purpose applicable under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. \$2.2 million available.

Open space fund: For the acquisition of lands zoned *8b Future National Park*, associated with north coast national parks and nature reserves. \$3.6 million available.

Crown leases fund: For the acquisition of Crown leases formerly in State forests within the north-east CRA regions. \$1.0 million available.

Occupation permits: For the purchase of private lands associated with occupation permits for grazing in former State forests. \$0.47 million available.

Dunphy Wilderness fund: For the acquisition of private land identified as wilderness. \$2.0 million available (first allocation of the new funding).

Southern CRA fund: For the acquisition of inholdings within, and lands adjoining, national parks and nature reserves within the Southern CRA Region. \$1.2 million available.

Western program: For the acquisition of priority western properties, including those approved by the Federal Minister for the Environment as also qualifying for funding assistance from the National Reserve System Program. \$3.0 million available.

Inholdings program: For the acquisition of inholdings within, or lands adjoining, national park and nature reserves anywhere in the State. \$0.5 million available.

15. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Management of NPWS Reserves]

- (1) How much money is provided for conservation management of NPWS reserves?
- (2) What is the breakdown for the NPWS directorates, and for the reserve types, eg national parks, nature reserves, historic sites?
- (3) What formula is used to determine the funding the management for each NPWS reserve (eg. \$/ha)?
- (4) What was the formula last year and five years ago?
- (5) What performance measures are used to determine whether the funding is sufficient?
- (6) How has this performance changed over the last five years?

Answer:

- (1) Conservation Management expenditures and revenues are contained in Budget Paper No.3 Volume 1 (p 4-115 and 4-116).
- (2) Directorates allocate their budgets across a range of programs taking account of local priorities and circumstances.
- (3) and (4) Funds allocated vary according to the relevant management issues (eg. weeds, feral animals, fire management) and level of visitation for individual parks and reserves.
- (5) and (6) Regional Advisory Committees are increasingly involved in providing feedback on management performance and the NPWS is devising indicators for enhanced State of the Parks reporting.

16. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Kosciuszko National Park]

For financial years 00-01 and 01-02, can the Minister provide a detailed breakdown for all spending and income related to the management of Kosciuszko National Park, including spending/income related to the ski resorts and activities related to the Thredbo landslide the associated inquiry and related activities?

Answer:

2000-2001

Total revenue for the Snowy Mountains region, the South West Region and the Resorts Division (which includes Kosciuszko National Park) was \$14.2 million. Total expenditure was \$68 million (which includes costs associated with the construction of the Alpine Way).

2001-2002

Total revenue for the Snowy Mountains region, the South West Region and the Resorts Division (which includes Kosciuszko National Park) is estimated to be \$14.7 million. Total expenditure is estimated to be \$29.8 million (which includes costs associated with the construction of the Alpine Way).

17. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Horse and other Inquiries by Professor English]

- (1) How much has been spent and will be spent on the five inquiries being conducted by Professor Tony English of Sydney University following the Minister for the Environment's decision to ban aerial culling of horses in NSW following the eradication of horses during an operation in Guy Fawkes River National Park in October 2000?
- (2) What consultation has been undertaken with the community for the preparation of each of these five reports?
- (3) How will the reports assist the removal of feral animals from NPWS reserves?

Answer:

- (1) As Dr English has not completed his inquiries, final figures are not yet available.
- (2) A workshop was held at Dorrigo on 10 February 2001 and submissions from the public were sought via advertising in major Metropolitan and rural newspapers in April 2001. Dr English has, and will continue to, consult widely with all relevant parties.
- (3) The recommendations Dr English makes will identify appropriate methods for the removal of feral animals from national parks and assist the NPWS to ensure its programs meet accepted "best practice".

This incorporates the:

- Development of a Plan of Management to reduce the number of feral horses remaining in Guy Fawkes River National Park;
- Development of a Code of Practice for capture and transport of feral horses to guide future operations; and
- Review associated procedures and protocols governing NPWS pest management operations.

18. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Threatened Species Recovery Planning]

- (1) How much has been spent each year on the *Threatened Species Conservation (TSC) Act* since its introduction in 1996?
- (2) How much of each of these amounts was spent on TSC recovery planning, including plan preparation and implementation and threat abatement planning?
- (3) How much will be spent on recovery planning in 2001-02 under the TSC Act, including itemised spending on recovery plan preparation, plan implementation and threat abatement planning?
- (4) What other actions is the Government taking to ensure the long-term survival of species listed in the TSC Act?

Answer:

- (1) Specific funding to implement the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* since 1996 is:

1996/97 - \$4 million
 1997/98 - \$4 million
 1998/99 - \$6 million
 1999/2000 - \$6 million
 2000/2001 - \$6.5 million

There is also expenditure on threatened species conservation through other NPWS programs and the programs of other agencies including NSW Fisheries.

- (2) The allocations for recovery plan preparation and implementation were estimated at:

1997/1998 - \$0.5 million
 1998/1999 - \$2 million
 1999/2000 - \$2 million

The estimated allocations for the threat abatement plan preparation and implementation that commenced in March 1998 were:

1998/1999 - \$150,000
 1999/2000 - \$170,000

- (3) Recovery Plan Preparation: \$600,000.

Threat Abatement Planning: \$940,000.

Recovery Plan Implementation: Total cost of recovery plan actions approved to date is approximately \$3 million of which over \$1 million are identified actions to be funded by the NPWS.

A further \$2 million will be spent over four years to identify critical habitat and develop recovery plans for threatened marine species.

- (4) A range of actions focussing on forestry management, environmental assessment, research, biodiversity strategies, management planning and protected area management.

19. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Itemised NPWS Spending]

Can the Minister provide details of NPWS actual spending and income for 00-01 and the proposed budget for 01-02 both broken down for each NPWS Directorate, Region and Area, and Division, Unit and Sub Unit or Group and Sub-Group?

Answer:

Income and expenditure is provided by regional Directorates. Budget figures at the work unit level are dependent on operational planning to address State-wide priorities in the context of local circumstances and contingencies. The total figures are shown in Budget Paper No. 3, Volume 1, pages 4-108.

20. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Wetlands Conservation and Management]

- (1) Will the Minister advise how much the NPWS will spend on:

- (a) plans of management for Ramsar listed wetlands within NSW;
 - (b) on on-ground works to implement the plans of management;
 - (c) on mapping, inventories;
 - (d) monitoring; and
 - (e) on mitigation of degradation of Ramsar sites in NSW?
- (2) Will the Minister advise how much the NPWS will spend on educating the community as to the values of Ramsar designated wetlands and the need to ensure that all use of wetlands is subject to the *wise use* principle under the Ramsar Convention?

Answer:

A total of \$280,000 will be allocated to develop and implement Plans of Management, for mapping and inventories, for monitoring, mitigation and education concerning Ramsar listed sites.

21. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Former Australian Defence Industries (ADI) site St Marys]

- (1) Will the Minister advise of the amount of revenue proposed to be generated by the NPWS by the sale of land blocks by the joint developers Maryland Development Company?
- (2) Will the Minister advise of the amount of expenditure by the NPWS over the last 7 years on site investigations into the proposed regional park on the former ADI site?
- (3) Will the Minister advise of the cost of site visits to the former ADI Site under the Recovery Plan process undertaken since 1997 for the Cumberland Plains Woodland Recovery Plan?
- (4) Has the NPWS treated the ADI site for a specific recovery plan as per the Commonwealth legislation requires, under Section 30 of the *Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) Act*?
- (5) Will the Minister advise if there has been additional money spent on vegetation studies on the former ADI site as called for by the Section 22 Committee under the 1996 St Marys Regional Environment Study?
- (6) Will the Minister advise what monies have been spent in the last 3 years on surveying the AHC Act listed land on the former ADI site, specifically the north west sector which has regenerated massively since early 1999?
- (7) Has the NPWS spent money to investigate the public's claim that this area now known as the north west regeneration corridor should be included in the Regional Park?
- (8) Can the Minister advise if the necessary investigations have been undertaken to verify claims that Koalas inhabit the site?
- (9) Can the Minister advise if the necessary investigations into endangered and threatened species have been conducted to verify claims that the Green and Golden Bell frog inhabit the site?
- (10) Can the Minister advise the amount of funds that have been allocated to the preservation of the Kangaroos and Emus on the site?
- (11) Can the Minister advise the amount of funds that have been allocated to studies over the last 3 years to have the animals, including the Kangaroos and Emus, sterilised to exterminate the animals?

- (12) Can the Minister advise if he has requested the Commonwealth to hand back the area known as Holsworthy, an area that was acquired by the Commonwealth during 1968 after changing the land acquisition legislation to include the acquisition of parkland, thereby acquiring this substantial land from NSW?
- (13) Has the Minister requested the Commonwealth to hand back all of the former ADI site as parkland to compensate the people of NSW for the loss of the huge area known as Holsworthy for military purposes?
- (14) Has the Minister requested the Commonwealth to give the people of NSW an equitable situation, especially in light of the fact that the people of NSW at Federation gave at no cost the area of land now known as Canberra or the Australian Capital Territory?
- (15) Has the Minister brought to the Commonwealth's attention, in this year of the Centenary of Federation, the importance of the ADI site to the historical heritage of the people of NSW – heritage such as the father of Federation Sir Henry Parkes spending 11 years living at Werrington House, renting from the Lethbridge family who through family obligations controlled and managed a significant area of the former ADI site?

Answer:

- (1) I am advised that no such revenue has been generated by the NPWS.
- (2) A small amount has been spent to cover the costs associated with staff attending planning meetings.
- (3) Approximately \$500.
- (4) This is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.
- (5) I am advised that the development proponent met these costs.
- (6) This is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.
- (7) NPWS staff have investigated the site and attended planning meetings covering the entire site.
- (8) NPWS have advised that it is extremely unlikely that koalas inhabit the site.
- (9) I am advised that the proponent, as part of the site investigation works, undertook investigations for frog species.
- (10) I am advised that the retention of a sustainable population of kangaroos and emus in the proposed new Regional Park will be feasible.
- (11) See answer to Question 10.
- (12) The future of the land referred to in the question is a matter for the Commonwealth Government.
- (13) The Commonwealth Government has decided to sell this land, not the NSW Government.
- (14) The Commonwealth Government has decided to sell this land, not the NSW Government.
- (15) The Australian Heritage Commission would be expected to be aware of the heritage significance of this Commonwealth-owned land. This includes the matter outlined in the question.

22. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Threatened Species Conservation]

- (1) How many reports alleging breaches of the *Threatened Species Conservation (TSC) Act* licence conditions by State Forests (SF) NSW have been received by NPWS since the implementation of the Interim Forest Operations Approval (IFOA)?

- (2) How many of these have been subject to a field inspection by NPWS and how many have been referred to the NPWS legal department?
- (3) Of those that have been investigated and a breach has been found to occur, how many have prosecutions been launched?
- (4) For how many of the alleged breaches would a prosecution have been warranted except that NPWS did not complete investigations within the 12 month limitation?
- (5) How many breaches of *TSC Act* licence conditions has the NPWS audit team itself identified and reported and for how many of those breaches have prosecutions been launched?
- (6) Why hasn't the NPWS instituted a Penalty Infringement Notice system, similar to that used by the Environment Protection Authority, to deal with forestry breaches?
- (7) How many hours have been spent auditing SF operations to ensure they have complied with their Licence conditions under the *TSC Act* and how many of these have been spent in the field?
- (8) Given that the public has had its third party appeal rights to prosecute breaches of the IFOA removed, isn't it incumbent on the NPWS to take its monitoring and auditing role seriously and actually police forestry operation with respect to threatened species?
- (9) What commitment in terms of funding do you intend to make to this auditing process in 2001/2002?

Answer:

Proceedings for an offence under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* may commence within two years of the offence being committed. The NPWS is committed to auditing and enforcing the conditions of the IFOA. It will continue to commit adequate resources to enforcement of the IFOA and implementation of a strategic audit program. The hours spent on these operations are integrated within the regional activities of NPWS staff. The NPWS will continue to respond to allegations of breaches of the IFOA by State Forests of NSW and field staff will continue to carry out routine observations. Like the EPA, the NPWS currently uses an Infringement Notice system.

23. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Wilderness]

- (1) Does the NPWS intend to follow the requirements of the *Wilderness Act* when finalising wilderness identification, or are political excisions to be made on areas such as the Bicentennial Trail?
- (2) Is NPWS going to identify wilderness areas on State Forest tenure which are included in protected Forest Management Zones (and are therefore unavailable for logging), which meet the wilderness criteria and which were nominated prior to January 2000?
- (3) Doesn't a specific clause in the Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (IFOA) enable these areas to be identified?
- (4) Don't those areas include at least 5 areas nominated by the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) in 1999, including proposed additions to Washpool, Bindery Mann, and Doyles River Wilderness areas and two new areas known as Tuggolo and Sundown?
- (5) Can NPWS justify and document the grounds on which any nominated area proposed for exclusion from wilderness identification was deemed not to have met the wilderness criteria and will this information be released as part of the wilderness report for public exhibition in north-east NSW?
- (6) NPWS is currently completing a RACAC funded project for the mapping of Oldgrowth Forest in north-east NSW. The issue of oldgrowth derivation on private land remains contentious. In order to get an agreed layer and avoid major conflict in the future over the map layer, some expert opinion must be sought to clarify a

number of questions. Will NPWS re-convene the CRA oldgrowth expert panel (under the co-ordination of DUAP and in consultation with DLWC) in order to provide a credible oldgrowth layer for use in Regional Vegetation Management Plans?

Answer:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The NPWS has identified wilderness-capable areas of State forest which are included in protected Forest Management Zones and which were nominated prior to January 2000. During the wilderness assessment, almost 34,000 hectares of State Forest was excluded from the IFOAs specifically to allow assessment and, if capable, identification of nominated wilderness areas.
- (3) Yes.
- (4) The following areas were nominated by the North East Forest Alliance (NEFA) in 1999: Washpool, Bindery-Mann, Doyles River, Tuggolo and Sundown. Certain areas of State Forest within these nominated areas, apart from Tuggolo, have been excluded from the IFOA to enable their assessment and, if capable, identification as wilderness. The Tuggolo area in question is also zoned as an area protected from logging, but was not excluded from the IFOA.
- (5) Yes.
- (6) Any decision to reconvene the Old Growth Expert Panel would be a whole-of-Government decision.

24. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Private Property Timber Supplementation]

The Forest Agreements for north-east NSW specify that, prior to any purchases by State Forests (SF) NSW of land for timber supply, a process was to be developed by SF NSW, in consultation with NPWS and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, for considering key substantially unmet Comprehensive Adequate and Representative conservation targets when selecting such land.

- (1) Is the Minister aware that large areas of land have been bought and logged without this requirement being met and that this requirement has still not been addressed?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that significant areas of oldgrowth forest have been logged by SF NSW on private property purchases in north-east NSW?
- (3) Will the Minister ensure that the process required by the Forest Agreements is immediately implemented?
- (4) Will the Minister give an assurance that as part of the process NPWS will ensure that no further logging of oldgrowth forest occurs on SF NSW private property purchases?
- (5) Have NPWS been informed of all SF NSW private property purchases under the private property timber supplementation scheme and provided with maps and information relating to their whereabouts?

Answer:

- 1) I am advised that the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is working with State Forests NSW (SFNSW) and the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning (DUAP) to address outstanding issues in the land selection process.
- 2) In line with the relevant IFOA, areas of candidate old growth forest that are not identified as HCVOG will be available for harvesting.

- 3) The NPWS will continue to cooperate with DUAP and SFNSW to develop a process to consider any substantially unmet conservation targets. More generally, I am advised that SFNSW will apply the conditions of the IFOA to the lands that it has purchased.
- 4) The NPWS and SFNSW have developed an agreed process for the identification and delineation of HCVOG on private lands. I am advised that the NPWS will ensure that this process is applied.
- 5) This information has been formally sought from SFNSW.

25. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – NPWS land purchases in Western NSW]

- (1) What area of land in western NSW does the NPWS intend to acquire this financial year and roughly how much will be spent acquiring it?
- (2) Will the NPWS promote the benefits of these new parks so that landowners are able to profit from tourism opportunities? If so, how? If not, why not?
- (3) Does the NPWS work with tour package promoters and landholders to optimise the financial return to far west NSW? If so, how? If not, why not?

Answer:

- (1) The NPWS has participated in a public forum titled “Managing the Grey-headed Flying Fox as a Threatened Species in NSW”. This will identify key management issues for the species.

The NPWS is initiating the development of a conservation strategy. The first stage has been a recent NPWS-funded project to map all the known Grey-headed Flying Fox roost sites in NSW. This project provided basic information on the location, size, tenure, zoning and usage patterns of the Grey-headed Flying fox roosts within NSW, enabling investigation into ways of providing protection for roosts. The NPWS will also assess the impact of mortality on the State-wide Grey-headed Flying Fox population over the next fruit growing season.

The NPWS supports the Australasian Bat Society in their annual counts that have been used to estimate the number of Grey-headed flying foxes throughout Australia.

Through the planning system the NPWS will seek to have habitat identified and protected in local and regional plans.

The NPWS will investigate opportunities to enter into property management plans, voluntary conservation agreements and joint management agreements.

- (2) The NPWS is working in consultation with farmers and scientists in preparing and assessing options for a licensing system to mitigate the crop damage caused by this species.

The NPWS will develop alternative crop protection measures to minimise any need for licences to disturb or harm. A precautionary approach will be adopted regarding licence approvals on the basis of current gaps in knowledge regarding the species.

The NPWS continues to advocate the non-lethal alternative of full exclusion netting as the most effective means of preventing crop damage by Grey-headed flying foxes. The outcomes of the recovery planning process will contribute to Government decisions with respect to flying fox management.

26. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Grey-headed Flying Foxes]

- (1) What is the NPWS doing to assist in the recovery of the now threatened grey-headed flying foxes, in particular in the acquisition of habitat and the establishment of habitat where flying foxes can establish colonies where they won't disturb schools and residents?
- (2) Will the Minister ensure that any licences issued to orchardists to disturb flying foxes will only be licences to disturb them in a non-lethal way and if this is not possible under the existing licence system will the Minister amend the NPWS Act along the lines suggested by my proposed Private Members Bill, of which I have given notice, to ensure that is possible to issue non-lethal licences?

Answer:

- (1) The NPWS has participated in a public forum titled “Managing the Grey-headed Flying Fox as a Threatened Species in NSW”. This will identify key management issues for the species.

The NPWS is initiating the development of a conservation strategy. The first stage has been a recent NPWS-funded project to map all the known Grey-headed Flying Fox roost sites in NSW. This project provided basic information on the location, size, tenure, zoning and usage patterns of the Grey-headed Flying fox roosts within NSW, enabling investigation into ways of providing protection for roosts. The NPWS will also assess the impact of mortality on the State-wide Grey-headed Flying Fox population over the next fruit growing season.

The NPWS supports the Australasian Bat Society in their annual counts that have been used to estimate the number of Grey-headed flying foxes throughout Australia.

Through the planning system the NPWS will seek to have habitat identified and protected in local and regional plans.

The NPWS will investigate opportunities to enter into property management plans, voluntary conservation agreements and joint management agreements.

- (2) The NPWS is working in consultation with farmers and scientists in preparing and assessing options for a licensing system to mitigate the crop damage caused by this species.

The NPWS will develop alternative crop protection measures to minimise any need for licences to disturb or harm. A precautionary approach will be adopted regarding licence approvals on the basis of current gaps in knowledge regarding the species.

The NPWS continues to advocate the non-lethal alternative of full exclusion netting as the most effective means of preventing crop damage by Grey-headed flying foxes. The outcomes of the recovery planning process will contribute to Government decisions with respect to flying fox management.

27. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Duck Populations]

- (1) Are duck populations continuing to decline in NSW and if so, why did the NPWS substantially increase this year's kill quota to landholders?
- (2) Is the NPWS finding a backdoor method of bypassing legislation to stop the recreational shooting of ducks and if so why? Why does the NPWS pander to the needs of Victorian shooters?

Answers:

- (1) I am advised that the surveys indicate that duck populations fluctuate according to seasonal and habitat-related factors.
- (2) No.

28. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Red Kangaroos]

- (1) Is it a fact that the average age of red kangaroos being shot by the commercial industry is down to four years?
- (2) Is it also a fact there are a greater number of females being shot?
- (3) Has the Minister asked for research to be undertaken into the age and sex structure of the red kangaroo population to determine what effect the industry is having on the red kangaroo population and in particular the effect of the industry targeting the largest male and female kangaroos? If not, why not? If so, when will the findings of that research be available?

Answers:

- (1) No.
- (2) No.
- (3) Research is being conducted into red kangaroo age structures interstate. A progress report was recently presented to the NSW Kangaroo Management Advisory Committee.

29. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Inspections of Kangaroo Shoots]

- (1) How many actual inspections of kangaroo shoots have been carried out by NPWS Officers in the past 12 months? Where were they?
- (2) Of what duration were the inspections? What assurances are there that required standards are actually being met?
- (3) What percentage of kangaroos did not die immediately? What attempts were made to humanely kill those who were not?

Answers:

- (1) I am advised that approximately 400 inspections occurred at 170 different locations.
- (2) Inspections vary and are up to several hours duration. The inspections are carried out in accordance with the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*, NPWS management program and licence conditions.

Licence conditions specify that kangaroo shooting is conducted humanely and any injured animals are humanely treated.

30. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Koalas]

- (1) What is the progress of the state-wide Recovery Plan for the koala and the identification and protection of critical habitat for the species?
- (2) What is the progress of the Recovery Plans for the endangered Pittwater and Hawkesbury koala populations and the identification of critical habitat?
- (3) What resources being directed towards the development and implementation of such recovery plans and the identification and protection of critical habitat?

Answers:

The statewide Recovery Plan is currently in a draft form, which has been circulated among the NSW Koala Recovery Team for review. Preparation of the Recovery Plans for the endangered Pittwater and Hawkesbury populations will commence as soon as practicable.

31. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Funding for the NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service]

- (1) Is the Minister aware that WIRES, the NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service, with over 1,400 volunteers throughout NSW caring for injured wildlife, is currently walking a budgetary tightrope and given the current funding situation, will be insolvent within two months?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that approaches to the Department have been made to discuss the lack of funding forthcoming, but to no avail? Will the Department ensure that levels of funding will be reviewed and increased? If so, when? If not, why not?

Answer:

WIRES receives annual funding from NPWS. This includes an annual \$10,000 grant. NPWS regional offices have allocated a further \$17,000 this year for native fauna carer groups, of which I am advised WIRES is likely to be a major beneficiary. In addition, the NPWS provides a range of in-kind support at a regional level, estimated to be worth over \$8,000. I am also aware that WIRES receives significant funding from other Government agencies, including the Roads and Traffic Authority and NSW Agriculture.

32. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Reptile Licensing]

- (1) What is the income from licence fees?
- (2) What is the expenditure on processing licences?
- (3) What is the expenditure on monitoring compliance?

Answer:

- (1) Annual fee revenue amounts to approximately \$120,000.
- (2) This is estimated at \$90,000.
- (3) The cost of monitoring compliance is integrated with law enforcement investigations, rangers and office staff duties.

33. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Bird Licensing]

- (1) What is the income from licence fees?
- (2) What is the expenditure on processing licences?
- (3) What is the expenditure on monitoring compliance?

Answer:

- (1) \$117,000.
- (2) Approximately \$80,000.
- (3) The costs for monitoring compliance are covered within the general duties of law enforcement investigators, rangers and office staff.

34. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – S120/121 Licences]

- (1) What is the income from licence fees?
- (2) What is the expenditure on processing licences?
- (3) What is the expenditure on monitoring compliance?

Answer:

- (1) I am advised that revenue from the wide range of general licences (not including research and wildlife rehabilitation licences or reptile, frog and mammal keeper licences) issued across the State would not exceed \$10,000.
- (2) and (3) The costs for processing and monitoring compliance are integrated into general operational expenditure.

35. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Licences Under the Threatened Species Conservation Act]

- (1) How many licences have been applied for?
- (2) How many licences have been approved?
- (3) How many licences were not approved?
- (4) What is the income from licence fees?
- (5) What is the expenditure on accessing applications?
- (6) What is the expenditure on monitoring current licences?

Answer:

- 1) Approximately 405.

- 2) Approximately 16.
- 3) The approvals under section 91 of the *Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995* are generally granted as certificates provided by Part 6 of the Act. A number of applications were withdrawn and 1 rejected.
- 4) Approximately \$1200.
- 5) The costs for processing and monitoring compliance are integrated into general operational expenditure.
- 6) To allow for the investigation of reported breaches of licence conditions.

36. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Prosecutions]

- (1) How many prosecutions have been undertaken under the NPWS Act?
- (2) How many of these have been successful prosecutions?
- (3) How many prosecutions have been undertaken under the Threatened Species Conservation Act?
- (4) How many of these have been successful prosecutions?
- (5) What is the expenditure considering possible prosecutions?
- (6) What is the expenditure on prosecutions?
- (7) What is the income from prosecutions?

Answer:

Without a specified time period it is difficult to answer this question. Since its inception in 1974 around 15,000 prosecutions have been launched and around 95 per cent of prosecutions have been successful. All expenditure on prosecutions is part of the NPWS global legal costs. All penalties and costs arising from prosecutions are forwarded to the fund maintained under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974*.

37. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Kangaroo Cull]

- (1) What is the expenditure on population monitoring?
- (2) What is the expenditure on processing applications?
- (3) What is the expenditure on monitoring compliance with the quotas and codes?

Answer:

- (1) Approximately \$125,000.
- (2) Approximately \$300,000.
- (3) Approximately \$160,000.

38. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Licences for scientific use of native animals]

- (1) How many licences have been applied for?
- (2) How many licences have been approved?
- (3) How many licences were not approved?
- (4) What is the income from licence fees?
- (5) What is the expenditure on accessing applications?
- (6) What is the expenditure on monitoring current licences?

Answer:

- (1) 927.
- (2) All were approved.
- (3) Nil.
- (4) Approximately \$20,000.
- (5) and (6) Expenditure on administration and general monitoring of the research licensing system was approximately \$40,000.

39. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – NPWS Ethics Committee]

- (1) What is the expenditure of this Committee?
- (2) How many meeting did they have during 2000-2001?
- (3) What is the number of members and constitution of this Committee?

Answer:

- 1) Approximately \$25,000 for the last financial year.
- 2) 9.
- 3) There are four members of the ACEC Committee, which is legally constituted and consists of a researcher, a veterinarian, an animal welfare representative and an independent as prescribed. The Committee was inspected and NPWS accredited by the Animal Research Review Panel as an accredited animal research establishment.

40. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Scientific Advisory Committee]

- (1) What is the operational expenditure of the Committee?

- (2) What is the total of the discretionary funds to commission reports and additional information to base decisions on?

Answer:

- (1) \$300,000 was allocated in 2000/01.
 (2) The sub-allocation of the funds provided to the Scientific Committee is at the discretion of the Committee.

41. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Threatened Species Unit]

- (1) What is the expenditure on recovery plans for species?
 (2) How many of these plans are in development?
 (3) How many have been completed?
 (4) What is the expenditure on recovery plans for communities?
 (5) How many of these plans are in development?
 (6) How many have been completed?
 (7) (a) What is the expenditure on the identification of critical habitats?
 (b) How many critical habitats have been declared?

Answer:

- (1) Approximately \$7 million.
 (2) Approximately 125.
 (3) 24 have been approved to date. Finalisation of additional plans is expected in the near future.
 (4) The costs associated with preparing ecological community plans are incorporated with those associated with preparing species recovery plans.
 (5) and (6) Finalisation of plans is expected in the near future.
 (7) These costs are integrated with other staff activities and not separately reported. Declarations are expected in the near future.

42. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – 1080 Poisoning]

- (1) Is the poison 1080 being used to kill native animals in NSW? If so, what animals, and how many, are being killed with 1080?
 (2) What is the current view on the effect of poison 1080 on native animals? On what research was this based?
 (3) What funding is being given to NPWS to kill native animals with 1080? What are the justifications for these animals being killed?

- (4) What evidence must be produced before a permit to use 1080 to kill native animals is granted?
- (5) What measures are taken to stop secondary poisoning - that is non-target animals eating the poisoned carcasses? If so, how are these measures being enforced?
- (6) The use of 1080 has been banned in Brazil since 1982. In the US last year a similar ban was proposed. Why does the Department continue to allow the use of this highly toxic and dangerous poison?
- (7) How much funding is used for research into 1080 poisoning?
- (8) How much funding is used for research into alternatives to 1080 poisoning?
- (9) How much funding is used to run 1080 baiting programs?

Answer:

- (1) Yes. Dingoes and dingo/wild dog hybrids are targeted.
 - (2) Numerous research papers have been published on the effect of 1080 on native animals. These have recently been reviewed in the pest management publications prepared for the Bureau of Resource Sciences (eg for dingoes refer to Fleming, P, Corbett, L, Harden, R and Thomson, P *Managing the Impacts of Dingoes and Wild Dogs*. Bureau of Rural Sciences, Canberra 2001).
 - (3) NPWS uses a global budgeting process and it is estimated that expenditure on the control of wild dogs and wild dog hybrids using 1080 baiting in 2001/02 will exceed \$500,000.
 - (4) No permits are required under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* for the control of dingoes.
 - (5) I am advised that birds of prey and other avian scavengers are less likely to be at risk due to their greater tolerance of 1080 and the fact that they may not eat the whole carcass or sufficient of it to receive a lethal dose.
 - (6) Sale, possession and use of 1080 is strictly regulated under the *Pesticides Act 1999*, the *Rural Lands Protection Act 1989* and the national *Agvet Code 1994*. 1080 is one of the most closely regulated and monitored pesticides in NSW. Strict conditions controlling the use of 1080 are specified in permits issued by the National Registration Authority. Foxes, wild dogs and pigs are a major threat to a wide range of Australia's native fauna. The NPWS uses 1080 as part of an integrated approach to reducing the impacts of these pest species, while maximising protection for native non-target species.
- (7) to (9) See part (2).

43. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) – Conservation values of State Forest private land purchases]

- (1) Has the NPWS been consulted about the \$9 million worth of State Forest purchases of private land to log?
- (2) Has the NPWS been provided with timely information in order to identify the relevant conservation values of this land, as required by the Forest Agreement and the Interim Forest Operations Approval (IFOA)? If not, why not?
- (3) Will oldgrowth forest on these purchases be protected, or will the NPWS continue to ignore it or worse still, approve it for logging despite the fact that it is a blatant breach of the IFOA?
- (4) Is the NPWS currently completing a RACAC funded project for the mapping of Oldgrowth Forest in north-east NSW?

- (5) Will the NPWS re-convene the CRA oldgrowth expert panel (under the co-ordination of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and in consultation with the Department of Land and Water Conservation) in order to provide a credible oldgrowth layer for use in Regional Vegetation Management Plans?

Answer:

- (1) NPWS has been consulted concerning a number of such purchases.
- (2) The NPWS and SFNSW have now developed a process to identify and delineate High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest on private lands.
- (3) High Conservation Value Old Growth Forest (HCVOG) will be protected on private lands purchased by SFNSW. The NPWS has worked to develop a process to determine and delineate HCVOG forest on private lands purchased by SFNSW. The NPWS has not ignored or approved the logging of HCVOG on private lands purchased by SFNSW.
- (4) Yes.
- (5) Any decision to reconvene the Old Growth Expert Panel would be a whole-of-Government decision.

44. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Ecologically Sustainable Bush Fire Management]

Will the Minister advise how much the RFS will spend on training RFS personnel in the principles of ecologically sustainable bush fire management, including the amounts allocated to:

- (a) permanent RFS staff; and
- (b) volunteer members of the Bush Fire Brigade

Answer:

The NSW Rural Fire Service employs an Environmental Officer who, among other things, educates volunteers and brigade officers on environmental issues.

Since 1996 the NSW Rural Fire Service has been conducting two-day training sessions for Service personnel covering ecological principles and the impact of fire. Each of these courses costs approximately \$2,000 to run.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has also engaged the University of Western Sydney to develop a formal three-day *Fire And Ecology Course* which will, upon completion, form a compulsory component of the qualifications required by Fire Control Staff.

This course will be conducted for the first time this year as part of the Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Public Safety (Firefighting Management). The cost of conducting this course for 24 officers is \$10,000 and it is planned to conduct two courses per year from 2002 onwards.

45. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Rural Fire Service (RFS)]

- (1) Is the Minister aware of the case at Bungawalbyn where the captain of the RFS is being prosecuted by the police for negligent driving, after attempting, in front of witnesses, to run down a member of the public, who is also a local conservationist and critic of the RFS's breaches of the *Rural Fires (RF) Act*?
- (2) Why has the fire captain not been suspended from duty?

- (3) Why has the department funded a senior barrister to defend the fire captain in question?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that the threats against the woman victim of this incident have been so serious that on police advice she has moved from the area?
- (5) How many members of RFS brigades have been convicted for serious offences of violence, larceny or arson?
- (6) Given the extraordinary position of trust and power that these brigades have in the community is it not appropriate that a screening process exist for brigade members, with membership denied to those found guilty of serious crimes?
- (7) During September a State of Emergency was declared due to numerous, separate, wildfires burning along the North Eastern ranges of NSW. Extensive temporary control lines were established by Fire Fighting Authorities, as is within their powers during a declared State of Emergency. Many of these temporary works were established straight down extremely steep slopes with no sediment control measures put in place.
- Is the Minister aware that more than 9 months and two major floods after the emergency works were hastily established, the active erosion of these temporary control lines is contributing significantly to ongoing sedimentation of headwater streams of the Clarence Catchment?
- (8) One such actively eroding control line extends for several kilometres from Timbarra Plateau down to the Timbarra River, while others remain similarly unstable in the Cataract Catchment of the Upper Clarence. Both these sub-catchments are of high conservation value and are known habitat of the Endangered Eastern Cod.
- Is the Minister aware that landholders at both of these locations have made numerous requests to various authorities (ie RFS, Department of Land & Water Conservation) since last year, yet no remediation work has been carried out?
- (9) What responsibilities do fire authorities have regarding the prompt restoration/stabilisation of such emergency works following a State of Emergency?
- (10) What mechanisms exist to ensure that such work is promptly and effectively carried out?
- (11) What is the full extent of unstabilised fire trail/control lines established during the spring 2000 wildfires in north east NSW?
- (12) Why has remedial work been delayed?
- (13) What data does the Minister have regarding the various causes of the numerous wildfires in north east NSW during spring 2000?
- (14) How many prosecutions regarding breaches of the *RF Act* have been pursued as a result of these wildfires?
- (15) Is the Minister satisfied that an adequate investigation of the Evans Head fire in Spring 2000, has been carried out?
- (16) Why was the Dirrawong Reserve lit up by the RFS in a so-called 'back burn' when it was apparent to the local community it was of absolutely no strategic advantage and actually endangered the village? (Had it not been for a fortuitous wind change many houses would probably have been destroyed.)
- (17) Is the Minister intending to give the RFS responsibility for fire-fighting in National Parks?

Answer:

A summons has been issued to a Rural Fire Brigade Captain alleging the commission of a traffic offence. The matter has been set for hearing at Casino Court on 26 September 2001. The Captain was considered eligible for Crown representation because he was engaged in RFS duties at the time of the alleged offence. The grounds on which people can be excluded from brigade membership are set out in a regulation of the *Rural Fires Act* and in the Rural Fire Service Standards. These include criminal offences.

A State of Emergency was not declared on the North Eastern ranges of NSW although an emergency declaration under section 44 of the Rural Fires Act was made. The NSW Rural Fire Service is discussing the extent of any problem in the headwaters of the Clarence Valley and what remedial actions are necessary with the Department of Land and Water Conservation.

I am aware of a small number of requests from landholders regarding remediation work and I am advised that they are being dealt with appropriately. Section 28 of the Rural Fires Act provides that restoration works (including land) can be claimed under the insurance policies of landholders where such measures arise from fire fighting operations. Special consideration is given where property owners are uninsured on the basis of hardship and environmental considerations.

Delays in rectification works usually arise from confusion among landowners, who are unaware that they are able to claim against their insurance policies under Section 28 of the Rural Fires Act. The relevant Agencies have advised the landowners of their rights.

I am advised that the data collected by the RFS suggests that a number of fires were deliberately lit during the 2000 fire season. All relevant information has been passed onto the Police to assist them in their investigations.

The actions taken at the fire at Evans Head have been investigated and discussed with local environment groups.

In relation to the Dirrawong Reserve backburn, I am advised that on 11 September 2000, fires were lit south of Yamba by an unknown person. Two brigades, Wooloweyah and Gulmarrad attended the fire. The weather predictions by the Bureau of Meteorology were for worsening conditions the following day requiring the incident controller to make a decision to implement a backburn around the perimeter of the fire so as to secure a control line.

The RFS and NPWS work co-operatively in fire suppression activities both on and off National Parks.

46. Mr R Jones asked the Attorney General, Minister for the Environment, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Arts, the Hon Bob Debus MP—

[In relation to Fire Management in National Parks]

- (1) (a) Is there a move by the Director-General of the NPWS to hand over fire management within the NPWS estate to the Rural Fire Service (RFS)?
 - (b) If so what are the cost savings anticipated?
- (2) Will this move mean that National Park management will be handed over to the RFS?

Answer:

No.