

PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FIFTY-SIXTH PARLIAMENT

FIRST SESSION

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

13 and 15 March 2007

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QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

*Answers to the following questions on notice were circulated on the date shown.
Questions have been incorporated from the notice paper of the Legislative Council.
Answers have been incorporated in the form supplied by the departments on behalf of the appropriate ministers.
The portfolio of the minister answering the question on notice starts each heading.*

Tuesday, 13 March 2007

Aboriginal affairs: Koori Business Network

- 41. MRS COOTE** — To ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs: What was the total amount of funding to the Koori Business Network in —
- (a) 2003;
 - (b) 2004;
 - (c) 2005: and
 - (d) 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The issue raised falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Small Business.

Education: school numbers

- 75. MR VOGELS** — To ask the Minister for Education: In relation to Victorian State Government Schools on both 1 January 2000 and 1 January 2007, what was the total number of:
- (a) primary schools;
 - (b) secondary schools; and
 - (c) government schools.

ANSWER:

As at the date the question was raised, the answer is:

Data regarding the number of government schools in Victoria can be found in the Department of Education Annual Reports.

Aboriginal affairs: chroming

- 117. MRS COOTE** — To ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs: How many Aboriginal children between the ages of 10 and 18 were treated for chroming in Victoria in each calendar year from 2002 until 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The question raised falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Mental Health.

Aboriginal affairs: petrol sniffing

- 118. MRS COOTE** — To ask the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs: How many Aboriginal children between the ages of 10 and 18 were treated for petrol sniffing in Victoria in each calendar year from 2002 until 2006.

ANSWER:

I am informed as follows:

The issue raised falls within the portfolio of the Minister for Mental Health.

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Thursday, 15 March 2007

Community services: disability support register

9. **MRS COOTE** — To ask the Minister for Community Services: In relation to the Disability Support Register at 30 June 2006, how many individuals were registered for —
- (a) support to move from DS supported accommodation;
 - (b) support to move to non-DS supported accommodation;
 - (c) support to continue to live in non-DS supported accommodation;
 - (d) family support options;
 - (e) support to achieve personal goals (non-housing);
 - (f) part-time activities;
 - (g) part-time activities with flexible support;
 - (h) full-time activities;
 - (i) full-time activities with flexible support;
 - (j) DS supported accommodation;
 - (k) DS supported accommodation with part-time activities;
 - (l) DS supported accommodation with full-time activities; and
 - (m) DS supported accommodation with ISP.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

The Disability Support Register (DSR) was introduced on 1 April 2006 to replace the Service Needs Register (SNR) and is the new system used by DHS to record the number of people with a current need for disability support.

The figures reported for 30 June 2006 are not available in the format requested as the Department was still in the process of making the transition to the new system.

Water, environment and climate change: impact of bushfires

51. **MR BARBER** — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change):
- (1) How and when are native forest wood supply volumes adjusted to account for the impact of bushfires.
 - (2) How are native forest wood supply arrangements (such as availability of coupes, location of coupes, quality of wood and scheduling of logging operations) changed as a result of bushfires.
 - (3) Who is responsible for assessing the impacts of fires on wood supply. When is the assessment made and how.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

- The effect of the bushfires on native forest is variable as the fire intensity varied over the period of the fire and therefore across the forest areas.
- Mapping of fire severity based on satellite imagery and aerial photography is currently under way and will be completed later this year. This information will be important in determining the impact on timber resources and wood supplies now and into the future.
- Once fire severity analysis is completed this will be incorporated into existing timber resource analysis so that the impact on future wood supply can be assessed.
- Timber harvesting within the fire area will be allowed in some parts of State forest where the fire has been severe and in accordance with the Code of Forest Practices and Salvage Harvesting Prescriptions.
- VicForests is responsible for planning the location of coupes and the scheduling of logging operations. All proposed areas are approved by the Secretary of the Department of Sustainability and Environment.
- As manager of State forest and regulator of commercial operations, the Department of Sustainability and Environment is responsible for assessing the impacts of the fire on future timber supply. The analysis of fire severity will be used to update existing resource allocation models, and new forecasts will be prepared in time for the five-yearly review of the Allocation Order to VicForests, which is due in mid-2009.

Water, environment and climate change: salvage logging

53. MR BARBER — To ask the Minister for Planning (for the Minister for Water, Environment and Climate Change):

- (1) Is the Minister aware of scientific evidence about the impact of salvage logging on threatened species.
- (2) What action has the Minister taken to research or monitor the environmental impact of salvage logging after previous fires, including 1939, 1983 and 2003.
- (3) What environmental assessment will be conducted before determining whether salvage logging will be permitted after the 2006-07 bushfires.

ANSWER:

I am informed that:

There is a range of excellent scientific research being undertaken to inform timber harvesting practices in our native forests. The Victorian Government's commitment to sustainable forest management is outlined in the *Sustainability Charter for Victoria's State forests*, which includes a strong commitment to high quality research and continual improvement. This is demonstrated by the funding of approximately four million dollars of forest-related research annually by the Victorian Government. The Government's forest research program is principally conducted by the University of Melbourne's School of Forest and Ecosystem Science, with research questions directed towards key issues.

A number of research and monitoring projects were initiated following the 2003 Alpine fires, regarding a range of water and biodiversity impacts. A report specifically regarding salvage harvesting impacts is expected to be completed later in 2007.

A new research and monitoring program is being prepared for the 2007 Great Divide and other major fires. The potential impacts of salvage logging have been identified as an important area for research.

The results of this research inform the conduct of salvage operations. Salvage harvesting operations must meet all of the environmental care prescriptions outlined in the *Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production*, and additional conditions imposed through the Salvage Harvesting Prescriptions (2007) to minimise possible risks, based on the findings of recent research.

Areas that do not naturally regenerate adequately following the salvage harvesting operation will be regenerated under the prescriptions of the *Code of Forest Practices for Timber Production*, which requires the original forest cover to be maintained.

There is very limited scientific information available regarding earlier fires and the possible impacts of salvage logging, however it is worth noting that some areas of forest that were extensively burnt in 1939 and subsequently salvage harvested have been considered to be of a high enough ecological quality to be included in some of our most important National Parks, and now provide vital threatened species habitat.

