



Mick Gentleman MLA

Manager of Government Business
Minister for Planning and Land Management
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for Corrections
Minister for Industrial Relations and Workplace Safety

Member for Brindabella

22/31221

RESPONSE TO QUESTION ON NOTICE
Questions on Notice Paper No 15
Question No. 696

MS LAWDER: To ask the Minister for Planning and Land Management—

- (1) Can the Minister elaborate on exactly what work is being undertaken from the \$350,000 being spent on the Lower Cotter Catchment Project.
- (2) What areas specifically are being restored and what are the proposed timeframes for these projects.
- (3) What evidence or monitoring of native flora and fauna is available or being undertaken to determine the life cycles of the species in this area and hence how they will be affected, assuming controlled burns are still going to be carried out in this area.

MINISTER GENTLEMAN: The answer to the Member's question is as follows-

1. The Lower Cotter Catchment Reserve Management Plan describes the need to promote ecosystem regeneration and ecosystem function to secure water quality outcomes. The funding is used to implement the actions in the Management Plan. Works completed or planned to be completed this financial year have focussed on major invasive weed control programs and broadacre revegetation programs.

This ongoing land restoration work will result in increased water security in the ACT and the realisation of the significant investment in the Enlarged Cotter Dam.

2. The restoration program in the Lower Cotter Catchment is centred around improving water resources and mitigating the risks from future disturbances, especially in a changing climate. As the Catchment continues to transition from intensive historic land-use – being grazing and, more recently, plantation timber – the importance of promoting landscape resilience is fundamental to reducing water quality impacts from future wildfires and floods.

This resilience is being progressively achieved through targeted restoration programs in line with the actions outlined in the reserve 10-year Management Plan, especially in waterways and more vulnerable parts of the Catchment. Programs include specialised erosion and sediment control to mitigate sedimentation impacts in the Cotter Dam, pest plant and animal management programs that focus on critical riparian areas, and both intensive and broadacre revegetation to encourage species diversity, promoting both ecological and landscape resilience outcomes.

3. Both ecological and landscape function monitoring is an important and ongoing component of managing the Lower Cotter Catchment. Since 2008, long term vegetation monitoring across the Catchment has shown consistent improvements in species diversity. Pest animal monitoring is similarly ongoing and informs management programs across the Catchment, with specific focus on vulnerable areas. Additionally, specialised measures to monitor the recovery of waterways and the threats to water quality are undertaken as part of the ACT's Conservation Effectiveness Monitoring Program. This combined monitoring effort equally informs fire management across the Catchment, with fire management actions balancing the importance of protecting the Catchment from wildfires while minimising localised ecological impacts.

Approved for circulation to the Member and incorporation into Hansard.



Mick Gentleman MLA, Minister for Planning and Land Management

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This response required 40 mins to complete, at an approximate cost of \$76.18.