

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Supplementary Budget Estimates 20 - 23 Oct 2008**



**Question: PM27**

**Outcome 1, Output 1**

**Topic: Logging**

**Hansard Page: F&PA 78**

**Senator Brown asked: I will just ask as a final despairing question on this issue: Forestry Tasmania has said that they will log as intended at the end of summer instead of now because there are birds nesting in a particular site in Wielangta. Last year or the year before, they actually stopped logging halfway through a coup because they found it was a nesting site for the birds. No doubt, every year, not only nesting sites but nesting birds and their young are being destroyed as this species heads towards extinction by this clear fell and open logging process. Can you tell the committee of any accommodating factor under the regional forest agreement or under environmental law in this country which would permit the logging of one of the richest nesting sites for this bird in this coming summer, after the birds who have nested there have left, never again to return?**

**Dr Dickson-If I can ask again: if you are happy for us to take on notice what action is being taken and the factors that are being looked at for the swift parrot, we can provide that.**

**Senator BOB BROWN-I am.**

**Answer:** Forest operations must be undertaken in accordance with the Tasmanian Regional Forest Agreement (RFA). This requires compliance with Tasmania's forest management system, including through the Forest Practices Code which contains management prescriptions for threatened species. The swift parrot is listed as endangered under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). As a result of this listing status, the parrot is also a priority species for protection under the Tasmanian RFA.

In response to a finding from the National Swift Parrot Recovery Team (NSPRT) that Tasmanian forestry operations in the swift parrot's breeding range were impacting on the long-term survival of the species, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, wrote to the Tasmanian Minister for Energy and Resources, Primary Industries and Water, the Hon David Llewellyn MP, on 8 October 2008. The correspondence noted that the NSPRT's finding was inconsistent with the Swift Parrot Recovery Plan objective of achieving sustained improvement in the quality and quantity of the habitat, to increase its carrying capacity. Mr Garrett also outlined his expectation that conservation science should direct on-ground delivery of recovery plan objectives in order to realise the standards

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set out in the EPBC Act. He also reminded Mr Llewellyn that Tasmania's forest management system under the RFA is the key framework through which these objectives should be delivered.



On 14 October 2008, Mr Llewellyn announced that Forestry Tasmania would defer harvesting of a coupe in the Wielangta area pending further monitoring of the behaviour of swift parrots in the area. Mr Llewellyn also announced that Forestry Tasmania, the Forest Practices Authority and the Tasmanian Department of Primary Industries and Water had jointly agreed to fund a strategic survey of swift parrot breeding in the Wielangta area during the current breeding season.