

**DIRK HARTOG ISLAND — NATIONAL PARK**

*Statement by Minister for Environment*

**HON DONNA FARAGHER (East Metropolitan — Minister for Environment)** [4.08 pm]: Today, I am pleased to inform the house that a new national park has been created on Western Australia's largest island, Dirk Hartog Island, which is part of the Shark Bay World Heritage area. The new national park encompasses almost the entire 63 000 hectare island and protects the unique values of arguably the most historically significant place in Western Australia. Dirk Hartog Island forms the westernmost point of Australia and is an incredibly biodiverse area with outstanding natural values, including more than 250 native plant species, three endemic threatened bird species, a number of threatened reptiles and the third-largest loggerhead turtle nesting beach in the world. On landing on the island on 25 October 1616, Dutch sea captain Dirk Hartog became the first European to arrive in Australia.

In managing the national park, the Department of Environment and Conservation will undertake a major project to restore its natural values. This will involve the eradication of cats, goats and other feral animals prior to re-establishing native mammal species that are currently locally extinct on the island. The creation of the national park will also provide the Malgana people with an opportunity to engage in the ongoing management and conservation of the region. This announcement is the culmination of a long and successful process that began under the leadership of the late Sir Charles Court in 1975, and will add greater levels of significance of and recognition to the existing Shark Bay World Heritage Property.

The government has also allocated \$1.27 million over the following 18 months for a fauna reconstruction project at Lagoon Point in Shark Bay's Francois Peron National Park. The project involves the construction of exclusion fencing and removal of all feral animals from the area to allow specific species such as the mala and the banded hare wallabies to be reintroduced. The long-term aim of the project is to secure a mainland site for possible translocation of animals to Dirk Hartog Island.

Consideration of the statement made an order of the day for the next sitting, on motion by **Hon Ed Dermer**.