

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BIODIVERSITY SCIENCE INSTITUTE

Statement by Minister for Science

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Science) [12.10 pm]: I rise to inform the house of the McGowan government's commitment to the Western Australian Biodiversity Science Institute, with a further \$3.4 million investment to continue its important research and build on its advances in biodiversity science. The state government funds WABSI to support research projects that protect, conserve and ensure the sustainable management of Western Australia's unique flora and fauna. WA is home to one of Australia's richest biodiversities of plant and animal life, including eight of Australia's 15 terrestrial biodiversity hotspots. It is crucial that we invest in the understanding of our environment, as WA's biodiversity is one of the main drivers of our economy through tourism, mining and agriculture.

WABSI's recent achievements include leading the successful bid for a \$29.5 million Cooperative Research Centre for Transformations in Mining Economies, which was announced in March. The CRC-TiME research aims to transform how mine sites are closed, to support prosperous and sustainable futures for surrounding regional communities and improve their local environments.

In partnership with the state government, WABSI also conceptualised the Index of Biodiversity Surveys for Assessments, which captures and consolidates the data from industry-funded biodiversity surveys and makes it publicly accessible. The IBSA data supports the state government's new "environment online" portal to help streamline environmental assessment processes through a \$20 million investment under the WA recovery plan.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank former chief executive officer Peter Zurzolo, who since his appointment in 2016 has successfully built and led WABSI in becoming an institution that is valued for its collaboration and creating enduring benefits for Western Australia. I would also like to welcome WABSI's new CEO, Professor Owen Nevin, an experienced conservation biologist and research leader with a track record of successfully bringing together industry, researchers and government.

The McGowan government is pleased to commit a further \$3.4 million in funding to WABSI to ensure that our state's rich and unique biodiversity assets will be preserved for future generations to enjoy.