

MCGOWAN GOVERNMENT — CONSERVATION

96. Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY to the Premier:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to conservation and ensuring that we have a cleaner and more sustainable environment. Can the Premier update the house on the actions that the McGowan Labor government is taking to deliver on its commitment to protect our environment, and can the Premier outline what targets the government has set to protect and expand our national parks?

Mr M. McGOWAN replied:

I thank the member for Bicton for the question. Yesterday, we launched a very bold target to increase the conservation estate in Western Australia—national parks, conservation reserves and marine parks—by 20 per cent in the course of the next five years or so. That will mean new and expanded parks all across Western Australia, from the Kimberley across the midwest to the south west and beyond. Work is already underway —

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, you are on three. Do you know what that means? The same as in the upper house—you go home.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Work is already underway on our commitment to expand Fitzroy River National Park. Planning is underway to expand Wellington National Park. The Preston River to Ocean Regional Park commitment is underway, along with Leschenault Regional Park and a range of others across Western Australia. We know, as do many, including the Tourism Council Western Australia—I was pleased to hear about its support of this—that this creates jobs and opportunities, particularly in Aboriginal joint management and on-country jobs for Indigenous people. The Aboriginal ranger program, which we expanded very significantly in our first budget, is a terrific program. It allows Aboriginal people to connect to country and look after the beautiful regions of Western Australia.

We are very committed to tourism. Tourists love our natural environment. Tourism is a large part of our state's future. Our biggest selling point nationally and internationally is our marvellous and beautiful environment. We will have a comprehensive consultation process now with traditional owners, the resources sector, pastoralists, commercial and recreational fishers, conservation groups, local governments and others to work out the boundaries and areas of this increase to conservation reserves.

When it comes to waste, we are targeting 75 per cent of waste in WA to be re-used or recycled by 2030. As members know, we have ruled out single-use plastic bags, and next year we are bringing in a container deposit scheme in Western Australia, the first time ever that has been in place on a state basis.

We are very committed to protecting Western Australia's environment. We believe good environmental management and the creation of a strong economy and jobs go hand in hand.