

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION BILL 2015

**662. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Environment:**

I congratulate the minister on passing the long-awaited Biodiversity Conservation Bill 2015 last night. Can the minister remind the house what this legislation will do?

**Mr A.P. JACOB replied:**

I thank the member for Morley for —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** I thank the member for Morley for the question. I know the member for Morley takes biodiversity conservation very seriously, as does every member on this side of the house. The passing of the Biodiversity Conservation Bill is the most significant milestone in biodiversity conservation legislation in this state for 66 years.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** It replaces the Wildlife Conservation Act 1950. It delivers on a 2013 pre-election commitment. It is something the other side committed to for decades, but 2013 was the first time that we committed to it and we delivered it in the first term after we committed to it. The new bill delivers conservation powers that have never been seen before in the state. Quite simply, every single —

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Quite simply, every single provision in this new legislation is superior to the existing Wildlife Conservation Act, yet that rabble over there voted against it. This Liberal–National government —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Bassendean, you have not stopped; I call you to order for the first time. Member for Gosnells, I do not want to hear you. I want this answer through the Chair—quick answer.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Yes, Mr Speaker, I am trying.

This Liberal–National government has taken a tough stance against the harming of and the illegal trade in our unique plants and animals in Western Australia. Fines under this bill will increase from the existing \$4 000 —

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Fines in this bill will increase from the existing \$4 000 to a maximum penalty of \$500 000. There is new special protection for whales, dugongs, dolphins and other cetaceans. It also enables for the first time the listing of habitat areas of land or water critical to survival of a threatened species or a threatened ecological community. For the first time critical habitat will be recognised by law in Western Australia. There is now increased public scrutiny of ministerial decisions on listing of native species.

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Gosnells, I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** There are improved ministerial accountability measures —

**Mr C.J. Tallentire** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I just want to tell you something, member for Gosnells: if you keep shouting out, you will be having a rest. You have two minutes, minister.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Fines have been increased to \$1 million for illegally obtaining and trading in sandalwood. Let the record show that all of these positive measures are things that the Labor Party has voted against repeatedly in this house. The Labor Party either does not understand or does not care about the environment. Last night in this place the Labor Party agreed with us at the point in clauses in which we removed all ministerial accountability—the Labor Party agreed with removing all ministerial accountability—but when we sought to insert tougher clauses on ministerial accountability, the Labor Party voted against it. The Labor Party voted against any parameters on a ministerial decision for scientific advice. Forget what members opposite talk about, that is their voting record. They voted against special protection for critical habitat. They voted against protection of —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Fremantle and member for Maylands, I call you both to order. You are starting to run out of time now, minister, so one minute.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** There is an absurd amount of rhetoric from the members opposite. They have never in their history achieved an update to the Wildlife Conservation Act, even to bring into this house, and they are so riddled with petty jealousy that they voted against special protection; they voted against listing of critical habitat; they voted against special protection for cetaceans; they voted against ministerial accountability; and they voted against scientific advice.

**Ms L.L. Baker** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Maylands!

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** If it was not for the Liberal–National government, which cares about the environment —

**Ms L.L. Baker** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Maylands, I call you to order for the second time. You now have 15 seconds, minister.

**Mr A.P. JACOB:** Members opposite voted to keep fines to a maximum of \$4 000. What a joke! The Liberal–National government achieves; it does not do hollow rhetoric. Members opposite should be forever condemned for the petty jealousy and the farce of voting against this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to update biodiversity conservation in this state.