

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GROUPS

Statement

HON MATTHEW SWINBOURN (East Metropolitan) [5.22 pm]: I want to make a few short comments because I did not get a chance to make a contribution during Hon Adele Farina's private member's business motion about natural resource management groups. My contribution relates to a group in my electorate, Landcare SJ Inc. It is a fantastic group based in the old Mundijong Primary School building in Mundijong and is run by Francis Smit. The NRM funding the group secured was for a project it has run for some years, the "cockatubes" project—an interesting word! Cockatubes are used as nesting boxes for black cockatoos, including Baudin's, Carnaby's and Red-tailed Cockatoos, all of which are endangered or vulnerable as a consequence of loss of habitat. Loss of habitat is a result of land clearing and the removal of old jarrah and marri trees, which hollow out over time and traditionally serve as nesting areas for black cockatoos. They have lost their nesting areas as a consequence of more aggressive birds, such as galas and corellas, that outcompete them. They also lose their nesting areas to introduced bees, possums and things like that.

These cockatubes, which have been developed over some time now, particularly by Mr Smit, have been designed out of PVC-type piping, which is usually used for creating culverts and other bits and pieces. They are about five feet high and are fitted out with a chain and then a wire grid is put inside so that the birds can get out. They basically replicate what is otherwise lost from nature because of our removal of their habitat. These tubes have been highly successful, although there have been issues in the past in getting these birds to nest in man-made nesting boxes. The cockatubes have been extremely successful and their use has been extended across Australia. Natural resource management funding that was given to Landcare SJ this year has extended its ability to further develop the cockatubes and place them in critical areas. They are available for purchase by people in communities for installation. They have a very long life span, which is very good because black cockatoos tend to return to the same nesting boxes. I believe the breeding pairs stay together perhaps not for their entire life, but for a very long time. The motion that was brought on by Hon Adele Farina about NRM funding brought to my mind a particularly important group in my area that is doing great work.

There is one other group that I would like to briefly mention. The Serpentine Jarrahdale Food and Farm Alliance has been the beneficiary of NRM funding, but we have also been the beneficiaries of the work that it has done with that funding. The Serpentine Jarrahdale Food and Farm Alliance works actively in the Serpentine–Jarrahdale area, which is a peri-urban agricultural area. Its role is to promote the virtues of its local community. It was formed by long-term local resident and powerhouse Merri Harris. Its role is to provide education to local producers on the importance of soil and how regenerative farming techniques can lead to healthier produce. Every year it runs an event that is supported by its NRM funding.

I commend the motion that the member brought on earlier today and I appreciate the opportunity to briefly mention these wonderful groups and reiterate the information that was provided about the return for the community when we invest in these groups. The return is at least double, if not more, in terms of dollar-for-dollar value through the activity and commitment of the volunteers involved.