

MUNDA BIDDI TRAIL

78. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Environment:

As someone whose electorate is home to national parks, I know the significance of ensuring that the government can expand access to our national park network. With this in mind, can the minister please update the house on the recent opening of the Munda Bididi Trail and its significance in supporting tourism and managed access to our state's national parks?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

For those members who do not know, Munda Bididi is a Noongar term which means “path through the forest”. The Munda Bididi Trail is now the world's longest, continuous off-road cycling trail. I am pleased to inform the house that the final section of the trail between Nannup and Albany was recently completed. The trail now extends over 1 000 kilometres, all the way from the south coast to Mundaring. I recently had the fantastic privilege of opening the trail in Mundaring. I got to wave the riders across the line as they completed the Munda Bididi Epic 1000 event. Twenty-six riders were the first people to traverse the full extent of that trail. I am pleased to inform members that this event received extensive coverage from as far away as the United Kingdom. We even had coverage in *The Telegraph* in England.

This trail is managed by the Department of Environment and Conservation in partnership with the Munda Bididi Trail Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that was set up around the same time we were planning the trail. The Munda Bididi Trail Foundation does an outstanding job in not only community engagement but also promotion of the trail. Over \$4 million in government funding has gone into this program over the years, through programs such as royalties for regions and through the Department of Environment and Conservation. We also received support from Alcoa and the Peel Development Commission, and Lotterywest provided support through the Department of Sport and Recreation. Significantly, Minister for Corrective Services, some prisoners have also assisted in the construction of parts of this trail, through an ongoing partnership between the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Corrective Services.

The completion of the Munda Bididi Trail will deliver real benefits to the tourism industry throughout the south west. It will boost the economies of small communities along the trail as it encourages more and more people to get out on their bikes to enjoy our natural environment in an environmentally responsible way. Assistance has been provided to communities along the trail, particularly between Albany and Nannup, supporting them to become cycle tourism-ready. Some people have been quite creative in trying to entice new services such as bike washing facilities and showers along the way for cyclists, tent areas if people do not want to book accommodation, and a range of cycle tourism strategies for some of the small communities.

Mr B.S. Wyatt: Well done!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Thank you, member.

Around 20 000 people already use this trail annually. That number is expected to grow exponentially now that the trail is completed, and indeed is the world's longest.