

STATE FORESTS 7, 16, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 57 AND 65

Partial Revocation of Dedication - Motion

Resumed from 11 May on the following motion moved by Hon Kim Chance (Leader of the House) -

That in response to Legislative Assembly message 103, the proposal for the partial revocation of state forests 7, 16, 29, 30, 35, 36, 38, 57 and 65 laid on the table of the Legislative Council on Tuesday, 29 November 2005, by command of His Excellency, be carried out.

HON NORMAN MOORE (Mining and Pastoral - Leader of the Opposition) [3.22 pm]: The last time this motion was debated, the request by the government for the partial revocation of a number of state forest areas provoked a debate about the Peel deviation, which will be constructed in part of one of the areas affected by the revocation. I listened to the Greens (WA) tell us why we did not need motor cars or the Peel deviation, and I was provoked to rise and say something. The argument for the Peel deviation is overwhelming. In the few minutes that I had to speak in the previous debate, I made the point that, as I drive to the south west on a reasonably regular basis, nothing is more frustrating or irritating than driving through Mandurah on a long weekend or, indeed, any weekend and being held up because of the inadequate state of the road system through Mandurah. Main Roads Western Australia has sought to make it easier by rearranging the lanes on the so-called new bridge at Mandurah, which was never big enough in the first place - just like most of the bridges we build, for some reason. Members who know Leach Highway and Shelley Bridge would know that that bridge is not big enough either. However, there is a problem on the bridge in Mandurah, and Main Roads sought to improve the traffic flow on long weekends and holidays by increasing it to three lanes. It is still grossly inadequate. It is irritating not only for people who travel to Bunbury, Busselton, Dunsborough or Margaret River, but also for the poor old citizens of Mandurah who find that most of the main roads in Mandurah become clogged up for very long periods, which makes it very difficult for them to go about their business.

The two-lane road from Mandurah to Lake Clifton is also a problem - it becomes a four-lane road beyond Lake Clifton or thereabouts - because it is a very dangerous stretch of road. Many accidents have occurred and casualties have been suffered along that stretch of road over time. It is a necessity for that road to be fixed. The proposal for the Peel deviation, which has been around for a while, is an attempt to continue the freeway from Perth down south, bypass Mandurah, cross the river near Ravenswood and join up with Old Coast Road, where the four-lane highway has been built. That is a very sensible proposition and it should have happened a long time ago. However, as we know, there have been a lot of arguments about who should and should not pay for it, and a lot of politics have been played about that road. The bottom line is that it should be built, and soon. The Greens' decision to oppose this revocation of state forest because they do not support the Peel deviation demonstrates a complete lack of understanding of what people would like to do in Western Australia. As I said during the previous debate on this motion, Western Australia is a very big part of the world and we cannot say to people that they cannot drive anywhere because there are too many cars on the roads, and that we will not build roads because we do not need roads and the more roads there are, the more cars there are, which exacerbates the problem. I suggest to the Greens that we cannot provide public transport of the sort that is found in places such as Europe and so on in every little town in Western Australia for people to get around.

Hon Paul Llewellyn: We already have public transport in Bunbury.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I know, but if people are going to Dunsborough, it is a bit hard for them to go to Bunbury and then decide whether they will walk the rest of the way or ride their bikes. A bus system goes to Dunsborough; however, most people who live in Western Australia want the freedom to use their motor cars when they travel south for their holidays or whatever. I do not think that is a problem. If we have to spend the rest of our lives on public transport to get where we want to go, life will be less pleasant and flexible than it is now. This notion that the Greens trot out all the time that when a road is built, more motor cars are created suggests to me that their alternative is rather peculiar. At the moment some roads, such as this one, are overcrowded and cannot cope with the amount of traffic. If the solution is to leave the road as it is, the situation will simply get worse. It will not get any better because there will be more cars anyway, because as young people get older, they buy motor cars. There will be more cars as the population grows, so the problem will get worse. The same problem was experienced on the Kwinana Freeway, as you might recall, Mr President. Until the second Narrows Bridge was built, people could not get across the bridge for a long period every morning and afternoon. Now that the second Narrows Bridge has been built, that bottleneck has been removed; the bottleneck has now been moved to the Canning Highway-Kwinana Freeway intersection. However, once people get past that intersection, it is a quick run into the city. By providing a bit of decent infrastructure, we have removed the bottleneck and people can get where they want to go much quicker.

The construction of the Peel deviation will make life a lot easier and safer for people travelling to the south west, as they are wont to do. The south west of Western Australia is one of the most delightful places in the world,

and it is understandable that people from the city would want to spend time in the area. It should not be a frustrating and irritating experience to travel to the south west for a holiday, particularly if it happens to be for a long weekend, Easter or any other public holiday. The Peel deviation, presuming that will be a four-lane highway when it is completed, will relieve a lot of that tension on the road and make travelling to the south west a much more enjoyable experience for people. Equally importantly, it will take a significant amount of traffic out of Mandurah. Everyone knows that Mandurah is a rapidly expanding part of the state. I cannot believe how quickly it is growing. That expansion in itself will create a huge amount of internal traffic, so it makes a great deal of sense to get rid of the bypass traffic to allow Mandurah to grow in a sensible way with its own traffic requirements.

I am very supportive of the proposition put forward by the government to make some land available for this route. There are some arguments yet to be had about the specific route and whether it will cross the river at Ravenswood. I do not know enough about that to even have a view, but I certainly hope it can be sorted out and that those sorts of issues do not delay the project.

As far as I am concerned, the quicker we pass this partial revocation - I will sit down in a minute, which will help it get through quicker - and the quicker the road is built, the quicker that people will get access to a decent four-lane highway from Perth to the south west and the better it will be for Western Australia. I strongly support this proposition and oppose the Greens' proposition that we should leave roads as they are and hope to goodness that people start jumping on public transport, which, for a very long time in Western Australia, has never been adequate enough to enable people to go to every place they want to go to whenever they want. Therefore, people will choose motor cars for a long time to come. The quicker we get on with this, the better. I support the revocation.

HON BARRY HOUSE (South West) [3.31 pm]: I will delay the passing of this partial revocation of state forests by another five minutes only because I want to make some comments as a member for the South West Region and as a very frequent user - probably the most frequent user in this house - of that route to the south west. I travel that route on average once a week, and I have done so for the past 18 years. I have seen some progressive improvements to the road and, in the past five or six years, regrettably some very major obstacles through the Mandurah area. Therefore, I have always been an extremely strong supporter of the Peel deviation, and the sooner it is constructed, the better. It and Indian Ocean Drive are probably the most important roads that need to be constructed in Western Australia at the moment. The Peel deviation is vitally important to the South West Region for all sorts of reasons; that is, for not only the reasons relating to Mandurah outlined by the Leader of the Opposition, but also tourism and commercial reasons. We should not forget the commercial reasons associated with a rapid transit route to the city from the south west. An enormous amount of produce moves both ways between the south west and the metropolitan area, and that amount will only become greater in the days and years to come.

The Peel deviation has an interesting history. As a member for that region, I have seen some vital improvements in the route. Members who drive down Old Coast Road now may not know how difficult it was to drive down that road only 10 years ago. Much of it was as bad as many sections of the Great Northern Highway are today - it also needs a massive amount of work. The coalition Court government can take a great deal of credit for constructing dual lanes on most of that highway from the end of the Australind bypass, which was initiated by the previous Labor government, to close to Lake Clifton. That was a major piece of upgrading work that needed to be done and has considerably aided access to and from the south west region, but there has been a hiatus in improving the road in the past seven or eight years. There has also been a rather distasteful argument about funding. There has been a bit of argy-bargy between the state and federal funding agencies. The initial cost of the highway was \$340 million. Today it is \$450 million and rising every day. The sooner the road is built, the better. The federal government, to its credit, has committed an initial amount of \$170 million and a further \$20 million subject to that road starting by the end of 2006. Also, in the recent federal budget an additional \$15 million was allocated to ensure that there is no excuse left for that work not commencing. This revocation of state forests provides the land for the section south of the Peel Inlet and Harvey Estuary through state forests to link up with Old Coast Road around Lake Clifton. I can recall that maybe 12 or 15 years ago, in an Address-in-Reply speech I mentioned the Peel deviation, along with a few other matters, which raised some debate in the community about the need for, first of all, this road to be upgraded and, secondly, the name to be changed. I floated the idea of changing the name of Old Coast Road to the Forrest highway, because it will be a major national highway. The first Premier of this state was the member for Bunbury. However, I received some rather indignant telephone calls from a couple of Mandurah people who were upset by the suggestion of a name change. That may be a consideration when the road passes Mandurah on the other side of the Peel Inlet and the Harvey Estuary and accesses the south west in a very direct and safe way.

Members might also recall that, a couple of years ago when the Peel region scheme was gazetted, disallowance motions were moved against the scheme. Hon Murray Criddle and I moved disallowance motions, as did

Hon Christine Sharp. We were all concerned with one section of the proposed route of the Peel deviation. That section traverses the Murray River adjacent to the Murray Lakes subdivision. There was a report in either *The West Australian* or the *Sunday Times* only a couple of days ago on the problems that section of the proposed road will pose for people in that area, who are largely retired, because it will be very close to their houses. A wall approximately 16 metres high and only three metres away will be constructed near a resident's house. I inspected that area and moved the disallowance motion mainly to raise that issue and to get the government to consider an alternative route at the back of that area, traversing the Murray River much more safely. At the moment, the proposal is for a tight bend, and erosion is an issue. There will be no native title difficulties involved with the alternative route and it would not impact so heavily on so many people. It is interesting that the Greens, through Hon Paul Llewellyn, raised these concerns during this debate, because Hon Christine Sharp moved another disallowance motion at that time. Members may recall the debate. She was bought out by Hon Alannah MacTiernan, who gave some sort of commitment to add to the conservation estate land that had been earmarked for some sort of commercial development, I believe, near the Golden Bay area.

It is still my firm belief that the route needs to be changed slightly where the Peel deviation traverses the Murray River, to achieve a far better, fairer and safer result with the Peel deviation. That said, the Peel deviation is the most important roadworks proposed for Western Australia. Regrettably, under the Labor government, delays have occurred year after year. If the coalition government had been returned in 2001, that road would be very near to completion now and within a far more palatable budget than the one that will emerge over the following years. I say, bring it on; the Peel deviation is vital infrastructure for people who traverse the south west to the metropolitan area and back again for all sorts of reasons. It is not a one-issue road that will make the south west more accessible for metropolitan tourists; it is vital infrastructure because of what the south west can provide to the metropolitan area. To a large extent, the south west already fulfils that role as the food basket of Western Australia. As long as the Labor government does not pinch all the water from the Yarragadee aquifer in the years to come, it will become an even more important food basket for the Perth metropolitan area. This revocation is necessary to provide public land for a very long-awaited and much needed important infrastructure, the Peel deviation.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [3.42 pm]: Mr President -

The PRESIDENT: I note Hon Paul Llewellyn has already spoken on this motion.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I seek leave to make further comments, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Such leave is granted subject to standing order 87, which constrains Hon Paul Llewellyn very much in what he can say.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I understand there were two ways of extending the debate. One was to seek leave to speak and the other was to move to refer the motion to a committee.

The PRESIDENT: Order! It may be of assistance to Hon Paul Llewellyn if I read out standing order 87, which states -

A Member who has spoken to a question may again be heard to explain himself in regard to some material part of his speech which has been misquoted or misunderstood, but shall not introduce any new matter . . .

That is the material part of that standing order. Hon Paul Llewellyn has the call to speak in those limited terms.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I understand that. I sought to clarify the process, which I am not at liberty to do.

The PRESIDENT: The process has been clarified, and I ask that Hon Paul Llewellyn please address his comments in accordance with standing order 87.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: The Greens (WA) put on record its concerns about this motion, which is a bundle of seven separate revocations of state forest. The Greens' concerns are about only the second area of state forest No 6 comprising 83 hectares required for the Peel deviation. Given that we cannot unbundle the individual parcels in this motion, the Greens felt compelled to further clarify its concerns about the Peel deviation and to clarify some of the statements made in the media and in this house. It is tempting and perhaps even provocative for the opposition particularly to oversimplify the points we are making about planning, traffic management, the need for transport and the concepts the Greens are proposing.

I am responding to Hon Norman Moore who insists that the Greens are anti-highway, are opposed to private transport and want to create a barrier to the future development of the south west. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Greens are fully committed to a vibrant, regional community in the south west and an efficient and effective regional transit system. The Greens prefer that public money not be squandered by building very large highways on very difficult sites. The Peel deviation's alignment runs through an extremely difficult site on

the eastern side of the Peel-Harvey system. The \$100 million in cost blow-outs for the Peel deviation will arise from a massive mitigation for acid sulfate soils and all the other issues that come with building large-scale highways. The Greens want to know that the money allocated to improving regional transit systems is spent well, with due diligence and prudence, and is in the best public interest.

The Greens believe that another highway that sandwiches the Peel-Harvey system between two highways will lead to significant degradation of the centrepiece of the Peel region and of the south west region; namely, the Peel-Harvey system. Hon Nigel Hallett, the shadow Minister for Regional Development, released a press statement that he was flabbergasted at the Greens' lack of understanding of the need to build the Peel deviation. It is fortunate that he released that statement because it resulted in my receiving many calls seeking clarification. Let us consider our existing highways: Old Coast Road to Bunbury, the South Western Highway, and the Kwinana Freeway, which almost reaches Mandurah. The freeway could be divided in both directions to go through either the South Western Highway or along Old Coast Road. If the new Perth to Mandurah railway is anything like as popular as the northern extension of the railway service, it will take a significant load off the day-to-day traffic between Perth and Mandurah.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Yes, 289 commuters.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We have had a discussion about the effectiveness of moving people by rail.

Hon Nigel Hallett interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We are talking about an issue of traffic congestion for a relatively small proportion of the year; namely, congestion that occurs during a certain number of public holidays. I have suggested previously during this debate that there is no reason that traffic could not be directed during peak holiday times through the South Western Highway or down Old Coast Road. The freeway becomes congested at peak hour. All our systems become congested at peak hour, and we do not necessarily have to design all our roads to manage that peak. We need to have an adequate traffic management strategy. For \$500 million, which is what the Peel deviation will cost the taxpayer, there must be several alternatives that could be developed, including redirecting traffic and building adequate connections on to the South Western Highway, without any further impact on the Peel-Harvey system. I understand that Hon Norman Moore is really in favour of more highways. In fact, we should name a new highway the Moore Highway.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Paul Llewellyn, the house has indulged you by giving you leave to speak again on this motion, and you are somewhat constrained in what you can say. You must have regard to some material part of the speech that you have already given, in terms of having been either misquoted or misunderstood. When you do so, you are not to introduce any new matter and you are not to bring forward any debatable matter. As you have not referred to any part of your speech that has been misquoted, I presume that your observations are to do with you having been misunderstood about what you said on 11 May. I ask you to confine your comments in that regard.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Thank you, Mr President. On 11 May I had some robust discussion about the need for more highways, and Hon Norman Moore implied that the Greens were opposed to all highways, and opposed to private transport, and that is quite untrue.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Name one highway you are in favour of.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I am in favour of the South Western Highway, the Albany Highway, the Moore Highway and more highways.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Paul Llewellyn, I have brought the attention of the house to the wording of standing order 87. You are not supposed to be dealing with debatable matters in your observations. I know it is difficult, but Hon Paul Llewellyn has the call.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I was making the point that Hon Norman Moore said he was in favour of more highways, particularly Moore Highways, and he was implying that the Greens were in favour of no more highways, which is quite untrue. We are in favour of highways, even if they are named Moore Highway, and we would not put an "s" on the end of "highway", we would just say "no Moore Highways".

Hon Simon O'Brien: Name one highway that you are in favour of, anywhere in the entire universe.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Hon Simon O'Brien, we are not debating the point. Hon Paul Llewellyn is pointing out where he has been misunderstood.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: If we were naming highways, we may well name one Moore Highway, and we may even call it no more highway. Whatever the case, it must be made clear in this house that the Greens are not opposed to private transport. We are not even opposed to more highways. We have made that point perfectly clear, and I do not think I will go there again.

Let me now turn to a matter that was raised in the media about something that I said in this house on 11 May. The shadow Minister for Regional Development, Hon Nigel Hallett, said that I believed that simple traffic control could eradicate all the problems of commuters between Perth and the south west. That is not what I said. I said that traffic management would contribute greatly to managing the congestion created during the peak periods when the Mandurah area experiences traffic delays. Other developments, including realignments from the freeway across to the South Western Highway and to the coast road would remedy many of the traffic issues. That is quite different from what was construed in the media; that is, that we are saying that simple traffic arrangements would do the job. We are talking about the most prudent and sensible way in which the \$500 million could be spent. Building a very expensive highway through wetlands with acid sulfate soils, spawning the development of more urban sprawl in an environmentally sensitive area, and surrounding the Peel-Harvey system with more urban development, and hence more environmental impact, is not a good and prudent use of public money. It is a simple matter; that is the view of the Greens. I make it clear that that is our view and we are not opposed to another highway simply for the sake of it. We are opposed to irresponsible, wasteful use of public money when there are remedies that could be put in place right now that are more cost-effective and less damaging to the Peel-Harvey system.

Millions of dollars of taxpayers' money are being spent right now on the Peel-Harvey system to prevent the decline of that system from eutrophication due to chemicals and fertilisers. The eastern side of the Peel-Harvey system acts as an ecological barrier or an environmental sink keeping the Peel-Harvey system intact, and we should not allow urban development to sprawl down that side of the inlet.

Mandurah, by the opposition's own reckoning, has become congested. It has become a less friendly and desirable place to pass through and to visit. This is because we have allowed unfettered, poorly planned decisions to lead us by the nose, one step at a time, into a situation in which we have degraded the very asset that attracted people there in the first place. Why would any member for the South West Region consider committing 80 per cent of the land around the Peel-Harvey system to urban development as a result of this very poorly conceived concept? The original public environmental review had a poorly constructed concept of the traffic loading, the appropriate alignment and the future potential costs. A survey of the potential for acid sulfate soils was not done. The original public environmental review did not include a geotechnical study to ensure that this would not create a massive environmental cost.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I hope that you're not introducing new subject matter.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We have already discussed this, and I am afraid that it was misconstrued in its interpretation. It is very common for the opposition and others to accuse the Greens of taking some kind of extreme view of a particular matter. First of all, they ask whether the Greens (WA) want to go back to the days of horses and carts and candles and caves. They then attack us and accuse us of wanting to go back to the days of horses and carts and candles and caves.

The PRESIDENT: I remind Hon Paul Llewellyn that in addition to speaking in accordance with standing order 87, he must also bear in mind standing order 100. The member must speak along very narrow lines.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Absolutely, Mr President.

When members referred to my earlier contribution to this debate, they insisted that I was implying that the Greens wanted the region to move backwards in time. However, the Greens want to move forwards. We want to move forward to the time when we have high-quality urban transit systems. Indeed, Mandurah and Perth are almost certainly going to be linked. We also want to consider how things will look in 2020. What will the price of petrol be in 2008 or 2010? What impact will the price of petrol have on traffic levels in the South West Region? During my contribution to this debate on 11 May, I debated against the notion that petrol prices have risen in Europe with apparently no reduction in the use of private transport. That is not so. As petrol prices in other countries have risen, more investment has gone into public transport infrastructure. I do not want some unfortunate family who wants to catch a train to Margaret River to end up in Bunbury without being able to travel any further. The Greens are saying that public transport in the South West Region has a role in reducing some of the traffic load to those destinations. By 2010 it is very likely that the price of petrol will make it prohibitive for the average person to get into his inefficient Holden Camira or his 10 litres per 100 kilometre vehicle and take a trip down south. I suggest that - I have made this point previously - the obvious reduction in the availability of cheap oil will result in an increase in the price of petrol and a reduction in the mobility of the average punter who wants to visit Margaret River or Bunbury for the day. I am not referring to privileged members of Parliament who flit up and down the highway on a regular basis.

Hon Barry House: How do you access your electorate?

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: As a matter of fact, I used the train the other day.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: That is new material.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I do not want to go there. I caught the train and I have the ticket to prove it! I must be one of the few members who occasionally uses a train to get to Bunbury. It is a very pleasant journey. It is an efficient journey too, because it allowed me to read quite a few bills.

The shadow Minister for Local Government and Regional Development, Hon Nigel Hallett, said that the proposed excision of forests for the Peel deviation goes hand in hand with initiatives to manage a vegetation management plan.

The PRESIDENT: Hon Paul Llewellyn, I take it that you are relating this remark to how your observations on 11 May were misunderstood.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Absolutely.

The point I was making on 11 May was that every state forest would require an appropriate and responsible vegetation plan, a fauna management plan and a rehabilitation and landscape plan. A rehabilitation plan would be needed only if the joint was messed up in the first place. I do not see the logic in that. Hon Nigel Hallett also referred to a surface water plan. Surface water would need to be managed only if the hydrology was messed up in the first place. It is the messing up of the hydrology and the surface structure that will cause the acid sulfate soils that, in turn, result in the need for environmental mitigation. How can we achieve a rational, sensible and cost-effective regional transit plan? How can we provide for the needs of a modern and mobile community with an additional \$500 million? Indeed, what is the best way to spend that \$500 million?

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Are you nearly finished?

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I am nearly finished. I can see that I am frittering away time.

It would be a sad indictment of the members of the South West Region if they facilitated an urban sprawl along the eastern side of the Peel-Harvey system. This deviation proposal goes hand in glove with an urban sprawl. It would be a sad indictment of the members of South West Region and members of the government if they spent an additional \$500 million on a highway when the traffic management issues that need to be resolved could be resolved in more cost-effective ways. It would be a sad indictment of any government if it did not predict future traffic volumes, the increasing cost of petrol and the impact that will have. Our modelling does not assume linear growth; rather, it assumes exponential growth. It does not assume linear growth in kilometres per person; rather, it assumes, exponentially, an increasing number of kilometres per person. I venture to suggest that we will see precisely the opposite trend. We are not likely to see an increase in kilometres per capita anywhere in the world because the price of fuel will escalate.

With that, I put on the record that the Greens are not opposed to more highways. The Greens favour rational planning and regional development that go hand in glove with sustainability. I hope that no more public outbursts will misrepresent the words that transpired in this place.

HON LJILJANNA RAVLICH (East Metropolitan - Minister for Education and Training) [4.08 pm]: I thank opposition members for their support of this motion. I thank Hon Paul Llewellyn for his contribution. I am heartened to know that standing order 87 works so well; having heard from Hon Paul Llewellyn, we can all take great comfort.

Quite clearly, what is known for the purposes of this revocation as area 2 is the most contentious in the proposed revocation of portions of our state forest. There is no doubt that state forest 16, which consists of an area of about 83 hectares and which is required to accommodate the major road construction project as the Peel deviation, has caused the most debate in this place. The government expected that to be the case. I fully endorse the sentiments of Hon Nigel Hallett that this really is a vital link between Perth and Bunbury. It has been on the drawing board for a considerable length of time. It is not just about people from Perth being able to access or get down to the south west; it is also an opportunity for people from the south west to commute to Perth. I agree most of all, however, with Hon Norman Moore that the sooner we get this done, the better.

Having said that, I thank members for their support and I urge them to support the motion before the house.

Question put and passed.