

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

Partial Revocation of Dedication - Motion

Resumed from 15 March 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 NIGEL HALLETT (South West) [12.28 pm]: The opposition will support this partial revocation motion. The total area being excised from the state forest is 126.4 hectares. Area 1 involves two small portions of state forest 7 that are required by Main Roads WA to upgrade and widen part of the Great Eastern Highway between Sawyers Valley and The Lakes turnoff. Anyone who travels that road will know that this work is well overdue. The area is about 0.47 hectares and is situated approximately four kilometres south-east of Chidlow. As a trade-off, it is pleasing that Main Roads has offered to close and include in state forest 7 an unused portion of the existing survey for Flynn Road, an area of 0.49 hectares. The opposition supports this revocation.

Area 2 relates to the Peel deviation. Main Roads has requested an area of approximately 83 hectares be excised from state forest 16 for the construction of the Peel deviation. This deviation would have to be the biggest issue facing the Peel and south west regions. The Peel deviation was first considered in 1976, 30 years ago. In 1985, Main Roads released a paper inviting comment on the deviation. In 1994, it released the possible routes for the deviation. Members can see, therefore, that this project has been going on for many years and is long overdue; it has been on the drawing board for about 30 years. Approval for this deviation was given in 2002. However, we are now four years down the track and construction has not yet begun. There is a sign on the Old Coast Road suggesting that construction will begin in 2007. It is frustrating that the government does not understand how vital this link between Perth and Bunbury is.

Hon Paul Llewellyn: How vital is it?

Hon NIGEL HALLETT: If Hon Paul Llewellyn spent as much time going up and down that road as other members from that region do, he would understand how vital it is. Three of the five fastest growing regions are in the south of this state. If the member is not aware of the bottlenecks in Mandurah, he is not a very good representative for the south west of the state. I suggest the member travel on that road more and have a look at the problems.

The original cost of that project was in the vicinity of \$300 million. The cost for construction of that road is now estimated to be \$500 million and it is still not started. The area affected by the motion involves an area of about 37 hectares of pine plantation and about 46 hectares of native vegetation. Those who know the area will agree that this will significantly improve travelling for motorists between Perth and the south of the state. Mandurah and Dawesville residents will be much more content because there will not be the constant intrusion of vehicles in their suburbs. Among other initiatives, a vegetation management plan, a fauna management plan, a rehabilitation and landscape plan and a surface water management plan will be put in place. None of those plans exists today. Therefore, the opposition supports this revocation of dedication.

The third area involves an area 10 kilometres east of Kirup. It involves taking approximately 4.3 hectares of state forest 29 comprising lot 302 and lot 303 on deposited plan 44598. This proposal will allow for the dedication of Anderson Road, which was constructed prior to 1970 by the then Shire of Balingup for use in logging in the area. The Shire of Donnybrook-Balingup has advised that if the revocation proceeds, it will close some unused roads in the same locality, which will add approximately 5.4 hectares to state forest 29. That addition will increase the area zoned as state forest, and the opposition supports this.

The fourth area is a small area of 0.0176 hectares of state forest 30. It is now known as lot 300 on deposited plan 42073 and is approximately four kilometres north of Bridgetown. This area will formalise a truncation at the corner of Hester Road and Bill Baldock Drive at the Bridgetown Golf Club. The opposition supports this.

The fifth area involves an area of approximately 33.08 hectares situated between Nannup and Manjimup. It comprises lots 13913 of state forest 35 and lot 13849 of state forest 57 on deposited plan 39680. This proposal will allow for the dedication of a 14-kilometre section of Graphite Road, which will benefit the public as it will provide access from the Nannup end of the One Tree Bridge section of the Donnelly River valley to beyond Manjimup. The road will also be a major fire access road that will assist local firefighters in the event of a fire. The opposition supports this revocation.

The sixth area is a small area of approximately 0.52 hectares situated some 11 kilometres south west of Manjimup. The land is needed to widen Seven Day Road, which will complete roadworks that were planned some years ago and improve road safety. There have been several fatalities on that road. Once again, the opposition supports this revocation. The seventh area is also in the Shire of Manjimup and is a very small area

of 0.01 hectares on deposited plan 41625. This area is in state forest 38 and will be added to the existing Kim Road reserve. The opposition supports this measure.

The eighth area involves the Shire of Gingin realigning two portions of Military Road situated in state forest 65. The two portions to be excised are lot 15362, comprising approximately 3.8 hectares, and lot 15364, comprising approximately 0.94 hectares, on deposited plans 39843 and 39844. The land is approximately 12 kilometres north east of Two Rocks. The opposition supports two substitute portions of Military Road, totalling an area of approximately 5.4 hectares, being included in state forest 65.

The ninth area again involves a small portion of state forest 65. The City of Wanneroo has requested that an area of 0.15 hectares be revoked to widen a section of Old Yanchep Road approximately 10 kilometres north east of Quinns Rocks. The proposed widening is part of the state road black spots program and the opposition supports the revocation as it will improve road safety in the area.

The Conservation Commission of Western Australia and the Forest Products Commission support all nine proposals.

HON PAUL LLEWELLYN (South West) [12.38 pm]: It is right and proper that, from time to time, we rectify and realign roads that run out of their road reserves. This involves the partial revocation of state forests. However, we very seldom hear about land going into state forests from the private estate or road reserves. Nevertheless, the Greens do not oppose most of these revocations, except for area 2 which relates to Peel deviation. It is clearly on the record that the Greens and the conservation movement have very grave concerns about the construction of the Peel deviation, from the point of view of not only its impact on the area, but also commonsense planning. It is true that Mandurah does experience traffic problems from time to time, but they usually occur in peak-time traffic or on long weekends. Sometimes people's journeys between Perth and Bunbury are delayed by 10, 15 or 20 minutes because of the Mandurah bottleneck, and I have some sympathy for them because they are heading off on their holidays. However, is the solution the construction of another very expensive highway? To build another expensive highway, we must revoke a certain portion of land. Where is that land? It is just to the east of the Peel-Harvey inlet.

To give this some context, the Peel-Harvey area has had a significant share of environmental impacts as a result of a sprawling metropolis; as a result of the Perth metropolitan region sprawling down the coast and creating not a node of development, but a sprawled urban area. As a consequence of that and as a consequence of agricultural chemicals and phosphates leaching into the Peel-Harvey system, the Peel Inlet has become a very unpleasant place around which to live. The Peel-Harvey system has become nitrified, and there has been a massively expensive public operation to recover the Peel-Harvey system. In part, that involved the construction of the Dawesville Cut, which was a very expensive operation. Much of this impact would not have happened if we had had our planning right in the first place.

Hon Nigel Hallett is absolutely correct in saying that it was about 1976 that the Peel deviation was first mooted. It was mooted alongside a number of optimistic views about how the metropolitan region would expand, and that highways would be built here and there to solve all the traffic issues. However, we have never caught up. Traffic planning always gets behind. The bigger the roads that are made, the faster the people go and the more congestion there is. As a result of putting in the Peel deviation, we will end up not with less congestion, but with more congestion, and the evidence is clearly there. The evidence from transport planning internationally is that when large roads are built, they fill up very quickly. It will not be very long before even the Peel deviation does not relieve us of that 15-minute inconvenience on Easter Sunday, on Easter Monday, at Christmas or on a long weekend when everybody in Perth wishes to rush down to the south west to enjoy the amenities of the region.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I reckon it's the best time to stay at home.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: It is a lovely time to stay at home. The honourable member is exactly right.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: I have the shopping centres to myself.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: The minister can ride around on her bicycle in the shopping centre car parks and have a lot of fun - that is true - or skateboard in and do those sorts of things.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Ken Travers): Order, members! We are dealing with the partial revocation of a state forest. Although I realise that it relates to the Peel deviation, I think shopping hours is taking it a little far.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We were not talking about shopping hours; although we could go there, we will not. We will go back to the Peel deviation and the short-sighted, rather than long-term, planning that relates to building more highways when we know that private transport - that very service, if one likes, that we revere in our society - will become so much more expensive. I do not think that people will be able to afford to drive to

Bunbury and spend weekends there. In fact, as the petrol prices rise, I believe we will find that far fewer people will whiz down on their holidays to Mandurah and Bunbury via Mandurah. However, we must bear in mind that the traffic problem that is being resolved by the Peel deviation is twofold. Firstly, can we shave a few minutes off our general route between Perth and Bunbury - possibly five, 10 or 15 minutes, depending on how fast we decide to drive?

Hon Norman Moore: If you reckon it's 15 minutes, I don't know when you last did it.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I am talking about the inconvenience when people are held up around Mandurah when they are rushing to spend their Easter long weekend down there.

Hon Nigel Hallett: Apart from the Peel deviation, which bypasses one of the most dangerous roads in Western Australia, I suggest you look at the facts and not deviate around that.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: We are certainly deviating, but we are deviating around a very large wetland. In fact, I will come to the probable impacts as a result of putting yet another major transit route on the other side of the Peel-Harvey system, which will spawn a more sprawling suburbia. That is the very reason that the amenity of the Peel region has been reduced. I will go into that. I have some time to deal with this matter.

Let us look at another matter; namely, the escalating costs of the Peel deviation. It has gone up not from \$300 million, but from \$240 million to \$300 million, and then up to \$500 million as a number of things have happened. First, the cost of construction is important. One thing that was not factored into the cost of the Peel deviation was the cost of mitigation against acid sulfate soils. My understanding and research suggest that to take that deviation through a wetland, something like \$80 million of remediation work will be required to deal with the acid sulfate soils that will be caused by soils being dug up and exposed to sulfates. That will have another impact on the Peel-Harvey system. As I said before, the Peel-Harvey system has been suffering as a result of nitrates and phosphates from agricultural land running into the system and causing nitrification. However, another major source of nitrification has been garden lawns and, to some extent, in areas that do not have deep sewerage, the material from septic systems leaching into the Peel-Harvey system. Everyone will know, because we all go down to Bunbury on long weekends -

Hon Giz Watson interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: Some of us do not; some of us choose to go down there on short weekends. However, we know that the main route runs right down the side of the Peel-Harvey system and that alongside that is a sprawling urban development. With the Peel deviation, a transit route will be put right down the other side of the inlet, and the Peel-Harvey inlet will be physically stranded. At the moment, the eastern side is relatively undeveloped. Pine forests, native forests and some national parks are there. They are about to be cut through. Some agricultural lands are also there. However, it is largely undeveloped. By putting the Peel deviation down the eastern side of our iconic regional water body, we will strand that extraordinary, high-value asset and cause more damage to the Peel-Harvey system. That does not take into account the acid sulfate soil issues along the length of the entire wetland system. We are not even talking about the impacts on the wildlife; we are talking about the welfare and health of a major regional water body. Are we prepared to accept that it is permissible to sign off on the further degradation of that area for the convenience of saving a few minutes on our trip between Perth and Bunbury? I believe that some traffic control measures could be put in place. When people reach the Mandurah turn-off at the end of the freeway, every second car could be required to turn off and go down the South Western Highway in those peak periods. Why not? Therefore, the traffic load would be taken off the road that goes via Mandurah down the coastline. Why could the traffic not be split in those peak periods? It is not difficult technology.

Hon Nigel Hallett: Have you been on those roads at peak time?

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I go down those roads regularly. In fact, I have been driving down there for the best part of 30 years. I understand the issues. I understand that there is a traffic issue from time to time. If the traffic load can be controlled through time or zoned by redistributing the load, why is there any need to invest \$500 million building an entirely new road and opening up an entirely new area for urban development? It is totally unnecessary to manage traffic at those peak times.

Hon Robyn McSweeney: People have minds of their own and will go whichever way they want.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: They can only go where there is a road. If they do otherwise, their four-wheel drives will get bogged in the Peel inlet. They would not want to go that way! Nevertheless, we could see someone in a four-wheel-drive take off through the deviation. There were various options for transit routes. The easiest transit route for transport planners and engineers has been chosen. They think that it will be a quick route. Why was the Old Coast Road to Bunbury not used? The alignment is there and no revocation would be required. The easements are already there and so is the road. No, the preference is to build a new superhighway at enormous public cost and put at risk one of the jewels of the South West Region, the Peel-Harvey system. We

are putting it further at risk for the convenience of a few minutes in travelling time. As unpalatable as it might seem, a simple traffic management device would work. It could be a large flashing light on the freeway that directs traffic every five minutes either through Mandurah or to the South Western Highway. It would operate for a few times during peak periods, such as around Christmas. If we did that, we would not have a problem. That would control the traffic. People can make the choice about the traffic load. It would control the peak period management problem. This is not rocket science.

Hon Nigel Hallett interjected.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I know it seems hard to understand the concept that we can actually redirect traffic and use traffic control. We have traffic control all the time. We have to stop at a stop sign and we have to give way to our right. We have to slow down to 60 kilometres an hour in some zones and speed up to 110 kilometres an hour in others. We take directions from our road rules all the time. We have to keep left. What about signs that state "Wrong way - go back"? That is what we say about the Peel deviation: Wrong way - go back!

Hon Nigel Hallett: Only one of you.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: There are at least two Greens here.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Ken Travers): Order, members! Hon Paul Llewellyn has the call. If members want to take the call, they are welcome to do so after the member has finished.

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I am having a great deal of fun and obtaining a great degree of satisfaction by clarifying the quality of the planning decision that we are tacitly agreeing with by allowing this small revocation of land.

Hon George Cash: We do not want you to have fun; we want you to be serious!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: I spend my whole life being serious; I am an extremely serious young man but, on this matter -

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Not so much of the young. He tried to slip that in!

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, members! Hon George Cash should not encourage fun in the chamber! This is a place for seriousness!

Hon PAUL LLEWELLYN: If this were not such a serious matter, I would be crying. I know many people who have spent their entire adult lives trying to preserve the Peel area. They will be crying because they know that this deviation will sentence the Peel-Harvey to death. That is a large claim. Certainly, it will be sentenced to some sort of biological deterioration, and the place will not be very pleasant to visit.

[Leave granted for the member's speech to be continued at a later stage of the sitting.]

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Hon Kim Chance (Leader of the House)**.

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The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In light of the time we will have an early lunch in readiness for the budget when we resume.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 to 2.00 pm