

ROTTNEST ISLAND AUTHORITY AMENDMENT BILL 2007

Third Reading

MS S.M. McHALE (Kenwick - Minister for Tourism) [8.04 pm]: I move -

That the bill be now read a third time.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [8.04 pm]: I appreciate the opportunity during the third reading debate to set the record straight on this bill. As members would be aware, during debate last week and in comments to the press, the minister went from saying that the settlement area would be 500 hectares to saying that it would be 300 hectares, and then today in Parliament she said it would be 207 hectares, which very much accords with the last "Rottnest Island Management Plan 2003 to 2008", which I read last week and which sets out roughly 200 hectares. There has been some confusion in the house about just how much land was being grabbed for development by this government. The minister said at one point last week that it would be 50 hectares. It was then 40 hectares. I think today the minister said that it was 37 hectares and a minimal change. Section 14 of the Rottnest Island Authority Act 1987 provides for the settlement and reads -

(1) The Authority -

(a) shall not provide any living accommodation on the island except in the settlement area;

This government has now increased the size of the settlement area by 37 hectares, which is the equivalent of 18-and-a-half Subiaco Ovals. The minister said last week that this would be a minimal change. What a joke! The 37 hectares of land can now be developed, yet the minister says the change is minimal. As I said today, the minister should be apologising to Parliament because she misled Parliament when she said that it was a minimal area that could be developed. She misled Parliament on the amount of land that could be developed. I just want to quote from *Hansard* of Thursday, 22 October 1987. Mrs Beggs, member for Whitford, who was then Minister for Tourism, said -

A settlement area is defined that is to contain all the accommodation of the island. No accommodation will be provided beyond the line defined between Geordie Bay and Kingstown Barracks except for Rottnest Island Authority staff where needed for work purposes.

That part of the act has not changed. However, what has changed is that this settlement area now has an additional 37 hectares. This was not a minor change to the act; it was a big change to the map of Rottnest Island. The minister misled Parliament on that. Then today she added to that when the member for Nedlands asked the minister whether the change in the settlement area was a recommendation in the Auditor General's report. I believe that is what the member for Nedlands asked the minister.

Ms S.E. Walker: Yes, it was.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I thank the member for Nedlands for confirming that. The minister said no, that it was not from the Auditor General's report but from the Rottnest Island Taskforce recommendations. At question time today I asked the minister which recommendation it was. I have spoken to a member of that task force and have sent messages to other members of that task force to ask them. After the minister made that statement, I looked carefully at the recommendations of the task force. The minister said today that it was recommendation 60 and it was recommendation 61.

Ms S.E. Walker: Was she telling the truth?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I will read recommendation 60. When I read this recommendation, maybe you, member for Nedlands, can point out what the minister is referring to as the settlement area.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): The member will speak to the Chair.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Through the Chair -

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas interjected.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: The member for Carine should keep out of this because she has sold the community short.

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: Is that right?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, member for Carine!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Recommendation 60 reads -

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Responsibility for the management of the A Class Reserve in Rottnest Island (west of the Settlement area) be transferred in a staged approach to the Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM).

Ms S.E. Walker: Is that recommendation 60?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Yes, that was recommendation 60. Mr Acting Speaker, maybe I could ask you: where does that say anything about increasing that area by 37 hectares?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member, you cannot ask the Chair a question.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Mr Acting Speaker, I did not hear your comment but I am sure you were saying to me that you could not answer that question. I do not think anyone can answer that question, because the recommendation says nothing at all about increasing the settlement area by 37 hectares. Then I thought I would look at recommendation 61. It states -

The Government proclaims the A Class Reserve on Rottnest Island (west of the Settlement area) a National Park in recognition of its status as an environmental icon.

Again, where does it say that the settlement area will be increased by 37 hectares? There is nothing in that recommendation that says the settlement area will be increased by 37 hectares. Not only did the minister mislead Parliament on several occasions last week about the size of that settlement area, but she also mislead Parliament again today. She told us in this house today that the recommendation to increase the size of the settlement area came from recommendations 60 and 61 of the Rottnest Island Taskforce. I will go back to this issue, because it is why I called a division for the second reading last week and why I will divide again at the end of the third reading stage. We currently have a Rottnest Island Authority. I have already mentioned who is on the authority at the moment. It is made up of one person who, in the opinion of the minister, has practical knowledge of and experience in the conservation of the environment; one person who, in the opinion of the minister, has practical knowledge of and experience in the preservation of buildings of historic value; one member who, in the opinion of the minister, is a person of sound commercial experience; and one person who, in the opinion of the minister, is a regular user of the island for recreational purposes. I pointed out last week that that was -

Mr R.F. Johnson: Who would that be?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Hon Peter Dowding.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Who's he?

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Hillarys!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: We said that we saw that appointment as a job for the boys. The minister said, "This isn't a job for the boys. He has a legal background and he knows about boating." In relation to changes to the membership of the authority, the minister said that she wanted to be able to appoint people with wide expertise. The way the bill is drafted at the moment, we know that there is someone on that authority who cares about conservation and someone who cares about the preservation of historic buildings. We now have an authority that will be made up of people from within the boys' network -

Mr R.F. Johnson: And girls.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: Yes, maybe with the minister in charge, it might be made up of girls from the girls' network. It will not be made up of people who have expertise in the designated areas. Those people are appointed under the act. People accept the act the way it is. They can now plan additional living accommodation in the settlement area. It does not come back to the minister. It does not come back to us.

This bill may go through tonight because the member for Carine, the opposition spokesperson on this bill, said that she supports this bill. I think it will go through, with possibly a lone voice up the front saying she will not support this bill.

Mr R.F. Johnson: Who would that be?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: That would be me just for a change. If this bill is passed, it will mean that this minister has misled the Parliament. I hope that her department has not informed her adequately about the consequence of this bill. I hope that when she gives her speech on the third reading, she will give an assurance -

Ms S.E. Walker interjected.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I thank the member for Nedlands for agreeing to abstain on this because it is a very serious bill. I hope that when the minister makes her speech on the third reading, she will say that she was not previously aware of the ramifications of this bill. The bill refers to the limit on the settlement area being, instead

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of 200 hectares, more than 237 hectares that the authority can play with for living accommodation. I know that the minister thinks that she has power outside this Parliament to approve developments, but she does not. Section 14(1)(b) of the Act gives the minister the ability to give approval for developments outside the settlement. These could be developments such as toilets, shops, car parks or boating facilities. She does not have the ability to ignore section 14(1)(a), which relates to living accommodation.

If this bill goes through in its current format, it will go through with no consultation from the government. We repeatedly hear how this government goes out and consults. How many people in the community knew that this bill would increase the land available to the Rottneest Island Authority by 37 hectares for accommodation purposes? No consultation occurred. The minister is saying that the government is bringing all the heritage in together to preserve the heritage. We know what this government thinks about heritage. Many members know my history on heritage matters, including Duncraig House, the Raffles and Wireless Hill Park. We will not go over those battles again; we will stick with this bill that is before us.

Several members interjected.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills; member for Nedlands! Ladies, we have a lady standing in the house trying to speak and we have two ladies on both sides of the house trying to have their own conversations. If they want to have them, they can go outside.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: It will be a very sad day for this Parliament if this bill is passed. Government members have sat in this place and listened to the debate. They would appreciate the fact that the minister has been untruthful in this house.

Ms J.A. Radisich: No, she hasn't.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: She has misled this house. She has said that this is a minor amendment. We are talking about almost 20 per cent of the current settlement area, an additional 37 hectares. When she was asked where the recommendation came from, she said it came from the task force. I have spoken to a member of the task force.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): The member for Alfred Cove has mentioned this point about five times; she is repeating herself over and over. I ask the member to get on with what she wants to say, as she is repeating herself on one topic.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I thank you and I am sorry that you, Mr Acting Speaker, think it is tedious.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I did not say it was tedious; I said that the member was repeating herself.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I have repeated myself because on several occasions during debate on this bill different figures have been given on how much land will be in the settlement area and untrue statements have been made about why this bill has been put on the table. As I said, I have not yet been able to contact Mr Allan, the chairman of the task force that produced the report. I sent him an email, and I daresay that the minister will send one off to him now asking whether he can give her any support. However, I did manage to get hold of Mr John Schaap and explained to him what was going on. I asked him whether he recalled a recommendation that said anything about increasing the settlement area and he said no. In fact I sent him a copy of the recommendations. I also sent Mr Alex Allen a copy of the recommendations from the task force so that I could get his comments.

I believe that the minister has either been ill-informed by members of her department or - if she is not willing to accept that she has been ill-informed - she has lied to this Parliament. If that is the case, she should be stood down from her position as minister because what has been said about this bill is blatantly untrue.

Withdrawal of Remark

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Alfred Cove said that the minister has lied to the Parliament. That is unparliamentary and I ask the member for Alfred Cove to withdraw that remark.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I withdraw that remark and I will choose my words very carefully if we are not allowed to say that someone has lied. I believe I can say that the minister has been untruthful.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Alfred Cove should just go on from where she was. She has made an apology and said that the minister did not lie. Saying that she has been untruthful is the same thing. The member should get on with what she is saying without getting into further trouble.

Debate Resumed

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: In that case I will not talk about an individual member. I will say that the rationale for this bill that the government has put on the table is untrue. There has been no consultation with the community on the bill. Many people in the community value the Rottneest Island experience. Each of my children has learnt

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to cycle on Rottnest Island. We as a family have gone to Rottnest Island several times a year for most years. I have spoken not only with adults and members of the Rottnest Society, but also with children about this bill. I have asked them whether they want a lot more development on Rottnest Island and their response has been no, they like Rottnest Island the way it is now. People accept that there will be another hotel there. However, this bill will increase the size of the settlement area and will allow for accommodation development to occur over which the government or the minister will have no say. The Rottnest Island Authority will comprise people appointed by the government, who I daresay will be various union representatives and various “yes” people. The agenda for what happens on Rottnest Island will be the government’s agenda, but it will be hidden behind a few “yes” people, and those front people will choose the management plan and potentially permit a high-rise development at Kingstown Barracks or whatever other living accommodation they might want to build there.

There was no mention during the briefing on this bill about an increase in the size of the settlement area. It was fortunate that I was given a map of the island that showed the changes to the settlement area. I was able to sit down with the Rottnest group and look at the former settlement area and the area that is now shown on the map as the new settlement area. We were then able to see the large section of bushland there. The minister said that there was a cricket pitch and a few guns there. However, they are protected anyway on the conservation reserve. No-one will do any harm to them on the conservation reserve. Again it was another furphy and an absolute nonsense that the settlement area will be extended to include the cricket pitch and a few guns. The extensions in this bill will leave the door wide open for development on those 37 hectares. Although this bill may go through this house tonight, I hope there will be a lot more debate on the bill. I hope that the community, which is now aware of the government’s agenda, will rally and let the government know what it thinks about this bill. I hope that if this bill passes through Parliament, the minister will lose her seat at the next election, because the way in which this bill has been put to this house by the government is dishonest. I therefore believe that an apology is owed to this house and I will not be supporting this bill.

MS K. HODSON-THOMAS (Carine) [8.27 pm]: I said during my contribution to the second reading debate that the opposition supported the Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill 2007. I indicated to the house that much of what emanated from the bill came as a consequence of the 103 recommendations made by the task force. Not all of those recommendations were taken up by the government; I actually stated that in my speech during the second reading debate. In fact, I made the point in my speech that I thought one good recommendation that the minister and her agency did not take up was a takeover of the management of the conservation reserve by our peak agency, the Department of Environment and Conservation. I state again that, in my view, that was a retrograde step. However, the government makes a determination about the legislation it brings into this place.

I heard the member for Alfred Cove say that this bill represents a land grab. I listened intently to the briefing that was provided to me. I also listened to the minister’s comments in the chamber during consideration in detail that the barracks were to be included in the settlement area; that they formed part of the settlement area; that they are heritage listed; and that there is no intention to allow development of the site. I like to think that when members of this place state things they are genuinely committed to them. Both the government and the opposition have a responsibility to tell the truth in this place. We are all accountable for what we say here, and I think that the minister gave a genuine commitment when she said that the barracks were being taken into the settlement area to recognise them as part of that heritage and to actually recognise the land that is now to be the Wadjemup reserve, in recognition of its Indigenous heritage. I think that that is very important and I thought that on my side of this house we were committed to recognising that. I, for one, said in here that I believe we can allow some development to take place on Rottnest Island in a way that we do not lose its ethos, history and heritage, but provide opportunities for people who are not necessarily Western Australians to visit the island. Often in this place we can create hysteria. I do not want to create hysteria. I am genuinely committed to ensuring that Rottnest Island is protected. At the same time, we can develop it to keep it as a tourist destination. That is possible and that can be realised.

I wanted to make those comments because I get the impression from the member for Alfred Cove that she thinks that somehow I have no interest in conserving the island. I do; I think it has some great -

Dr J.M. Woollard interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Look, I understand what the member for Alfred Cove is trying to suggest, but it is actually part of the settlement area.

Dr J.M. Woollard interjected.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: The member can come in here and make all the allegations she likes; all of them -

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Dr J.M. Woollard: And I can go home and sleep at night, too.

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: And so can I!

Dr J.M. Woollard: Can you really?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: I can. Did the member not listen to me? I actually said to the minister that there are 103 recommendations. Not all of them have been taken up.

Dr J.M. Woollard: Which one? Maybe the member can point out which one of the recommendations says to increase the settlement area by 37 hectares?

Ms K. HODSON-THOMAS: Member for Alfred Cove, which recommendation says that the Rottneest Island Authority should be in charge of the Wadjemup Conservation Reserve? The report does not say that at all. In fact, it says that it should go to the Department of Environment and Conservation. The member for Alfred Cove can make all of the allegations she likes. She can suggest that I am in some kind of conspiracy, but I suggest that during consideration in detail, the minister gave a commitment to this house that that heritage precinct would be protected and that it would not be developed.

MR R.C. KUCERA (Yokine) [8.33 pm]: I just want to speak for a few moments while I can because the Rottneest Island Authority Amendment Bill 2007 is the culmination of recommendations that were brought forward by the Rottneest Island Taskforce. I also want to express my appreciation to Alex Allan, John Schaap, Tim Sharp, Paolo Amaranti, Pat Barblett and others who were part of the task force deliberations. If we remember, it came about because of an Auditor General's report that recommended that unless, I think, pretty close to \$170 million was spent on the island, the island would virtually cease to be a tourist destination altogether. As it has turned out, that was not the case and the task force came up with a very carefully considered and deliberated report that has now put the island back on a sound footing. The island still has some way to go in terms of its financial return, but I believe that in the next decade we will see it come out of the morass that it was in at the time the Auditor General put his report together.

I will comment very quickly on the debate about the settlement area that has gone on in this place over the past few sittings. I met with the task force on a regular basis and I know it had some difficulties in deciding how to define the conservation area and deal with those degraded areas that surround the army camp. At that time, the army camp was not part of either the settlement area or the conservation area. Conserving a heritage army camp area with degraded surrounds, which include the tracks and runways down to the gun emplacements etc, is a very different proposition from preserving a conservation area in which the principal role is to reintroduce the flora and fauna that existed when the island was originally settled by Europeans. It is a very different role. The idea behind declaring the Wadjemup Conservation Reserve area was to declare a conservation area and honour the Aboriginal people who died on that island, and the Aboriginal people whose artefacts are now found to go back almost 40 000 years, when the island was still part of a land bridge. There was no conspiracy to try to rename the island or do anything unusual. It was simply a decision to reflect the Aboriginal history of the island. The conservation of that area is very different from the conservation of the degraded area that the army has occupied for many years. The simplest way of dealing with that was to bring that parcel of army land into the settlement area. I might also say that the minister is quite right, as indeed is the member for Carine: it is a heritage area and all hell would break loose if any development proposals were put up by any government, let alone our government -

Ms S.E. Walker: Well, what about Sunset?

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, member for Nedlands!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Rottneest Island is a very different proposition to other parts of the state; it is very emotive. I am passionately involved with the island. I declare an interest: I share a mooring on the island with four other people, so I might say I have an interest in that regard.

The reason I got to my feet is that I have listened to all this nonsense that has gone on over the past few days and I was particularly incensed when I saw that article in *The West Australian*, because it is pure nonsense. It does not give due recourse to people like Pat Barblett, who has as much of a history with that island as anybody I know, even back in the times to when I was a young copper on the island, in 1967 or 1968. It is a place of very special significance for the people of Western Australia.

I commend the minister for bringing this bill to the house. It is a very minor amendment but it at long last sets down the areas of the island that need to be preserved. I heard nonsense talk about a hotel out of Geordie Bay. For goodness sake, it is being built on what was about 15 acres of bitumen; a bitumen water reclamation area, which because of the desalination plant and the windmills and everything that we have put in to desalinate water, is no longer required. That degraded piece of land will now become a world-class resort. I agree with the

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member for Carine that there are many international visitors who like to stay overnight but who will not stay in the kinds of accommodation that we see as very special on Rottnest. I commend the member for Carine; she has at least taken the time to go to the island and be part of the process, rather than sit here and carp about a bicycle holiday she had 15 years ago. This is about actually being part of the process of making sure that our icon is preserved for all Western Australians. It is not about nitpicking; it is not about lack of trust. This minister has gone ahead and put the matter on the record in relation to the settlement area. She has made those commitments, and I am willing to trust her. I know that that is the way it will be. I might say that I am not sure that I will trust future Liberal governments in that regard. However, at the end of the day, this is a good, sensible bill. I am pleased that it is supported by the opposition. It is the culmination of an excellent report that the task force brought together. I must say that in my time as minister, the proudest thing that I did was to put that on an even footing to make sure that the place that I love, which is my second home, will be preserved for future Western Australians.

MS S.E. WALKER (Nedlands) [8.39 pm]: That is that: I will be voting against the bill after that last speech. Far out! There is a lot of hot air in this place and I think that the member for Yokine produces some of it when he talks about heritage while his government is selling off the Sunset hospital site.

Mr R.C. Kucera interjected.

Ms S.E. WALKER: The government is selling off the Sunset site.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Member for Nedlands, we are not talking about the Sunset hospital site; we are talking about Rottnest Island.

Ms S.E. WALKER: We are talking about the Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill 2007 and we are debating what the member for Yokine just said about the government's splendid track record on preserving heritage. I am raising the issue of Sunset, and saying that they want to -

Point of Order

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: Point of order, Mr Acting Speaker.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): Order, member for Nedlands! I have said that we are not talking about Sunset. I call the member to order for the second time.

Debate Resumed

Ms S.E. WALKER: I am saying that this government is trying to make out that it is looking after Rottnest Island, yet it is not looking after Sunset.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Nedlands to order for the third time.

Ms S.E. WALKER: You cannot stop me debating in this house, Mr Acting Speaker.

Mr J.C. Kobelke: It is the third reading. You cannot have a general debate.

Ms S.E. WALKER: I have said before -

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nedlands cannot have a general debate on the third reading. The member needs to speak to the bill.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. I do not recall the member for Yokine speaking on the second reading of the bill.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Is the member questioning my ruling?

Ms S.E. WALKER: I am not questioning your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker. I am just concerned that I may not be able to say what I want to say on the Rottnest Island Authority Bill. During the second reading debate, I referred to the Auditor General's performance report on the business sustainability of the Rottnest Island Authority. I think that was at a time when the member for Yokine was the Minister for Tourism. The Auditor General said that poor financial performance is constraining the Rottnest Island Authority's economic performance. The Auditor General said in relation to the Rottnest Island Authority's environmental performance that the RIA is becoming reactive rather than proactive in managing adverse impacts on the environment, that progress to repair past environmental mistakes is slow, and that research into strategies to prevent environmental damage is being delayed. I referred also to page 44 of that report, at which the Auditor General stated that repairing the environment has been a legislative responsibility of the RIA since 1987. He said also that the Rottnest Island Authority is charged with managing the flora and fauna of Rottnest Island.

The Liberal Party is supporting this bill. However, I think that at this stage I will abstain from supporting this bill. I have listened to the second reading debate. I am a bit disappointed with members in this place. The member for Alfred Cove stands alone in this place. She alone has the guts and the courage to stand up and say

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what she believes. The sniggering that we get from members is a poor reflection on members of Parliament. It reminds me of Winston Churchill, who warned the Westminster Parliament for eight years about Hitler and the defence armaments that were required, and everyone sniggered at him - until Hitler arrived! It is a matter of respecting each other's opinion. Members pick on one person because that person is alone. That is why they do it. It is a poor reflection on members opposite that they sit there and snigger but never get up to make a speech. Members opposite are in the headlines only when they are doing something crooked.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Member for Nedlands, please talk about the third reading of the bill.

Ms S.E. WALKER: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker.

I have concerns about this bill. I will have a good look at this bill when it comes back from the other house, and I will speak to members of my community about it, because the things that the minister said during consideration in detail were not entirely accurate. I want to see whether the Minister for Tourism will be able under this bill to hand to the Rottnest Island Authority the power that she is given under the Land Administration Act to veto things that take place in the settlement area, or any other area on Rottnest Island. I do not have any issues with the development at this stage, but I do not know. I did an analysis of the bills that I handle in this house. I handle about one-third of the government bills that come into this house. Therefore, I cannot be across every bill. Rottnest Island is a Western Australian treasure. A lot of people in my electorate are very fond of Rottnest Island. This is an important bill. Time and again, bills go through this house when not much thought has been given to them, and they have a profound effect on people's lives. I am not saying this Rottnest Island bill will have a profound effect on people's lives. However, Rottnest is a wonderful island. It is a shame that members on the other side are gagged and cannot get up and speak as I can in the Liberal Party. I do not think the public understands what is happening with Rottnest Island. I certainly have not understood what is happening with the island. The way the minister has hedged questions in this debate on important areas in this bill has caused me to want to have a further think about this bill. I will be perfectly entitled, as a member of the Liberal Party, to vote against the bill when it comes back from the Legislative Council. I am not saying I will do that, and I will certainly inform my party room if that is what I do decide to do. However, at this stage, I will abstain from voting in support of this bill. That has nothing to do with the presentation by the member for Carine. I thought she spoke very well on this subject. Those are my thoughts on the bill.

DR S.C. THOMAS (Capel) [8.45 pm]: I do not intend to take a lot of time on the Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill. I was in the chair during some of the consideration in detail debate. I am not seeking to introduce new material. However, I would like to provide some clarification on the issue of conservation reserve. I believe we struggled with that matter during consideration in detail. "Conservation reserve" is a generic term that relates to all of the conservation estate. As members would be aware, the term "conservation estate" is not necessarily defined in an act. Conservation reserve is a generic term that refers to a collective group - a bit like a parliament of owls, as it were. The reserves on Rottnest Island are part of the conservation estate and are listed as an A-class reserve. I want to put that on the record so that members who may be confused about the definition of conservation reserve will have their confusion remedied.

Mr R.C. Kucera: It depends on the nature of certain parts of the island.

Dr S.C. THOMAS: That is right. These reserves are part of the conservation estate in its various forms. Members are right. There is not actually a definition that is listed in an act. It is simply a generic term. The government might like to remedy that shortcoming by putting in a definition of "conservation reserve". However, I have always considered it to be just a generic term.

The issue of development based on environmental outcomes is very dear to my heart as well. I am always concerned about debates that try to limit or divide the two completely. In this particular circumstance, we are talking about a development that may deliver a good environmental outcome. Whether a development delivers a good environmental outcome depends upon the way it is delivered. I am not one to say we should not have development because it may have an adverse environmental outcome. I think I have said that in a number of forums now. I would like some good environmental outcomes to be delivered from what has been proposed so far. If the government manages to do that, well and good. I am sure that if this side of the house were in government, we would deliver good environmental outcomes in any development that took place on Rottnest Island. I have no doubt that we could manage that. We will be holding the government to account to see whether it can deliver good environmental outcomes. The government can expect us to be on its hammer completely during that process. I expect that the member for Carine will be fulfilling that role over the next 12 months. That is where I would like the government to go.

MS S.M. McHALE (Kenwick - Minister for Tourism) [8.48 pm]: I thank the opposition for its support of the Rottnest Island Authority Amendment Bill. This is a good bill. I am glad that the member for Carine informed herself so assiduously on this bill and was able to go through the bill in considerable detail, including the details

Ms Sheila McHale; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Bob Kucera; Ms Sue Walker; Dr Steve Thomas; Mr Tony McRae

about the settlement. I acknowledge the efforts made by the member for Carine, and other members, in the debate on this bill.

In response to the comments of the member for Alfred Cove, once again I will try to reaffirm for the member that essentially what she has been doing over the past few days is setting up a straw man. There is no argument about development. I have said on numerous occasions, both publicly and in this house, that the majority of the extension into the settlement is already heritage land. It is military heritage land and comprises, for instance, a cricket pitch that probably takes up the size of an oval, the sergeant's mess, and the gun emplacements. Part of that heritage precinct is within the settlement area, and part of it is outside the settlement area. It makes sense to put the whole of the heritage precinct within the settlement area, and that is what we have done.

In consideration in detail, I explained why the government did not proceed with the then Department of Conservation and Land Management - now the Department of Environment and Conservation - being responsible. The opposition, through the member for Carine, has acknowledged that. We wish to avoid duplication and increasing complexity of management of the island.

The member for Alfred Cove has chosen, in my view, to ignore the fact that any action of the authority in managing the island must be in accordance with the management plan. That is in section 17 of the legislation. Therefore, I refer members to section 17 of the act, which sets out the responsibilities of the authority to control and manage the island in accordance with the management plan. Therefore, any development that may occur in the settlement area must be in accordance with the management plan.

Finally, the composition of the authority is being changed to ensure that we secure the broadest and the best expertise for the island. It is interesting that the notion of jobs for the boys has come up. However, I remind all members that we wish to use the expertise of people from both sides of Parliament. If we took a very narrow and prescriptive view, we would not have used the expertise of the likes of Cheryl Edwardes, Hendy Cowan, Richard Court, Barry MacKinnon and others who were not in Parliament. I have already talked about Laurie O'Meara, Kate Lamont, Monty House, Judyth Watson and, yes, Peter Dowding, who was a Premier of the state and who I would have thought would have -

Mr M.J. Birney interjected.

Ms S.M. McHALE: I would have thought that Peter Dowding would have the skills required. On a lighter note, the member for Kalgoorlie has just chirped up. Previously, he asked me to give him information on the key species. Is the member for Kalgoorlie listening, because I think this is very relevant? He asked me to give him the key species, so I will tell him that there are, of course, quokkas, peacocks and pheasants. In terms of heritage trees, we have Moreton Bay figs and olive trees. I thought the member might find this particularly interesting: in terms of the frogs and the reptiles, we have barking frogs, moaning frogs and burrowing frogs. There is also the Rottnest bobtail skink, which is distinct from the king's skink. There are a range of stilts and a range of ospreys. In flora, there is the Rottnest Island daisy, the Rottnest Island pine, the tea-tree, the pink fairy orchid and the pigface. Therefore, in ensuring that I responded to the member for Kalgoorlie's request for detailed information on the flora and fauna, there we go.

I thank the opposition once again for its support. I say to the member for Alfred Cove that she has been labouring to construct a straw man. I can assure her that we have absolutely no plans - this is not a land grab - to develop, and I leave it at that. I commend the bill to the house.

Question put and a division called for.

Bells rung and the house divided.

Point of Order

Mr A.D. McRAE: The member for Nedlands is attempting to leave the chamber while the bells are ringing.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr P.B. Watson): She can do.

Division Resumed

The division resulted as follows -

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 4 September 2007]
p4756b-4764a

Ms Sheila McHale; Dr Janet Woollard; Acting Speaker; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr Bob Kucera; Ms Sue Walker; Dr Steve Thomas; Mr Tony McRae

Ayes (43)

Mr P.W. Andrews
Mr C.J. Barnett
Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan
Mr M.J. Birney
Mr T.R. Buswell
Mr G.M. Castrilli
Dr E. Constable
Mr M.J. Cowper
Mr J.H.D. Day
Dr J.M. Edwards
Mr B.J. Grylls

Mrs D.J. Guise
Ms K. Hodson-Thomas
Mrs J. Hughes
Mr J.N. Hyde
Dr G.G. Jacobs
Mr R.F. Johnson
Mr J.C. Kobelke
Mr R.C. Kucera
Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan
Mr J.A. McGinty
Mr M. McGowan

Ms S.M. McHale
Mr A.D. McRae
Mrs C.A. Martin
Mr M.P. Murray
Mr P. Papalia
Mr J.R. Quigley
Ms M.M. Quirk
Ms J.A. Radisich
Mr D.T. Redman
Mr E.S. Ripper
Mrs M.H. Roberts

Mr A.J. Simpson
Mr G. Snook
Mr T.R. Sprigg
Mr T.G. Stephens
Mr D.A. Templeman
Dr S.C. Thomas
Mr T.K. Waldron
Mr M.P. Whitely
Mr B.S. Wyatt
Mr S.R. Hill (*Teller*)

Noes (1)

Dr J.M. Woollard (*Teller*)

Pairs

Mr F.M. Logan
Mr A.J. Carpenter
Mr A.P. O'Gorman

Mr P.D. Omodei
Mr J.E. McGrath
Dr K.D. Hames

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the council.