

## ZOOLOGICAL PARKS AUTHORITY BILL 2000

### *Second Reading*

Resumed from 29 March.

**DR EDWARDS** (Maylands) [12.09 pm]: The Opposition supports this Bill because it recognises the modernised operations of the Perth Zoo and legitimises what is going on at the Zoo. The Opposition has one reservation that concerns competition for the scarce corporate dollars. I will comment on the Bill and the Zoo, and then move on to the concerns I have. Nevertheless, the Opposition supports the Bill and will not seek to amend it.

Perth Zoo is nearly 102 years old. It is probably one of the few institutions in the State that has been open every day of its existence, which is a remarkable tribute to the people who have worked there over the years. The Zoological Gardens Act was first enacted in 1898 to cover the needs of the day. It was modernised in 1972. It had become apparent in the past five years or so that the Act needed modernisation to reflect the Zoo's operations. As the minister said, this Bill modernises the definition of zoo. It reflects the whole range of activities at the Zoo - financial, business, sponsorship, research, conservation, and marketing activities, which have contributed to the Perth Zoo's fine record. An entity that has impressed me when I have visited the Zoo - I have visited on a number of occasions and had a number of briefings - is the Marsupial Cooperative Research Centre. The Perth Zoo is a fine example of how zoos have changed over the past century. It has gone from a place to which people go to ooh and aah at exotic animals to a place that is recognised for its research and conservation efforts. The people at the Zoo can be proud of the number of exhibits that still exist for the member for Cottesloe and others to ooh and aah over. In addition to that, and probably more importantly, the Zoo has an international reputation for the work it is doing in the important area of research. Throughout two world wars, the Great Depression and various stages in history, people have visited the Zoo every day for 102 years. Part of the Zoo's patronage comes from people who make return visits and bring their children, grandchildren and overseas and country visitors. The Zoo has a proud record. The Zoo can also be proud of its tourism record. In 1998 and in 1999 it received an award for the best major tourist attraction in Western Australia. It is certainly doing its job.

I will concentrate on its conservation work and one factor that identifies the great work that is being done. In conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Land Management, the Zoo has released back into the wild more than 170 Zoo-bred threatened animal species. It is important that the work is undertaken in conjunction with CALM, because CALM clears the area into which the animals are placed so that no other predators will gobble them up. In recent times numbats, dibblers - tiny animals I had never seen until I visited the CRC at the Zoo - and the now quite famous Shark Bay mouse have been reintroduced into their natural habitat. The Zoo has made good links with other conservation agencies to advance the work that is being done in Western Australia. While the Zoo's conservation and research efforts focus on native animals, it has not ignored its global responsibilities to help maintain genetic diversity throughout the world. This is important when one considers the habitats that are under threat. Western Australians believe that flora and fauna losses result from salinity problems, in particular. Those losses will continue until that problem is resolved. However, pressures in other parts of the world - such as the clearing of rain forests, climate change and over-population - are placing many species under threat. The Perth Zoo also plays a role in that global sense. For example, a golden lion tamarin was brought to Perth from the Adelaide Zoo. It also has a Sumatran tiger that graced the cover of its annual report a few years ago.

I was concerned to read in the Zoo's annual report about an incident in November 1998 which involved African hunting dogs under the Zoo's care. They died after they were fed meat that had been inadvertently poisoned. That demonstrated the complexity of the activities at the Zoo. The meat fed to those animals contained barbiturates. It transpired that the animal that had been fed to the dogs had been killed in an inappropriate manner, and some of the checks and balances about food quality had broken down. Since then I have had discussions with the Health Department, and I raised this issue in the estimates hearings. I heard some of the evidence to the inquiry that followed and the safeguards that are now in place to ensure animals are not inadvertently poisoned in that way. This demonstrates the complex tasks that have to be done by people working at the Zoo. Not only do they deal with hundreds of thousands of visitors who go there each year to see the rare and exotic animals in their care, and carry out research with native animals, but also they must undertake basic checks on food quality so they do not cause any harm to their animals.

The Zoo's publicity is very good. Everyone will have seen recent television footage and photographs of the Rothschild's giraffe being transported to the eastern States. That created lots of interest in the community, particularly among young people. I was also interested to read in the annual report that about 18 months ago the Zoo was responsible for an RAAF flight that transported horned oryxes from Western Australia to the Western Plains Zoo at Dubbo to help with its breeding program. People who are involved with the Zoo undertake many

complex tasks in the day-to-day activities of the Zoo. As part of that, I understand that the Zoo is involved in 23 postgraduate research projects.

I will turn now to events and marketing. The Zoo holds a huge range and number of functions not only to attract people to the Zoo and its facilities but also to educate the community and to provide a wide range of functions. When I visited the Zoo about five years ago, after not having been there for a long time, I was fascinated by the number of older teenagers who were there. I visited on a number of occasions on a Saturday morning and was amazed to see young people in the 18 to 20 year age group who had decided that going to the Zoo on a Saturday was a highlight for them. It is a tribute to the Zoo's marketing that it attracted that age group, the very young children who are fascinated by the animals, and the seniors who bring their grandchildren. It is a tribute to the Zoo that it has targeted those niche markets. In addition, the Zoo has run twilight concerts. This allow people to look at the animals in the early evening and stay on for a concert. Anyone who saw the dinosaur exhibition will never forget it. I had to run down a path chasing my son telling him they were not real, that they were only plastic and electronic.

Mrs Edwardes: How old was he?

Dr EDWARDS: He was about three years of age. He took off when this huge dinosaur exhibit moved its head and roared. Recently I took a number of my son's small friends to see the penguins. At their age, penguins are the flavour of the month. The penguin exhibit is fascinating. It is really well done and enjoyable. I had to be dragged away from the penguins on that occasion. The Zoo's work could not happen without their docents - their volunteers, of which there are around 300. In the Zoo's centenary year its docents gave nearly 45 000 hours of service. That is a lot of service from a lot of people with a great commitment to the Zoo. I was delighted to hear that entry was free on Father's Day. It was great to see on television the number of fathers and others making use of the Zoo on that day.

The annual report is also interesting because one of the customer indicators is the entry price to the Zoo. People are very satisfied with the entry price, which is important, because if people are satisfied with the price they will visit the Zoo and enjoy the experience. It is a tribute to management that it can keep that price at a reasonable figure to achieve the levels of satisfaction set out in the annual report, varying between a low of 79 per cent up to a high of 88 per cent. That is a very good target.

I will now comment on the botanical state of the Zoo. A number of people I know go to the Zoo to look at the plants and not the animals. The palm collection is a very fine collection. I do not like palms, but members of my family are absolutely addicted to them and they go to the Zoo not to look at the animals but to stare at the palms and wonder at their ages and diversity. These sorts of plants are very important because they provide food for some of the Zoo animals, and there is a marriage between various departments. In my electorate, CALM rangers and students at the John Forrest Senior High School are now growing a type of bamboo around the school grounds, which provides shade to some of the classrooms and is periodically harvested and taken to the Zoo where it is used as food. The Zoo has a lot of what one might call tentacles that go out into the community and result in these high customer satisfaction ratings and high attendance numbers. In fact, in the Zoo's centenary year the attendance was 635 000. The annual report states that the attendance is always up in the 500 000 range but it has grown steadily over the years and continues to grow.

This leads me to one of my concerns about the Bill. In her second reading speech the minister pointed out that the board of the Zoo recognises it is operating in an increasingly competitive environment for what it calls "discretionary leisure expenditure". This is an important point. The Zoo has embarked on a number of different business plans. It has drastically improved its performance. One need only look at how the exhibits have changed over the years to see the improvement. I am aware of improvements made at other levels - for example, how the Zoo is managing the nutrient flows and discharge water on the site. The Zoo has pointed out that part of the reason for the changes outlined in this Bill is to allow it to put the proper procedures in place so that it can compete for what it calls the "discretionary leisure expenditure".

Most of us deal with big, non-government organisations which are sometimes based in our electorates, and we are all aware of the difficulty people have raising money for their organisations. Those in the non-government sector tell us the situation is becoming tighter. For example, it is harder to get the corporate dollar, it remains difficult to get money for charities from other people, and they all feel the competition is very tight. Work has been done under the Charitable Collections Act and we may well see the results of that in the near future. While the Zoo is already out there competing for sponsorship, this legislation will make sure that it does so in a more active mode. I do not know what can be done about that. I have some sympathy with the Zoo. According to the Zoo's business plans, it has obviously recognised that the amount of money it gets from government cannot continue to escalate and the programs and opportunities it wants to present to people all cost money.

A positive side to this is that I believe there will be greater accountability. One of the frustrations we on this side of the House had was that sometimes we were not able to achieve an adequate level of scrutiny of the Zoo,

because various societies and organisations are attached to and raise money for the Zoo. I raise the concern that the sponsorship dollar is tight and many large, non-government, charitable and other organisations are out there in the same environment competing for this dollar and, as people are saying, any dollar donated must be accounted for. It is difficult for everyone to compete in this environment. For example, the Zoo's annual report contains a list of new sponsors and its gold and platinum sponsors. The sponsors include Healthway, Dome Coffees Australia Pty Ltd, Pivet Medical Centre, Alcoa of Australia Ltd, MIX 94.5, AlintaGas, Coca-Cola Amatil, the Water Corporation, Channel 10, the Lotteries Commission and the *Sunday Times*. That is a short list of some of the bigger and newer sponsors. The tribute to sponsors in the annual report is typed in a small font and fills up a very big page. One of the reasons so many people go to the Zoo and are very satisfied with their experience is, in part, attributable to these sponsors, but again the dollars are tight.

I will now put on the record some of the issues the new Bill covers. As the minister said, it will provide the Zoo with a statutory basis to borrow funds externally for development purposes in line with its master plan; it will provide the basis to invest any sponsorship, fundraising money and profits in an appropriate short or long-term manner; and it will provide the basis to enter into business arrangements for profit sharing. There will also be a facility to charge a fee for services provided in connection with the Zoo for particular events. Finally, the Zoo will be able to operate under more than one trading name. I make those points to indicate that although, on the one hand, the Bill will make the Zoo more accountable and will bring it into line with modern practices, on the other hand it will be out in the marketplace competing in a different manner for that tight dollar.

Finally, I welcome the recognition that has been given to the work done with the cooperative research centres and the Bill sets up the framework for the Zoo to compete in further CRCs. I believe the CRC that has been dealing with marsupials has been very successful and the fact that we are seeing the reintroduction of many native animals demonstrates its success. However, CRCs have only a limited lifespan and I am unclear as to what will happen when the current CRC reaches the end of its life. One hopes that a new CRC will emerge, that the work will never be lost and the Zoo will participate in some sort of new CRC. However, it is important that the Zoo has all its proper statutory mechanisms in place so that it can fully participate in new CRCs.

In conclusion, I emphasise that the Zoo plays a valuable role in the community. We all visited the Zoo as children and undoubtedly we now take other children, friends and visitors there. The Zoo's attendance figures of over 600 000 a year indicate that people are speaking with their feet and recognise the Zoo's value. It is a tribute to the Zoo that over the years it has moved away from using dreadful concrete and iron cages to very appropriate and entertaining facilities that hopefully meet the needs of the animals and also those of the general public. The Zoo has also moved into the arena of being a very credible partner in a cooperative research centre. Following the comments I have made which raised one concern we have with this Bill, we are pleased to support it.

**MS WARNOCK** (Perth) [12.29 pm]: Like my colleague, the member for Maylands, I am pleased to support this Bill, which is timely, given the importance of zoos worldwide in the extremely crucial areas of species preservation, breeding and research. It is certainly no secret that zoos in the past, even one as splendid and much praised as our own, had standards of animal care that we would not tolerate today.

I am sure that members will recall seeing bears in small concrete cages walking up and down looking depressed, and poor tethered Tricia, the elephant. That was a disgrace, but it was fairly typical of the way zoos ran at that time. Mercifully, those days have gone and the standard of keeping animals in zoos generally has improved out of sight. This Bill recognises those changes and the need to update legislation relating to Perth Zoo and its new role. It is a wonderful organisation. It has been open daily, 365 days of the year, for more than a century. Vast numbers of people visit the Zoo - it received some 600 000 visitors last year. It is visited by not only tourists but also several generations of Western Australians. I am sure that all members went there as children and took train rides. In the era I went there as a child, we probably even had elephant rides too. Since then members have probably taken their children as visitors.

These days the Perth Zoo is remarkable not only for the beauty of its garden-style grounds, which are admired worldwide, but also because many species of animals now live there in rain forests, grasslands or open plains which are appropriate to their place of origin. It must be more fun being an animal in the Perth Zoo today than it was many years ago, insofar as human beings are able to tell. Even the lonely rhino Memphis now has a companion. I have not checked lately on how the relationship is going; all I can say is, good luck to them both. More seriously, it is well known that zoos now play a vital part in preserving threatened species from throughout the world through breeding programs. We should never minimise that important role that the Perth Zoo plays. Like many Western Australians, both ordinary citizens and scientists, I have been extraordinarily impressed with the success of conservation efforts for animals such as the orang-outangs, bilbies, chuditches, numbats and dibblers from Western Australia and of course the famous western swamp tortoises which are found nowhere else in the world and have been virtually rescued from extinction.

It is chilling for animal lovers and conservationists like myself to constantly read about destroyed habitats and recently extinct species. We human beings have a very bad record of destroying species. The extinction of the Tasmania tiger is almost nauseating to contemplate. It is a tremendously sad story for animal lovers which should act as a warning to all of us if we think we can be casual about how we treat our fellow creatures. It would be nice to think that this type of thing no longer happens, just as it would be nice to think that human beings had stopped fighting each other over territory or religion. Alas, however, species are still under threat and millions of hectares of their habitat are destroyed every year. The chilling rate of destruction of habitats in places like Indonesia and South America means that every rare species that dwells in those various forests also is under threat. I am beginning to sound like a member for the Greens. I describe myself as a greenie and I have great concern about the way we treat not only each other, but also the planet.

The conservation and preservation of species, the breeding programs and the research conducted by the Perth Zoo is vital. For a number of years, under various directors, the Zoo has changed direction, improved its performance and gone from strength to strength. I should declare an interest in a manner of speaking. I am a Friend of Perth Zoo, just as I am a Friend of Kings Park, and I sponsor a chuditch and a hairy-nosed wombat. I help pay for their keep through a program which is largely directed at school children, but I cannot see why adults should not do the same thing.

Dr Edwards: Have you named it?

Ms WARNOCK: Yes, I have, but I will not disclose their names, as they are too embarrassing. I would rather not discuss the hairy-nosed wombat any further. It was an anniversary present to my husband and the certificate hangs on the wall of our kitchen. We both enthusiastically and vigorously support the hairy-nosed wombat. I applaud the attempts of the Zoo to raise funds in this way. I emphasise that I also believe that all Governments of whatever political colour should continue to support Perth Zoo because of its vital place in the Western Australian community, its value as a conservation and preservation laboratory and its value as a tourist attraction. It is a high-quality zoo. I have visited a number of zoos in a number of places in the world. Insofar as a human can say this, I would rather be an animal in the Perth Zoo than I would in most of the other zoos I have visited throughout the world. I applaud the work of the Perth Zoo and everyone who works in it for the tremendous work they have done over the years in their various fields. I am pleased to support this Bill, as is the Opposition.

**MS McHALE** (Thornlie) [12.36 pm]: I assure members that I did not deliberately dress for this Bill! Heaven forbid how I would have dressed for the prostitution Bill! I assure members that I am not dressing according to whichever Bill is before the House.

I will make a few remarks about this Bill. It is clear from the comments of my colleagues, the members for Maylands and Perth, that the Opposition supports this Bill. I will reflect on the history of the legislation which has underpinned the incredibly popular Perth Zoo. I remember that when I came to Perth in 1978 as a young British migrant, my first visit anywhere in Perth was to the Zoo. I remember two things: First, getting absolutely sunburnt because it was a hot February day, when I caught the ferry to the Zoo. Secondly, I recall being struck by the archaic condition in which many of the animals were living. It was not a pleasant visit to the Zoo. I was expecting to see something which reflected the Australian fauna but what I saw, even in 1978, was many of the animals in concrete cages. I felt that the Zoo had a long way to go. However, 20 years on, I am pleased to see that the Zoo has come an enormous way. It is now renowned as a centre of learning and excellence. It has evolved over its 102 years of existence.

I remind people of that journey. The first Act that governed the Zoo was enacted on 28 October 1898. The Zoo, as we know, has celebrated its centenary. It is interesting to consider the intentions of the first piece of legislation to show how it evolved, although perhaps not as quickly as the animals would have liked. In those days the Zoo was a centre for a public resort and recreation. An acclimatisation committee was formed in 1896. In those days our Zoo was not seen as an educational centre or as a centre which protected our endangered species; it was a resort and a centre of recreation. One gets the impression that the animals were there for the humans' entertainment, not for the sake of the animals per se. Throughout the early 1900s it was clear that that was the direction the Zoo was taking. In 1972 when the Act was repealed and a new Act was introduced, there appeared to be a change in emphasis of the Zoo. The Zoo was very much becoming a centre for education and research. The Labor Government introduced the Bill in 1972. It was then beginning to be realised that the Zoo's potential as an educational resource was considerable. At the time it was said -

... whilst in the field of conservation it has engendered an interest in endangered fauna and has also furthered the propagation of rare species in captivity. The short-necked tortoise, for instance, is an interesting example of the work carried out in this regard.

In 1972 we were already understanding the need to preserve our endangered species. Unfortunately, species were being endangered and we were losing much of our natural fauna and flora. The Zoo was playing a much

more central role in the preservation of our endangered species. Although it is distressing to accept that some species are endangered, the Zoo was playing much more of a role in the preservation of our endangered species. The main purpose of the 1972 legislation was to repeal the 1898 legislation and to give the board greater powers than it currently had. It also finally did away with the acclimatisation committee and established the Zoological Gardens Board. In fact, the 1972 legislation did to the 1898 legislation what this legislation is doing to the 1972 legislation, but this legislation does more.

I understand from the briefing that I had in March that this Bill brings the Zoo into line with modern management practices and also modernises the legislation. The Bill reflects the commercial approach that the Zoo has been taking for a number of years. As with many other centres, whether artistic or natural as is the Zoo, organisations are having to turn to the commercial sector for sponsorship and for raising money for conservation and education programs. That is the reality that is certainly facing the Zoo. It is questionable whether that is right or wrong. However, the reality is that insufficient government funds are available to undertake the gamut of research required to protect our environment. This Bill enables the Zoo to raise money for conservation and education programs.

At the briefing I said that the Bill did not have a set of principles underpinning the overall function of the Zoo. What I was getting at was whether there was an argument for enshrining in the legislation exactly what is the overall purpose of the Zoo. The Bill provides for the functions of the Zoo and the powers of any board, but from memory - the minister may wish to comment on this - it does not give the overall philosophy of the Zoo. The people at the briefing responded by saying that those principles are in the strategic plan of the Zoo, which may or may not change, and therefore were not enshrined in the legislation. That might be the answer but it may be worthwhile to have enshrined in the legislation exactly what is the philosophy of the Zoo.

I understand 90 per cent of the Bill involves updating the old legislation and about 10 per cent involves the commercial interests of the Zoo. That is a necessary amendment to the legislation. It provides an opportunity for the Zoo to enter into financial arrangements with the Federal Government. I also understand the current Act frustrates the research programs that the Zoo wants to undertake. Therefore, the Bill is constructed in such a way as to increase the opportunities for research programs.

I was driven to make a few comments about the Bill, having been a councillor in the City of South Perth where the Zoo is located. In a former life I was very much aware of the importance of the Zoo to the local economy of the City of South Perth as well as to the broader economy of the State from a tourism and environmental perspective. I know that the member for South Perth will contribute to this debate. I hope that he will because of his particular relationship with the Zoo. Having had that relationship with the Zoo as an ex-councillor, I wanted to make a few remarks about how important the Zoo is. It is also important for the Government to protect the Zoo by ensuring that it is more than adequately funded so that its research, its protection of endangered species and its contribution to the environment continue.

When the Bill was introduced in 1972, it received bipartisan support. It was introduced by Mr Evans, the member for Warren, and Mr Grayden, the member for South Perth, supported the legislation on behalf of the Opposition. Likewise, we support this legislation. We hope that the Zoo goes from strength to strength. We hope that the commercial interests, although necessary, do not have a negative impact on the many other organisations that are seeking the corporate dollar. In order to minimise that, the work of the Zoo and other organisations in seeking that corporate dollar needs to be ably assisted by a good Government.

**MR PENDAL** (South Perth) [12.49 pm]: I want to make a brief contribution to the debate, and in the main to welcome the fact that we have a new Bill before the House which represents a comprehensive review and updating of a statute that has been on our books for a little under 30 years. I have a special reason for making this contribution; that is, the Zoo is an important part of South Perth and has been since 1898. We celebrated the centenary only a short time ago. I want to indicate the sense of continuity that still exists. It is somewhat amazing to think that to this day in Fraser House in South Perth there still lives one of the surviving daughters of Colonel Le Souef, who was the co-founder and the first director of the Zoo in 1898. That sense of history and heritage is still there and comes through loud and clear.

If the Zoo is not the cultural heart of South Perth, it is certainly the heartbeat or perhaps the ventricle. It is so ingrained in South Perth's social, cultural and educational life that it would be difficult to imagine the area without it. Indeed, when I was first elected to Parliament, an article appeared in an Asian newspaper suggesting that an investor was about to make overtures to the Western Australian Government to relocate the Zoo so that he could redevelop the site bounded by Mill Point Road, Labouchere Road, Onslow Street and Angelo Street for residential purposes. It was not difficult for a fresh, new member to make a very strong public case that it was a matter of hands off with regard to the Zoo. Thankfully that remains the case to this day.

Unlike many institutions, the Zoo has a great and unsullied reputation. It also has a good reputation as an educator. It still attracts more visitors on a per-capita basis each year than any other Australian zoo. If that

statistic has altered - I am not aware that it has - the situation must have changed only in the past year or two. The Zoo has played a part in the ongoing education of generations of children. It is still a central attraction to a huge number of people. About 600 000 people, or one-third of the entire Western Australian population, go through the gates each year for one purpose. That figure tells its own story.

The Zoo is held in high regard not only nationally but also internationally. I have visited a number of the Zoo's overseas counterparts, particularly during the years when I was the shadow Minister for the Environment. I had the opportunity to visit a number of zoos in the United States. I recall being taken to one which I will not identify but which was lauded as one of the 12 leading zoos in the United States. Even at that stage of its development, the "South Perth Zoo", as we prefer to call it, was so transparently ahead of that highly-regarded US zoo that it did not bear any comparison. That was in about 1990 and it was the first time that it dawned on me what an important cultural and educational institution we had in the Zoo. Its role in international endangered species networks and programs is important; in fact, it cannot be overstated. When I visited the San Diego Zoo in 1996, the authorities there were very familiar with the work, developments and modern practices of the Perth Zoo and the part it was playing in preserving endangered species. It is very difficult for anyone in Western Australia, even being entirely parochial, to overstate the value of the Perth Zoo to our environment.

The member for Thornlie referred to the commercial realities with which the Perth Zoo has become imbued. I will say again - I said it during one of the budget debates last year - that I regret that development. Thankfully, the day of the economic rationalist is almost over. We are about to move into a new era of politics in this country in which the dollar and the bottom line are not the only motivating influences. Notwithstanding what the Government would say to the contrary and notwithstanding the amount of money that it commits out of consolidated revenue, the fact remains that when, in balancing its books, the Zoo is forced to rely on sponsorship funds - as was the case when I reported to the Parliament - we have come to a very sorry pass. It does not reflect the true cultural value of the Zoo to our society when it is brought to that point.

In the ordinary course of events I would not raise the question of an amendment because that would be dealt with in the consideration in detail stage, but I do not think we will have that stage. Members are aware that I have lodged the only amendment on the Notice Paper. I do not intend to do anything about that amendment because the Government has indicated that it will not support it. I will talk briefly about the principle that I was seeking to highlight so that those matters are on the public record.

The Zoo has a special relationship with the South Perth City Council. It occupies a very significant portion of the public lands within the City of South Perth. In 1991, when I was the opposition spokesman for the environment, the importance of the relationship between the council and the Zoo was acknowledged and a commitment was made that an incoming Liberal-National Party Government would legislate to ensure that it was entrenched in the statutes. That would involve ensuring that a representative of the South Perth City Council - I think it was intended to be the mayor - would by right be a member of the Perth Zoo board. The Government duly changed and the member for Greenough became the Minister for the Environment. I subsequently led a deputation to him with the then mayor, Peter Campbell, to remind him of the coalition's policy - given that I had written it. The Minister for the Environment at the time, Hon Kevin Minson, made the reasonable point that in the overall scheme of things, if that amendment were put in the new Government's legislative queue, we might be waiting several years before it would be debated in the Parliament. He wanted to honour the undertaking and said he would do that by making the next vacancy on the board available to the Mayor of the City of South Perth and that at an appropriate time further down the track the legislation would be amended. I accepted that as a stopgap measure, as did the mayor. Of course, the Government has introduced legislation - the Bill before the House - but it contains no provision to honour that commitment. I regard that as, if not a breach of promise, an oversight on the Government's part. I made some efforts to bring about the outcome that had been promised.

I regret the fact that the minister indicated to me, prior to the debate, that the Government does not intend to support my amendment. For the record, and in light of that, I regard it as a breach of promise. The undertaking was given and I accepted it in good faith. It is not good enough to say that the Government will keep appointing the Mayor of South Perth or his or her representative. We may get to the stage in one, two or five years when the minister of the day will have other imperatives before him or her and the opportunity to entrench the relationship may be lost. I do not think it is satisfactory and I express my anger at the Government's not being prepared to honour the promise.

I return to the positive note on which I began. It is good to see that the legislation controlling the Perth Zoo is being modernised. As with a number of similar statutory bodies in the past five or 10 years, when the occasion warranted it, the Parliament accepted with alacrity government Bills to modernise legislation. That is what we are doing in this case. There are sound reasons to support the Bill and to support the Government in what it does with the Zoo, with the exception that, in my view, it is being starved of funds when it is clearly one of Australia's leading cultural organisations. I look forward to the day when the theory of economic rationalism dies so that an organisation such as the Zoo does not have to rely on sponsorship to survive. The Zoo's survival

is far more important than which sponsor's banner is placed outside the Zoo's premises. It is a great institution. I commend the Zoo's directors and staff. It is an important part of my political and electoral life. I am happy to support the Bill albeit with a sense of anger that the one key element - which merely represented the coalition's stated policy of nine years ago - will be the subject of a breach of promise. With that point to one side, I am happy to support the legislation.

**MRS EDWARDES** (Kingsley - Minister for the Environment) [1.02 pm]: I thank members opposite for their support of the Bill today. I also thank them for the support of the Zoo over many years. The member for South Perth has a very special relationship with the Zoo and it is evidenced by his strong loyalty and commitment to the many programs for the Zoo that the Government has initiated. The member for Perth is also a strong supporter of the Zoo and Kings Park. The Zoo and Kings Park attract strong bipartisan support, which is unprecedented in many other areas, and that is largely because of the good work that they do.

In respect of the member for South Perth's request that a councillor of the City of South Perth be appointed to the Zoo's board by statutory requirement, it is the current trend when developing legislation for appointments to boards, committees and councils, not to allow for the appointment of people in representative capacities. Individuals are selected on merit and for the skills that that person can bring to boards and committees.

This Government has a strong commitment, through past and current ministers, to the Zoo. The Zoo has a strong relationship with the City of South Perth and this Government values that. It would be difficult, particularly with a number of sensitive issues to be considered, not to include an elected member of the City of South Perth as a member of the Zoo's board. The Government has appointed the mayor or the mayor's representative since 1993. The invitation has always existed, although in practice the position has been filled by the mayor. The top person in the City of South Perth has seen fit to take the position as a strong commitment by the City of South Perth.

The Government does not believe that the appointment should be enshrined in legislation - as opposed to a policy which is endorsed by this Government - as it believes in flexibility. Many scientific organisations and other institutions would like a place on the board of the Perth Zoo. However, that would restrict the Government's ability to appoint to the board representatives from a relevant cross-section of business, community, professional, local government and scientific communities. If the Government made a concession for a representative from the City of South Perth, there would be considerable pressure from other groups to be so designated. The Government believes that the current policy, to which it has a strong commitment, provides the intent that the member for South Perth wishes to have enshrined in legislation. Following the appointment of Peter Campbell, his successor, John Hardwick, became the representative. The position is currently filled by Her Worship, the Mayor, Suzanne Pierce.

Members opposite referred to the discretionary leisure dollar that is spent in places such as the Zoo. Many places in Australia and overseas are competing for the tourism dollar as well as for the conservation dollar, which has a very strong place in the mission of the Perth Zoo. Having visited many attractions in Australia, I believe that many do better than we do. Many other attractions encourage visitors to empty their pockets during their visits. There are many places to eat, drink and shop for items connected with the attraction. There are also often other facilities on site which provide extra variety. That is the direction in which the Perth Zoo is heading. Having visited other zoos around the world, I can say that we are particularly fortunate. The Zoo is excellent in the way it manages the animals as well as other facilities to provide enjoyment for Western Australians and tourists. The Zoo also has a strong conservation program.

The member for Maylands mentioned the cooperative research centre. That excellent cooperative exercise has been very successful. It is now under review, as a new CRC is established every seven years. The Zoo's submission is receiving particular attention and has been enhanced by the level of cooperation the Zoo has with other government departments or agencies with an interest in science and conservation and academic institutions in Western Australia. The Zoo also receives particular attention because of its wonderful achievements and we look forward to a positive response to the submission.

I have an update on some aspects of Perth's Zoo and why it is regarded as so successful. It houses one of the four breeding pairs of silvery gibbon, which is the most endangered primate. Tomorrow is national endangered species day and Western Australia can take great pride in the work done by various agencies to look after some of our most endangered species, both native and exotic. Perth's Zoo has the most successful breeding program for orang-outangs and produces the Australian guidelines for the care and housing of the animals. It tells other zoos how orang-outangs should be housed. The Zoo also manages the international studbook for the silvery gibbon, the regional studbook for animals such as the pygmy marmoset and the Australian captive management plans for the ringtail lemur. Many would be aware that the Zoo saved three sun bears destined for a local restaurant. They are now successfully housed in Western Australia. Those are just a couple of reasons why Perth's Zoo is regarded as successful and why we feel the CRC submission will be successful. The timing of new births in the Zoo is always critical. Three new meerkats were born last week and are doing very well. The

Dr Judy Edwards; Ms Diana Warnock; Ms Sheila McHale; Mr Pandal; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes

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meerkats are part of the African Savannah exhibition. The Zoo's veterinary services department has been successful and has close links with the University of Western Australia and Murdoch University for the treatment of all animals, both native and exotic.

Competition for the conservation and the tourism dollar is increasing. Management must become more innovative and smarter in the way it carries out its functions. This legislation will help by providing for more management processes. At the same time, the Zoo remains a conservation and education agency, which is the forefront of its success. It has the highest number of visitors per head of population of any zoo in Australia. The success of its conservation program ensures that the Zoo remains a favourite attraction for many local families.

I thank members for their support of the legislation and commend it to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, proceeded through remaining stages without debate, and transmitted to the Council.