

SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS MANAGEMENT ACT 2006

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for the Environment) [2.05 pm]: I am very pleased to advise the house that today marks the first day of the operation of the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006. The proclamation of this act shows a new way forward in managing and protecting the Swan and Canning Rivers, with a focus on developing better ways for government, industry and the community to work together. This is just one of the ways the Carpenter government is acting now for the future to ensure the health of the rivers, the foreshores and the wider catchment, and sustain the different uses of these precious waterways.

The legislation provides a mechanism to better protect the rivers, and sets up a more coordinated management framework to deal with commercial and recreational activities, and urban and rural influences on the rivers. The legislation clarifies the roles, powers and accountability for activities that affect the Swan and Canning Rivers. It states that public authorities are required to take the act's objectives and principles into account when they undertake their functions. To help protect the rivers, the legislation has given the Swan River Trust the authority to issue river protection notices to owners or occupiers of land in the Swan-Avon catchment when action is needed to address long-running problems affecting the rivers. The primary goal is to improve the health of the rivers, and failure to comply with the notice can result in a penalty of up to \$50 000. The legislation also recognises the importance of the rivers as an icon, by establishing the Swan Canning Riverpark. This will include the waterways and adjacent public land of the Swan, Canning, Helena and Southern Rivers.

Along with proclamation of the act comes a newly appointed board. Under the continued leadership of Chairperson Charlie Welker, the new board's experience will have a much broader focus. Its areas of strategic expertise include planning, tourism, recreation, natural resource management, conservation and matters of interest to rural and Nyoongah communities. With the potential impact of things like climate change and a booming economy, it is crucial that we have a future direction to guide the management and protection of our much-loved Swan and Canning Rivers. The rivers belong to the people of Perth, and the Carpenter government wants all Western Australians to have the opportunity to be involved and have a say in how we care for the rivers now and into the future. I thank the Swan River Trust board and staff for the many dedicated hours of work they have committed to this new legislation during the past few years. I also thank the many stakeholders who gave of their time and knowledge to help build this act and I acknowledge members on both sides of this house who ensured bipartisan support for this important legislation.