

PLAN FOR OUR PARKS PROGRAM

Motion

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [1.08 pm]: I move —

That this house commends the Cook government for the implementation of its Plan for Our Parks program, which is the largest expansion of the conservation estate in the state's history.

This is a great opportunity to talk about a great initiative from our government. Many members are probably already aware of our Plan for Our Parks. We developed this initiative in 2019, seeking to create five million hectares of new conservation reserves by the end of this year. This has been done on a historic scale and will result in a 20 per cent increase to our parks and reserves, which will greatly protect our most valuable natural assets. We are very lucky here in Western Australia; we have such a large state and so much diversity. To be able to have so much more added to our conservation estate to protect some of the diverse biodiversity we have across the state is really great and very important.

The other reason this initiative is really great is that we are entering a new era when it comes to working with our traditional owner groups in both land and sea management. We have had new agreements with over 20 traditional owner groups across the state, which provide Aboriginal people with great opportunities for jobs, training and career development in all areas of land and sea country management. It is estimated that we will have up to 280 full-time jobs across the state with the investment in the Plan for Our Parks program, and we will build new relationships with our traditional owners. The Plan for Our Parks program provides a great opportunity to work towards closing the gap. I refer to the implementation of our Aboriginal empowerment strategy—Western Australia 2021–2029. It really illustrates our commitment to making agreements with Aboriginal communities.

The program also provides a really great opportunity for further development of nature-based and cultural tourism. Everyone knows marine and national parks, and they are really a brand that drives tourism. Last year, over 24.6 million people visited our national parks. That was an increase of over nine per cent from the year before. That shows people are really valuing getting out and being in our natural environment. I think COVID was one of the things that helped people to wander out yonder and see how great and diverse our state is and how many opportunities there are to get out and enjoy the outdoors, whether it is through hiking or other things like that.

Another important thing is the opportunity for people to experience Aboriginal culture and heritage, and Aboriginal cultural tours. We want to realise our goal of being the premiere destination for Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences. We have *Jina: Western Australian Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan 2021–2025*. I also want to commend the work of the Western Australian Indigenous Tourism Operators Council for Aboriginal tourism and promoting Aboriginal tourism around the state. My good friend Robyne Reynolds represents the goldfields–Esperance area on WAITOC. It does some fantastic work to promote Aboriginal cultural tourism and help Aboriginal groups develop tourism opportunities.

I am pleased that we are already up to 50 per cent of our target of five million hectares, which is really great. Since 2019, 2.5 million hectares have been protected under this program. The first park was Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park in 2019. That was coupled with \$10 million to tourism management and infrastructure. The government has made strong commitments towards helping stimulate tourism through helping in the development of tourism products as well as park infrastructure.

A lot of members would have heard about our Aboriginal ranger program. It is a really important program. I want to commend the government for the program, which has operated since 2017, which is when we came to government. The government has invested \$103 million into the Aboriginal ranger program. Earlier this week, \$13 million was awarded in round 7 of the program, funding 21 on-country programs around the state, which is really fantastic. I want to give a shout-out to one of the groups that has received some funding, the Gnowangerup Aboriginal Corporation, which is chaired by Robbie Miniter. I commend it for the work that it is doing down there. It was successful in the grant program. South Coast Natural Resource Management, which is based in Albany, was also successful and works in the great southern. I wanted to give it a shout-out because it has done a lot of work with the Aboriginal corporations in helping them build capacity. It has worked with Gnowangerup and nearby Tambellup and helped them build capacity with a lot of their new ranger projects, mainly seed collection projects. Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation and Badgebup Aboriginal Corporation are two Aboriginal corporations that have also been funded through this program. It is really great to see the progress that has happened through the development of their ranger programs since 2017 and the collaboration with farming groups, local government and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions.

We all remember when Minister Whitby took on his role as Minister for Environment. One of the first national parks under this Plan for Our Parks program that he opened was Dryandra Woodland National Park. I was very

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lucky to go there with him when he announced that park. The state forest has now been transitioned to a new national park under the Plan for Our Parks program. It is the first national park to be developed in the wheatbelt region. If members have a chance to go there, they should because it is less than two hours from Perth and it is fantastic. When people go for walks there, they can see numbats, woylies, brushtail possums and malleefowl. It is a great place for some of our most vulnerable wildlife. I think I have spoken before about the predator-proof enclosure there called Barna Mia, where people can go on some night walks and see a lot of the animals that are being protected in the enclosure. I think there is a really fantastic opportunity for us to have some Aboriginal rangers working in the park in the future. The initiative is supported by the Shires of Narrogin and Cuballing. I look forward to what we can do in this area in the future with the new park. I also want to talk about the commitment that went into building the predator-proof enclosure at Barna Mia, which has a 14.7-kilometre fence that is 1.8 metres high and provides a great area for protection of species that cannot survive out in the wild due to predators.

I will briefly comment on the Western Shield project, which has been going for over 25 years. It is one of our largest native-species conservation programs. It looks at feral foxes and cats. We all know how many native animals feral cats kill each year. They kill more than 1.5 billion native animals in Australia each year, which is a huge amount. A lot of our native species have benefited from the Western Shield project, so I wanted to commend the government on running that program. I also commend all the community groups that go out on annual fox shoots, working to target some of our foxes, cats and rabbits. For example, down in Ongerup and Gnowangerup, they recently had a fox hunt. I think they had 165 foxes, five cats and 311 rabbits in one night. I give a shout-out to all those people, mainly from farming communities, who get out and collaborate to help protect our native animals against predators.

One of the things that Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson did in her role as Minister for Environment, before she moved on, was to release a 10-year plan for the wheatbelt region. As I said, Dryandra Woodland National Park was the first national park under the Plan for Our Parks project, but she released a 10-year management plan. There are a lot of parks and reserves across the wheatbelt region and a lot of diversity; it is an important habitat for our rare and native species.

I want to move on now to a really important project we are doing along the south coast as part of the Plan for Our Parks, and that is the proposed south coast marine park. It is supported by a lot of members of our community. This park will take in more than 1 000 kilometres of coastline and cover about 1.3 million hectares. It will be the first oceanic marine park on the south coast. The government's vision is to create a world-class marine park that rivals Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef. I am really pleased that the Cook government is getting on and delivering that park because it has been talked about for decades and, finally, we are the government that is getting down and doing it.

We can go back to 1994 when the Department of Conservation and Land Management came out with its first report on a representative marine reserve system for Western Australia. Then in 2010, *Oceans of opportunity* was another report that proposed a strategic framework for marine waters off our south coast. It is really great that we are finally getting down and doing this. I recall that shortly after I moved to Esperance over 20 years ago, the University of Western Australia had funding to do a really big project to characterise the fish habitats of the Recherche Archipelago. It did a huge amount of research work by vessel and created a couple of really great books that showcase the great, diverse marine environment across our south coast. Once established, the park will make a significant contribution to the comprehensiveness, adequacy and representativeness of our network of marine parks. As I said, we do not have a marine park on the south coast, so this will be really great.

Since coming to government in 2021, we have been conducting a lot of community consultation. We have overhauled the community consultation program that was underway. It has been restarted in a new way with community reference groups and sector advisory groups to really consult with the community and get their feedback on the development of the park. The draft management plan for the south coast marine park is now out for public comment, and I encourage everyone to comment on it. We extended the usual three-month public comment period to four months. If people can give constructive criticism and tell us what they like as well as what they do not like, that will help us to work out what we have got right and what is really important to people. We are proposing to have about 25 per cent as sanctuary area. People will still be able to drive on, fish from and bring their dogs to the beaches, which is a really great balance. As a government, when people say that we are doing too much or not enough, we know that we have the balance right, and I think we have done a pretty good job with this. There are some amazing places out there to go to. I love to go to Woody Island, as does a lot of the community, as well as diving and snorkelling off Esperance. As I said, the park will run for 1 000 kilometres along the south coast from Bremer Bay to the border. It is a huge area.

One of the things I am really pleased about is that the park involves four traditional owner groups. When the draft management plans came out, we had four separate draft management plans, one for each of the traditional owner groups, which is really good. First of all, it makes it simpler for the public who do not have to look at a plan

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that covers a huge amount of coastline. It also gives the traditional owner groups their own little management plan that they can work on with the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. Holistically, the park will be managed as one park, but it is great to see the initiative have four separate management plans covering the Mamang Maambakoort, the Wudjari, the Western Bight marine park—the traditional owners are the Ngadju—and the Mirning. I encourage everyone to have their say about the proposed marine park. It is, again, a fantastic initiative from the government, and it is really exciting to have a park on the south coast.

I am married to a fisherman, and when I met my husband on a random beach outside Esperance, he had a motorbike and dive hookah, and I did not really know what he was doing. He was diving for abalone, and I did not even know what an abalone was back then. I have been lucky enough to spend time with someone who has a boat and has spent thousands and thousands of hours swimming underwater around all the islands across the archipelago. It has been a great opportunity to see the value of what we have got out there. There is so much out there to explore and see; it is a really spectacular part of our state. If people have not been there, I encourage them to go.

I would like to acknowledge Recfishwest and all the work it has done to encourage people to get involved in the consultation and say what this park means to them. Recfishwest does some great work. Over summer, it ran fishing competitions along our south coast. It held 10 fishing clinics that were completely booked out. Over 350 kids took part in those clinics, with a record attendance for the tour. It shows that people are getting out to the regions and that they have an interest in fishing. One of the reasons for creating the south coast plan is to protect those things for our children and our grandchildren so they can continue to fish and experience things like the great big blue gropers. I look forward to seeing the blue gropers grow larger in some of those areas and our kids being able to swim with and see those amazing creatures again, because right now they are pretty rare and few and far between.

The south coast is also important to Esperance because of a couple of big fishing competitions that we hold. Each year in September, there is the Esperance Land Based Fishing Club competition, which last year saw 130 fishers participate. The Esperance Deep Sea Angling Club also runs the Esperance Archipelago Offshore Fishing Classic every year. It is a huge event with a lot of people coming from the goldfields. Last year, more than 275 anglers competed on 83 boats. It was great to see 83 boats going out of Esperance. It is a pretty fantastic day and a great thing that the angling club is doing. I want to commend the recreational fishing groups in Esperance for the work they have done in bringing people together. It is also good for one's mental health to get out and fish, so I commend the groups for their engagement in this whole process, especially the volunteers who have given their time. It is really important that I take the time to thank them as well.

In the short time I have left, I want to mention the link between the proposed south coast marine park and the land. We have so many fabulous parks that link in with this new south coast marine park and plenty of opportunities for people to visit. East of Esperance, we have Cape Arid National Park and Cape Le Grand National Park. A person can see the whales from the beach in Cape Arid. They can walk up on the rocks and look down on the whales. It is fantastic. Cape Le Grand has some fantastic beaches as well. Lucky Bay has just been voted the best beach in the world. There are fantastic opportunities there. Over summer, one can see just how popular it is with all the parking lots overflowing. With climate change happening, in summer it is great for people to come down to the south coast where it is cooler, and they can still hike and do a lot of outdoor things that cannot be done in a lot of other areas of our state because it is too hot.

The Fitzgerald River National Park lies between Hopetoun and Bremer Bay. That is a fantastic park as well. It is an amazing natural environment with so much natural diversity and so many unique species. People can also see the whales from places like Point Ann, which can be accessed from Bremer Bay.

I do not have much time left but I want to commend the team at DBCA. The new director general, Stuart Smith, has come over from Fisheries and is fantastic. I think he has really helped to bring the south coast marine park together. I also commend Luke Bentley, manager, Aboriginal engagement, planning and lands. I thank them both for all the work that the DBCA does behind the scenes on collaboration in trying to get this park right—well done for that. They have also put together a heap of information—fact sheets and newsletters—over the last couple of years. I encourage anyone who wants to, to have a look online because there is a lot of information about the park.

I am sure other members will talk about the rest of our huge state. I have provided some information just on the south coast and the wheatbelt area in the southern half of the state, but we have a huge state and we are doing a lot of great work with traditional owner groups and on protecting our natural environment. I am really proud of our government's commitment to our natural environment.

HON ROSIE SAHANNA (Mining and Pastoral) [1.28 pm]: I would like to speak in support of the motion moved by Hon Shelley Payne on the Cook government's Plan for Our Parks program. I thank the honourable member for discussing this program today.

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The Plan for Our Parks program has so many benefits, including protecting our state's natural environment, implementing its conservation strategies and creating more nature-based tourism opportunities, but as an Aboriginal person, one of the benefits closest to my heart is the opportunity the program offers traditional owners to jointly manage country. I am sure people have been caring for country for thousands of years. They have a special connection with their land. The Plan for Our Parks program is administered by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, which has a long history of partnership with traditional owners throughout WA and working together with Aboriginal people to manage, access and care for country.

One of the best things about the Plan for Our Parks program for me, from a Kimberley point of view, is that it has really enhanced cultural tourism in our state, mostly in the Kimberley, where I live. There are tourists there just about 12 months of the year. The parks are one of the main attractions. In 2022, three new marine parks in the Kimberley were announced. The Bardi Jawi Gaarra, Mayala and Maiyalam Marine Parks cover more than 600 000 hectares of the Buccaneer Archipelago and are now jointly managed by the Bardi Jawi, Mayala and Dambeemangardee traditional owners.

Last year, the Bunuba National Park was created in the Fitzroy Valley, extending the Danggu Geikie Gorge National Park along the Fitzroy River to Dimond Gorge. The new park covers more than 220 000 hectares and is larger than London. The creation of the Bunuba National Park was not only the fulfilment of an election commitment but also a historical cultural milestone for the Bunuba people and their knowledge that the Martuwarra Fitzroy River is a living ancestral being. The new Warlibirri National Park was also formed in the Kimberley in 2022, spanning 16 000 hectares along the Margaret River east of Fitzroy Crossing. Margaret River is home to important areas for the Gooniyandi language group and is also considered a living ancestral being by Gooniyandi people. Although it is not a newly formed park, it is worth mentioning that, in 2020, the Labor government renamed the King Leopold Ranges in the Kimberley the Wunaamin Miliwundi Ranges to honour its Aboriginal heritage. The new name incorporates the Ngarinyin, which is my people, and Bunuba traditional names for the ranges. There have been other examples of national parks in the region being either renamed or adjusted to incorporate their traditional names. It is so refreshing, as an Aboriginal person, to see names for national parks and cultural areas being recognised in the Kimberley.

I guess most members sitting here in this chamber have been to the Kimberley at one time or another. If not, members are missing out, because the Kimberley region is regarded as one of the last remaining true wilderness areas on the planet, and it is home to some of the most extraordinary natural attractions, including me! It is commendable that the Cook government understands the profound importance of preserving areas such as the Kimberley so they can continue to be visited and enjoyed by generations to come. It is also commendable that the Cook government recognises the most beneficial way to preserve these areas of natural beauty and intense culture is to work alongside Aboriginal people in the management and conservation of these beautiful, magnificent sites.

Working collaboratively with the Plan for Our Parks program is the Cook government's Aboriginal ranger program, which is also very close to me. It has created more than 800 employment opportunities since its inception. The initiative combines thousands of years of traditional knowledge with modern technologies and strategies to preserve the environment, cultural values and the traditional owner's connection with land, sea, community and identity. Caring for country has benefits for the cultural, economic and emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal people.

The Cook government's ongoing investment into the Plan for Our Parks program will continue to empower Aboriginal people to have a say in how their country is cared for as well as providing the necessary environmental and economic protections.

I am proud to be an Aboriginal person in this government, and I am proud to be part of a government that fully recognises the benefits of both the Aboriginal ranger and the Plan for Our Parks programs.

HON PIERRE YANG (North Metropolitan — Parliamentary Secretary) [1.34 pm]: Thank you, President, for the opportunity to say a few words to support this magnificent motion moved by Hon Shelley Payne. It is a fantastic motion to outline the Labor party's credentials on environment protection and also conservation. The Labor Party has a deep and proud history of protecting the environment because it knows it is an important aspect of our human life. It is important for the wellbeing of all Australians.

I must make the observation that the entire National–Liberal alliance is capably represented in this chamber by Hon Colin de Grussa, and all the other honourable colleagues of the member are on urgent parliamentary business. Perhaps if they could make themselves available, they could learn a few things from the Labor Party and the Cook Labor government because the Labor party has a strong and proud history in supporting and protecting our environment. We know that it is not only important for the wellbeing of all Australians, but also good for the economy of our state.

Back in 2016, the Labor Party put out the *WA Labor plan for jobs*. I have mentioned this document a number of times. I took it upon myself to translate this document into Mandarin Chinese, and this translation was published

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in 2016 by the Leader of the Opposition's office with the support of Hon Mark McGowan, as the Leader of the Opposition. In the document, there are a number of initiatives on supporting regional jobs and jobs for our First Nations peoples living in Western Australia. The Labor party knows that that is linked to the wellbeing of our economy. Let us not forget—I think it is important that we remind ourselves in this place and in our community that we were in domestic recession in 2016. In Western Australia, 80 000 Western Australians were out of a job. You can imagine the difficulties those families faced. That was all to the discredit of the former Liberal–National government.

Hon Dr Steve Thomas has talked a number of times about fiscal management and accused us of having good luck as a government. It is conveniently left out that the Liberal–National government also had a mining boom. What did it do with its money? It blew it. It let public sector debt run through the roof. It was a total disaster. They bought plastic cows and singing toilets using royalties for regions funds. When Labor came to power, it changed that. It put mechanisms in place so that the money in this state can be spent in the best interests of the people of Western Australia. I recall that during the eight and a half years of the Barnett government, Hon Donna Faragher for a time was not the minister because of family duties. I hasten to add I sometimes wondered had she stayed on as a minister in the Barnett government during the entire time perhaps, she could have used her —

Hon Donna Faragher: I do not know where this is leading.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I am trying to find the best words to describe that situation. It would be great if we had Hon Donna Faragher beyond 2025. Unfortunately, I think we will be missing you, and you will be dearly missed.

Hon Dan Caddy: She will be missing us!

Hon PIERRE YANG: Most of us, perhaps!

Hon Donna Faragher: I will tell you on May 21 next year.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I have your number, so I will probably give you a call on the 22 May.

President, I would like to come back to the motion.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, honourable member. You are very welcome to do that any time!

Hon Donna Faragher interjected.

Hon PIERRE YANG: I will come back to that in a bit. We will see how we go over the next 40 minutes, honourable member.

It is important to know that the geographic area of Western Australia is one-third of the entire nation of Australia, and we have many wonderful old-growth forests in the south west. As an Army reservist serving in the ADF for 10 years, not every month but perhaps every second month, I would go out into the Bindoon military training area with my mates to train. The Australian Army can also claim credit for the management of its grounds. It is very important that we maintain what we have in this state. We do not go and chop things down. We protect the environment. We take the rubbish out after a military exercise so we do not leave litter in the military training area. The Army can be very proud of its management of the entire military training ground in the bush and at different training areas in Australia, such as Puckapunyal, Singleton in New South Wales and Townsville in Queensland, and I give the Army a shout-out. Good on it for doing what it is doing.

Western Australia covers one-third of the geographic area of Australia. We have many pristine areas in the state, and the Labor Party, and Labor governments whenever we are in power, has demonstrated deep-rooted support for the environment. Who could forget the protection for the Ningaloo Reef during the Gallop government years or the ban on logging old-growth forests? Of course, I will also go back to the 1980s when Bob Hawke was the Prime Minister. The former leader of the Greens, Mr Bob Brown—is he a doctor?

Hon Donna Faragher: Yes.

Hon Darren West: Yes. Member, Dr Bob Brown pronounced Jimi Hendrix dead. Fun fact!

The PRESIDENT: Order! If you do intend to interject, please make it relevant.

Hon PIERRE YANG: In an article dated 17 May 2019, after the passing of Hon Bob Hawke, Dr Bob Brown claimed that Mr Hawke was our environmental Prime Minister. I wish to draw attention to the fact that Hon Dr Brad Pettitt, a member of the Green Party in this Parliament, is away on urgent parliamentary business. I had hoped that he could be here, but he is on urgent parliamentary business.

During the 1980s, the Hawke government protected 60 000 hectares of wilderness in Tasmania. That was a very important achievement because in the lead-up to the late 1980s, the awareness of the importance of protecting our environment was gradually dawning on us. We want to protect the environment or we will leave this place for our children and grandchildren worse off than we found it. The Labor government in Canberra took the lead and protected our environment. That was the first and most critical moment in our nation so that we could start the process of

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protecting our environment. Of course, when it comes to the state government, as I mentioned, the Gallop government protected our environment and the Carpenter government continued it. The McGowan government also had a very proud history of environment protection, which is continued by the current Cook government.

If I may, it is important to note that to date a total of 2.5 million hectares of new conservation reserves, which is 50 per cent of the target, have been created under the Plan for Our Parks initiative. The initiative provides the basis for a new era in working with traditional owners, with reserves created that are intended to be jointly vested or jointly managed with traditional owners.

Hon Rosie Sahanna talked about the importance of having cultural tourism. That is one initiative that we had in our Plan for Jobs program back in 2016, which we took to the 2017 election. Hon Rosie Sahanna also talked about the First Nation people's care for our environment, and I wish to add that our First Nation people have cared for this land continuously over 60 000 years. There is a way for peaceful and harmonious coexistence and co-dependence between us and the environment. This does not mean that we go in and log and fish species to extinction; it means that we protect the environment when we need to protect it and extract resources when we can do so sustainably, but also leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

I wish to give a shout-out to the Labor government, and I want to give a shout-out to Hon Shelley Payne for this incredible motion. It is important that we talk about protecting our environment and we talk about our Plan for Our Parks initiative so that we can remind ourselves of the importance to continue this protection.

HON SANDRA CARR (Agricultural) [1.48 pm]: I am very happy to rise today in support of the motion to recognise the great value of the Plan for Our Parks program and in support of my colleague and friend Hon Shelley Payne. This is a really important motion to make, notice and recognise in that it is no overstatement to suggest that having a Plan for Our Parks is, indeed, a visionary and an incredibly important legacy to leave for future generations. It is more than just environmental protection and preservation; it is legacy, it is community, it is connection, and it is recognising that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves and the impact that we have on our short time here on Earth.

Historically speaking, planning for parks has proved incredibly valuable. I might take us overseas for a quick trip to a place that I have always wanted to visit and never have and that is New York. If we think about the planning that took place and the visionary future-thinking needed to create what is now Central Park in New York, it has proved such a valuable and critical part of the infrastructure. It is the lungs of that city. It is a tourist hub. It is a recreational hub. It is a vital green space in what would otherwise be 100 per cent concrete jungle. Planning for parks matters.

Another example right back here on our shores—the fastest trip members will ever get to New York and back—is right here over the road from us, and that is Kings Park, a beautiful space that people planning and thinking ahead preserved for the future. They preserved a beautiful part of the environment and invested time and space into it. Any time we take a trip to Kings Park, we see people valuing and appreciating that beautiful space. The trees there never cease to take my breath away. It is really important to note that planning for parks matters, and that is why I say this is a visionary plan or series of plans by the Cook government, and I am really proud that this is something we have done.

Another fun fact I will tell members about Central Park in New York is that one of the winning designs for that park was by a farmer named Frederick Olmsted. I will take members back to that a little later. I thought that was a very interesting fact. It was not him alone, but I thought it was great to see that a farmer recognised the importance and value of preserving and making sure that there is green community space in which people can recreate and indulge in community and connection with each other, in a place where, increasingly, community and connection was starting to dissipate into small, isolated apartment buildings.

Kings Park is a wonderful park here in the city, but three parks in my region, Geraldton and the midwest, and even up into the Mining and Pastoral area that I mentioned, have been included in our Plan for Our Parks. We heard Hon Shelley Payne talk about value-adding and the preservation of species, and I will talk a bit about that as well, but we also heard Hon Shelley Payne talk about how that then enables things like the Aboriginal ranger program, and how we then build on reconnecting people back into country, providing them opportunities to plant roots back into the country that they may have become disconnected from for various reasons. It is not just country but also community. This will enable people to make a valuable and vital contribution to community and be a part of something bigger—our Plan for Our Parks. I want to mention firstly the Badimia conservation reserves, which are in the Agricultural and Mining and Pastoral Regions. There are 114 000 hectares of reserves located in Badimia country, and they have significant Aboriginal, cultural and pastoral heritage values. Those reserves also protect around 563 flora and 162 fauna species. It is so incredibly important to preserve those species, and it is a great way to leave a legacy of protecting species that are unique to our country. I do not know whether anyone watched any of

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the programs on the ABC over the weekend, but we continue to discover new species. We will not continue to discover these new species if we do not preserve and plan for our parks, as we have been doing. On that program at the weekend, the scientist—forgive me; I cannot remember his name—talked about having discovered a new ant species and said that Australia has the largest number of ant species in the world. Keeping and protecting open spaces allows us to protect and continue to discover these new species. The numbers and figures that I have provided do not necessarily stop there. The research and work that people can do in those parks is critical to not only maintaining and preserving our natural world for future generations, but also understanding the way they can contribute to ensure that plants continue to be propagated and other species continue to survive, because we all know that those things are interconnected.

There is also the Thundelarra Conservation Park in the Mining and Pastoral Region. That is in the south midwest region, also on Badimia country. This one is 100 000 hectares and spans a vast range of the midwest region. This park also supports some important ecological species, including flora and vegetation types, and also the malleefowl. These are really important species and are part of our cultural identity. If we do not plan for our parks in this way and create these spaces, create appreciation and respect and really truly value the species that are native to our country, we will lose that connection and part of our cultural identity. It is bigger than just preserving the park areas. It also creates opportunities for people to recreate, learn to tread softly on the Earth, and learn to really value and develop that sense of awe and wonder that we need to have for our Earth and country to really invest in caring about and protecting it. When we separate people from those things, we start to lose sight of the importance and value to human existence. That sounds a little bit over-the-top, but it is, in fact, quite true. Our country does more than just provide us something nice to look at; it also feeds us.

The last part I will mention that has been incorporated into the Plans for Our Parks is the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park. It is very close, just across the water from my home in Geraldton. I say “just across the water”; it is a bit of a trip by boat, or we can fly over there as well. The Abrolhos, as we know, is rich in history. It is not just a unique and special landscape providing opportunities for industry like crayfishing; it also provides part of the history and story of our nation. There is the Batavia shipwreck. So many stories exist there, and it always baffles me that we are not a mecca for European travellers, who love those historical stories. I think that the establishment of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park is the beginning of building that tourism mecca that is really focused on preserving natural environment to ensure that it is inclusive, and also build the tourism potential for the region that treads very softly and respectfully upon that environment.

I will share a really great story about some of the development on the Abrolhos Islands. Recently, in January of this year, there was a story about Chris Kerr, a local identity from Geraldton, which was filmed and shared in the media, if members would like to have a look. She got to experience the new disability-friendly infrastructure that has been established there in the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park, so she could move about the island. Trust me—even when someone has shoes on it can be a bit treacherous. It is reef oriented and is not stable ground. Walkways have been established so that there is a full range of access, and other facilities have been established that enabled Chris Kerr to put on a mask and snorkel, go diving and experience the magical underwater world of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park. It is a magnificent part of the world and probably one of the better kept secrets. Not many people head out there and really engage in that environment. If members get the opportunity to watch the video of Chris Kerr, a woman who is in a wheelchair, experiencing all that, please have a look. It is a fantastic story and really helps us to appreciate the value of ensuring that we provide equity of access for people to appreciate these national parks that we all quite frequently take for granted.

This is legacy building by the Cook government. I am incredibly proud to be a part of it, and I really thank Hon Shelley Payne for bringing this motion to everybody’s attention, because it a really worthy project to celebrate.

I think it is also really important to note that there is also a lot of hard work to strike a balance when we are developing the parks to make sure that the touch of human impact and footprint on those parks is managed, and that we are looking at impact and making sure that the species of flora and fauna in those environments that we are striving to protect and recognise, and maybe even identify as more research is undertaken, are protected and preserved for future generations. It is a really important inclusion in this Plan for Our Parks. I am really proud to say that is something that has been a focus of the Plan for Our Parks and part of the work of the Aboriginal ranger program, as well.

On the subject of the Abrolhos Islands, I would like to make a special note. As everyone knows, there is a crayfishing industry in Western Australia, and the Abrolhos Islands are a big part of that. A woman by the name of Pia Boschetti has grown up there. She runs Latitude Gallery in Geraldton. She has run a program out in the Abrolhos Islands called Flotsam and Jetsam for many years now. That is a really successful program. People go over, collect all the flotsam and jetsam—ropes, rubbish, driftwood and all the bits and pieces that might turn up on and around the islands—collate it, bring it back to the wharf in Geraldton, artists from across the region go and collect the bits

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and pieces, create artwork out of the flotsam and jetsam, then they have an exhibition and prizes are awarded. It is a fantastic event and a really great way to get people invested in caring about that environment and making use of waste that otherwise would probably end up in rubbish dumps or left on the islands. It is a really great program by Pia Boschetti, and I really congratulate her for the continued success of that program and also her absolute commitment to it and the Abrolhos Islands. She has done some fantastic work. She is known as the girl who grows the pearls, so there are also pearls that come from the Abrolhos Islands as well.

While I am on my feet, the Plan for Our Parks program and protecting the environment are important, but I think this is also a good opportunity to think about the planning for, and preservation of, our land generally—that is, things like agriculture, horticulture and pastoral lands. I watched quite a bit of ABC on the weekend. I will not pretend I did not. I was watching *Landline*. I do not know if anyone else saw it, but there was a program talking about Byron Bay and the encroachment of human residential land and other projects on agricultural land. I think that one of the other things we probably need to think about is planning for the protection of our agricultural and food producing land, because this program was very much focused on food security. I find it absolutely mind-boggling that none of the members across the floor who purport to represent agriculture ever seem to raise this issue. I find it very odd. That is probably something that we need to look at in the future and I think that the Cook government does a really good job of thinking and forward planning to make sure that we leave long-lasting legacies. I am particularly proud to mention that is something we have been doing.

We also perhaps need to think about planning and protecting green spaces. It is a strange anomaly that our local governments have an almost laissez-faire permission to decide which trees are cut down for developments. Perhaps there also needs to be things about considering planning for green spaces and protecting trees. A lot of development that happens in our own backyards probably happens without us giving a great deal of thought to the consequences of cutting down trees in or around a particular local government area.

I can think of an example of that in Geraldton itself, where I spent most of my time growing up. It has been quite inundated by white cockatoos and they tend to attack and peck at all the trees and do the things that birds naturally do. People often talk about wanting to manage that and it always struck me as odd that no-one has ever asked the question of why they have ended up there. It is because of the massive land clearing and the lack of trees in the environments that they normally would be that has driven them towards where there are trees. At the risk of sounding like I might be stepping into the Greens' chair across the floor, I think we need to plant more trees.

As an extension of that slight digression, dipping my toe into my love of trees and all things green, I am really proud of the Cook government's Plan for Our Parks. I am proud of the work that it did. I know that the Houtman Abrolhos Islands National Park was kicked around for about 30 years and it took the WA Labor government to step in in 2019 to finally make it happen. I am particularly proud of it. I think that other members will speak about some of the other parks that have been established across Western Australia, so we will hear a little bit more. We are taking initiative and creating plans. We all know the expression, "If you don't plan, you plan to fail", so it is really great to see that there are plans in place for everybody to see. They are being executed and are creating real jobs for Aboriginal people from relevant areas to bring, learn, develop and share local knowledge.

I know that some of the Aboriginal rangers who have worked in programs around the midwest area have gone into schools to share some of their knowledge. They have talked to me about how much the students in those schools love to hear about the work that they are doing and learning about the country and how people have engaged with it in the past. They have described students' excitement, fascination and genuine interest. I do know about other members, but I have taught in schools and I did not always get fascination, excitement and genuine interest in the things that I was teaching. I think when there are tangible real things that people can see around them, they really see the value and relevance in them. I think the education delivered by those rangers and the people who are helping to work with them is also really important.

The Aboriginal rangers who are working in our parks have also gone out to rivers around the midwest area to teach and deliver programs to some of the students to make sure they understand the ecosystem around the river. It is an adventure for them. It is actually one of the rivers that I remember stomping around in as a child as well and collecting tadpoles and watching them grow into frogs. I still remember how important it was for children to get their hands and feet dirty, engaging with the natural environment and learning about it. Those are the things that really make us care about our natural environment, and our flora and fauna. That is definitely one of the core drivers of the Plan for Our Parks initiative. I am really proud to say that that is something that the Cook government has delivered and continues to deliver. It will be a fantastic legacy of the Cook government and I thank Hon Shelley Payne for bringing it to our attention.

HON DARREN WEST (Agricultural — Parliamentary Secretary) [2.06 pm]: It gives me great pleasure to respond on behalf of the government to the excellent motion but today by Hon Shelley Payne —

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That this house commends the Cook government for the implementation of its Plan for Our Parks program, which is the largest expansion of the conservation estate in the state's history.

Although it is always nice to be commended by the house, I get commended everywhere I go for this initiative. We have been on this journey for a while. I meet with a lot of environmental groups. We do not always see eye to eye on issues, but one thing in common with everyone I meet in that environmental space is their particular commendation for our Plan for Our Parks. I thank the member for bringing on the motion.

I also acknowledge Minister Whitby, the Minister for Environment, and his predecessors Hon Amber-Jade Sanderson and Hon Stephen Dawson for their work in this place. I think Hon Stephen Dawson was the Minister for Environment who kicked all this off when we were elected in 2017. He completely changed the game in terms of preserving and protecting our areas of natural beauty and environment for generations to come.

I have been sitting here listening to the debate and the excellent speakers before me. I noticed a couple of school groups coming through and thought, "This is one debate that I am sure would really engage students sitting in the public gallery of the Legislative Council and that they would like to hear about", because it is about everybody's future, particularly young people's. It is a great motion. I know Hon Shelley Payne is particularly passionate about the environment. Members may not know that Hon Shelley Payne has a masters in environmental management, so she knows what she is talking about and has a great passion and understanding of our natural environment.

She mentioned her husband, Mark. I also want to acknowledge him. I think he told me once that he had spent around two years of his life under the water on that beautiful archipelago down in Esperance, fishing and enjoying the natural environment. Mark is a crusader on research into sharks and the importance of the natural environment down there. We have some magnificent scenery down there and some unique and wonderful wildlife. Anyone who has been to the Bremer Canyon can attest to that. I acknowledge Mark and Shelley's work in preservation, research and the protection of the natural environment down on the south coast. It is wonderful that we are able to do this south coast marine park, which people have been calling for for a very long time. It will be a success. I know that there has been some opposition by the opposition, but it will be a remarkable achievement to preserve that area of the coast. That park will rival Shark Bay, Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef as one of the world's leading marine parks. It was good to hear about that.

How lucky are we to have Hon Rosie Sahanna speak from her perspective? We are so lucky to have someone like Hon Rosie Sahanna in this place—to bring her knowledge and experience of, and passion for, the natural environment. She spoke about how people have interacted with the natural environment for hundreds of generations.

I share with Hon Pierre Yang acknowledgement of the contribution of Hon Donna Faragher, former Minister for Environment. We are going to miss Hon Donna Faragher after 2025; we are now on the hunt for a new favourite Liberal, are we not, Hon Pierre Yang?

Hon Pierre Yang: Yes!

Hon DARREN WEST: We will have to come up with a new favourite Liberal after 2025! Hon Pierre Yang quite rightly touched on the history of Labor protecting the environment. It was a Labor government that stopped old-growth logging in Western Australia; it was a Labor government that protected Ningaloo Reef; it was a Labor government that saved the Beeliar wetlands; and it was a federal Labor government that saved the Franklin and Gordon Rivers in Tasmania from being dammed. We take seriously our responsibility to future generations.

Hon Sandra Carr talked about vision in planning—and that is absolutely what the Plan for Our Parks program is all about—and the importance of looking back through history at when people got it right. There are plenty of examples of when people did not get it right, but she talked about governments getting it right. We believe we are doing that here. I think the most important part of Hon Sandra Carr's contribution was when she spoke about the interface, over millennia, between humans and the natural environment. That will continue. There is something really good about going out into the bush with no-one else around, and absorbing and experiencing the natural beauty. We plan to keep that going.

Members may be aware that we seek to create, through the Plan for Our Parks program, five million hectares of new conservation reserves by 2024. We are on track; it was not easy through the pandemic, but we are pretty much on track. This is being done on a historic scale, resulting in a 20 per cent increase in our parks and reserves across Western Australia as a minimum. Anyone reading this transcript in the future or listening to this debate should try to get their head around a 20 per cent increase in our current national parks area; it is a major undertaking that has required significant work from organisations such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for it to happen. I would like to acknowledge all the hardworking staff at those agencies who are tasked with making that happen. It is a government policy and we have put all the frameworks in place to make it happen, but ultimately it is the staff in our government agencies who need to make it work, and they have done an amazing job. They did an amazing job through the pandemic

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and all the challenges that that threw up. It has been a difficult labour market, but we have been able to pull all the right people together to make this happen, so kudos to them.

This initiative has expanded and will continue to expand the conservation estate to protect some of the state's most valuable natural assets, including wetlands, rangelands, forests and marine areas. Scores of threatened flora and fauna species will have their habitats secured. Again, that is for the future. This expansion of our conservation estate under Plan for Our Parks will enhance vegetation conditions and carbon sequestration and will support our aspiration for net zero carbon emissions by 2050. If members are not on the net zero by 2050 train, they had better get on soon. The carbon wars are over; we know what we have to do. The science tells us what we need to do and we are getting on with it. We owe that to future generations.

However, it is not only about conservation. The program will also provide the basis for a new era in working with the state's traditional owners in land and sea management. Of course, that is nothing new. Our first Australians have been managing land and sea and living in our natural environment for many thousands of years. It just makes sense to engage more closely with our traditional owners and First Nations people for the next several thousand years. The spinoffs from that have been profound, and I will talk about that in a while.

Plan for Our Parks involves new agreements with more than 20 different traditional owner groups across the state. It is providing transformative job, training and career development opportunities for Aboriginal people right across every area of land management. At full implementation, this initiative is expected to create over 280 full-time jobs across the state, with around 70 per cent of those expected to be in place by June and the remainder in the 12 months following. It is also providing real and meaningful opportunities for traditional owners and the community to build their capacity, strengthen governance and to directly participate in the joint management of their country. We have already seen significant benefits from that. It just makes sense.

The program offers a valuable opportunity to assist in closing the gap, provides for a practical implementation of the state government's Aboriginal empowerment strategy, and illustrates the government's commitment to agreement-making with Aboriginal communities. Who better for us to work with than our Aboriginal communities and first Australians? There is also a considerable opportunity for further development of nature-based and cultural tourism attractions and facilities, based on the remoteness, isolation, vast open spaces and spectacular scenery of the initiative areas.

Parks are a recognised brand that drives tourism, and the parks will create new reasons for people to travel to the regions. A few speakers have touched on that; what a great opportunity for Western Australians. We saw, when we closed the borders during COVID and pretty much locked up our tourism market in Western Australia, how many Western Australians took the opportunity to explore their own state. We also saw how many were really glad they did that, and will do so again.

The new parks have Aboriginal cultural heritage, landscape and natural features of interest to visitors that can be leveraged by the tourism industry through the creation of new tour experiences. With joint management partners, the parks offer opportunities for visitors to experience Aboriginal culture and heritage, offering a rich new lens through which to view the country. The parks will make an important contribution to our vision to become the premier destination for authentic Aboriginal cultural tourism experiences, as articulated in the state government's *Jina: WA Aboriginal tourism action plan 2021–2025*.

Will it not change the way people think about rock art on the Burrup Peninsula when they go there with a traditional owner who will tell them the real stories about the art, its meaning and its significance? Will that not change their visitor experience, compared with just wandering through?

The emerging carbon farming and nature repair markets offer further opportunities for traditional owners to undertake meaningful work on country and enhance the conservation and cultural values of the parks. I am pleased to report that more than 2.5 million hectares of new reserves, comprising more than 50 per cent of the target area, have been reserved, and there is more to come.

Agreements are currently being finalised and joint management is being implemented with: the Jidi Jidi Aboriginal Corporation, for a new national park at the upper reaches of the Gascoyne River in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Wajarri Yamatji Aboriginal Corporation, for new parks in the Murchison and Gascoyne regions, also in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Malgana Aboriginal Corporation, for new jointly managed reserves that will protect the internationally significant World Heritage values of Shark Bay, again in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Nanda Aboriginal Corporation, for new parks in and around Kalbarri in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Nyiyaparli people, for a new nature reserve at the nationally significant Fortescue Marsh in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Nyamal Aboriginal Corporation, for new parks east of Marble Bar in the Mining and Pastoral Region; the Gija people, for a national park to build on protections of the Fitzroy River, again in the Mining and Pastoral Region; and the Baiyungu people, for new parks in the Exmouth region of the Mining and Pastoral Region.

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I also note the recent release of management plans for the proposed south coast marine park in the Agricultural and Mining and Pastoral Regions—a significant milestone for this government. The area is home to southern right whale nurseries, vast kelp forests, vulnerable seal and sea lion colonies, precious reefs, and other marine species. The plans were developed in partnership with traditional owner groups and build on consultation undertaken in 2021. The state government is encouraging community feedback on the plans, which have been released for four months of public comment. I urge members, rather than jumping to the wrong conclusions, to please engage with the community consultation process. This is a project we want to create together. The creation of the park will be an important part of the state’s marine conservation reserve system. We have achieved a lot under the initiative so far, and the government is looking to create more reserves over the course of the year, in partnership with traditional owners. The state continues to finalise Indigenous land use agreements to create the remaining areas under the initiative. The government looks forward to reporting back on the achievements under the initiative as we approach the target of five million hectares.

That is what the government is doing. It is a significant body of work. It is a significant undertaking and we have had our critics, particularly those sitting opposite. When we talk to groups of young people, environmental groups, traditional owners and communities, in the main, an overwhelming number of Western Australians are supportive of a Plan for Our Parks. That is why it is important to talk about it in the house today. That is why it is important for members like Hon Shelley Payne to bring us to this conversation so we can have it together, very publicly and openly, and so we can resolve our differences here as to the best way going forward. Over the term of the McGowan and Cook governments, I think we have this one pretty right. I think the areas that need to be preserved will be preserved. There may even be areas that come back again in the future because, of course, we cannot do everything at once. One of the common questions we get when we meet with environmental groups is, “What about our area? Can we put that in the Plan for Our Parks?” We are discovering more and more areas across the state as the communities and people who enjoy those areas hope we can bring them into the Plan for Our Parks.

I am pleased we have been able to talk about this today. We have a very good story to tell. It is yet another example of how the Cook Labor government is managing the future of our state for future generations. It is not easy in government but we get to do some really good stuff and this is one of those really good things we have been able to pull together. I am a little disappointed in the opposition today. I thought there would be some contribution on this because it might be something that everyone agrees is in the interests of all our electorates. I thought everyone would agree it is something we need to do, notwithstanding there would be some differences in how we might go about it. I hope that someone opposite gets up and makes a contribution on this today because we would like to know where the opposition is on this and I think the voting public would like to know where the opposition is on this. It has been a bit light on policies over the last little while, but when a motion like this is brought before the house, I would hope that everyone can get around it because I know the general public supports it. I thank the member for bringing the motion and I am very proud to give the government response. I think all the speeches made today have been really well made.

HON COLIN de GRUSSA (Agricultural — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [2.22 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to this motion on behalf of the opposition. In all reality, the commitment by the government back at the 2021 election for the Plan for Our Parks initiative with the creation of five million hectares of new national parks, marine parks and conservation reserve can be seen as a noble aspirational target. However, unfortunately, true to form, although it set out to be a noble aspirational target, it has fallen victim to this government’s sledgehammer, no-compromise approach. It is that approach that puts the opposition in a position of not being able to support this motion because, after all, it is the implementation of the Plan for Our Parks program that is creating big issues in many of the communities that I represent and in many communities and industries across Western Australia. I am going to talk about the south coast marine park and others.

Looking at the process, it started with a quick and dirty consultation process that unravelled when community members realised and understood what was going to happen. It was not really consultation; it was essentially, “We’re delivering this and we’re just going to navigate this process so it happens the way we want.” Then, of course, the government dredged up the Wilson report, which other members have referred to today—that is, *A representative marine reserve system for Western Australia* from June 1994. The report is 30 years old. Hon Pierre Yang went back to the 1980s in his contribution. I am going to go back to the 1980s a little bit, too. In fact, one year after that great movie *Back to the Future* was released, the group that prepared this report started coming together and doing the work for it. We are talking about work that started in 1986, the same year as *Top Gun* and the year many of my generation were enjoying the wonderful computing power of the Commodore 64—many years ago. The inconvenient truth of the Wilson report is that it does not recommend the establishment of marine parks of the scale and scope that have been proposed. In fact, the report recognised there is a lack of scientific data relevant to the south coast and it acknowledged that further research was required to identify specific areas of conservation. The government then commissioned a further review of the south coast marine environment between Albany and Eucla. That report was the Carijoa report, *A review of the south coast marine environment and proposed areas for state marine*

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reservation between Albany and Eucla, Western Australia, which was released in June 2021. Unsurprisingly, that report came to the same conclusion as the Wilson report from 30 years before. The executive summary of the report points out —

The information, recommendations and knowledge gaps presented in this review are based on the most current scientific literature, however, it is acknowledged that the WA south coast is relatively understudied compared to other areas.

There is even a whole chapter in the report devoted to gaps relevant to marine park planning along the south coast. It clearly identifies that the science is not there and that more needs to be done in order to understand the marine environment. Obviously, that begs the question of what additional research was done? As recommended by the Carijoa report, what additional work was done in formulating the marine park boundary and zoning scheme? The answer to that, of course, is none. Instead, the goalposts were moved. Rather than following the usual practice of scientific orthodoxy, as recommended in the report that the government itself had commissioned, it decided to take the precautionary principles approach; that is, “We’ll lock it up because we kind of think there might be something there to protect. We’ll lock it up in exclusion zones and do the research later.” Back in March last year, I called out the government for not releasing the socio-economic impact assessment that it had done to help justify the establishment of the south coast marine park. The reason for doing that is it is incumbent on government to justify its position, to be able to say why it is taking a certain course of action and what impact that course of action is going to have. A socio-economic impact assessment should form a natural part of a project of this scale. Obviously, it is a very systematic method and process that looks at the particular impacts of a project, engages with the communities, local governments, industry, tourism, traditional owners, and ordinary folk who might use the area. All sorts of people are engaged in a socio-economic impact assessment to then understand exactly what is going to happen as a result of the decisions that are made. The beauty of a process like that is, if it is done properly, it builds trust and confidence and it enhances the relevance and accuracy of the work that is being done. It is a good thing to do because when the government chooses a course of action that has a potential to do damage to livelihoods, a strong argument should be put forward that it is the only option available. The government should do the studies and quantify the impacts and consequences of that decision. However, the government did not release that study because it did not do one.

If we go back to November last year to gain a bit of insight on this, I asked a question in this place to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Regional Development —

I refer to the request for tender for the provision of services for the south coast marine park socio-economic impact assessment—Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development document 2023045.

- (1) On what basis was the tender not awarded?
- (2) Was the contract re-tendered?
- (3) If no to (2), why not?

The response from the parliamentary secretary was —

- (1) It was value for money.

It was not awarded because of value for money, it was not re-tendered and —

- (3) A separate decision was made for the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions to undertake a baseline socio-economic study.

I am sure members were all paying attention yesterday when I asked a similar and very simple question in the house, referring to the question I had asked in November. The question in the uncorrected *Hansard* reads —

- (1) Given that it was the consensus recommendation of the evaluation panel to award the tender following the confirmation of the availability of the necessary funds from each of the three agencies involved, who took the decision not to award the tender based on value for money?
- (2) On what basis was it determined that the tender did not constitute value for money?

The response in the uncorrected *Hansard* was —

- (1)–(2) The premise of the question is incorrect. There was no consensus recommendation by an evaluation panel to award the tender, so the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development declined all offers. The offered price of the preferred respondent was over three times greater than the pre-tender approved budget, and a value-for-money purchasing decision was difficult to establish.

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That was the response to the question. However, the reality is that the tender evaluation panel came to a consensus decision to award that tender to a company called BDO Australia. In email exchanges obtained under the freedom-of-information process, this is clearly the case—even to the extent that the panel had commenced discussions on the process through which the preferred tenderer would be briefed and the practical steps upon their engagement, such as who they were going to talk to and what they were going to do. Further, an email exchange between members of the panel confirmed that each agency had secured the funds necessary to complete the study. I will read from one of those emails. This email of 17 November 2022 reads —

Good news. I've spoken with my Director today and I can confirm we can fund \$150k for the job and I understand from talking with Luke this morning that DBCA will also fund \$150k.

If Shane can confirm GEDC can fund \$20k we are ready to go with funding. I'll let Heather know.

In reality, the tender evaluation panel was overridden by the department. The director general of the department directed to change the recommendation to decline all offers. I quote an email of 15 December 2022 from the contracts and procurement officer in the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development —

Hi everyone,

It came to my attention late yesterday that we're going to decline all offers for this process. This wasn't my understanding from early in the week, so it would have been useful to know this information earlier. I'm now in the process of amending the evaluation report to reflect the decline all offers position.

The response was —

Thanks ...

Yes that is correct we discussed the possibility of the DG potentially overriding the decision that procurement arrived at (I.e) decline all offers and go back out to market.

Advice received late Tuesday was not going to override.—apologies of not relaying earlier.

Clearly, the decision was made to override that original decision. Finally, an email of 15 December 2022 reads —

Hi ...

Attached please find the Evaluation Report for ... Provision of Services for the South Coast Marine Park Socio Economic Impact Assessment.

Outcome—Decline all Offers.

That is despite all the previous emails indicating they had accepted the offers and they had even gone as far as working out who to consult in the process. Those emails quite clearly show that in reality the departments had engaged someone under that tender, had awarded that decision and had found the funding but then were overridden. For some inexplicable reason, someone further up the line inside government decided that a proper socio-economic impact assessment did not represent value for money for the government even though it was tendered, procured, agreed and funded. In essence, it was not worth the time and money for this government to have a proper look at what the impact of the marine parks will be on the wellbeing of communities along the south coast like Esperance, Bremer Bay, Jerramungup, Ravensthorpe, Hopetoun and Albany. Instead, after the government overrode that decision and canned the proper socio-economic assessment, it did a quick and dirty desktop study based on generic assumptions on the likely impact. The interesting thing is that it is not only members on this side of the house—opposition members—who are calling the government out on that. I turn now to a media release of 21 February from the President of the Shire of Esperance. He said —

What has been delivered is a vague desktop document, giving ambiguous Key Findings that “the South Cost Marine Park is likely to have some impact” on industry and businesses within our region.

“Presenting ‘likely to have some impact on commercial fishers’ and “likely to be impacts on local businesses’ as a serious socio-economic analysis for decision making in a project this substantial is an insult and a disgrace”, ... “What an affront to local fishing families who have said the sanctuary zones presented by the State Government will mean the end of their livelihoods”.

“Our community knew four years ago the proposed park would have an impact on, not just our commercial fishers, but on the entire region. We don't need ‘likely’, we need to know what the impact will be.”

“What do we stand to lose, socially and economically? How is the State Government going to balance community wellness, business and sanctuary zones with this proposed park? We already have a strong and growing tourism industry, we already have a sustainable fishing industry”, ... “The proposed sanctuary zones are unnecessarily closing down business and industry. It's entirely possible to implement this

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marine park to conserve and manage our precious environment, while retaining the region's industries and economic resilience."

"This isn't a socio-economic assessment, it's an indication of the low value the State Government places on our regional small businesses ...

They are not my words. They are the words of the President of the Shire of Esperance. The disturbing thing here is that exactly the same situation is now playing out with the proposed extension to Marmion Marine Park off the west coast. The WA Fishing Industry Council, the Western Rock Lobster Council, Recfishwest and others are all raising identical concerns as those that have been raised about the south coast planning process. It is not a surprise that the exact same criticisms have been levelled against the Buccaneer Archipelago marine parks planning process.

I do not argue for one second against conserving and protecting our natural environment. We must do that for future generations. I completely agree that we should do that. Many communities I have spoken with—fishermen, business owners, whoever—all have zero issue with the establishment of marine parks or national parks. They support them. Their issue is when the government does not bother to present a defensible argument about why a certain course of action is the appropriate course of action. The government has not done its homework and they shake their heads when all the government can come up with is this 30-year-old report and a quick and dirty—not even a socio-economic analysis really, but just a whole bunch of motherhood statements that do not put the reality in context. Unfortunately, people in those communities realise they are just collateral damage for the steamroller that is this government.

I encourage members of all communities along the south coast to have their say in the public comment period for the south coast marine park. People can find the "Have your say" questionnaire on the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions website. Please have your say on that park. Let us know what the effects will be. The government has not done its homework on the effects it will have on local businesses, so perhaps it is time that people did its homework for it.

HON LORNA HARPER (East Metropolitan) [2.38 pm]: Since we have already had a lot of regional colleagues today speaking about national parks, I thought I would also get up and say let us not forget that here in the metropolitan region, as many members know, we also have many a national park.

I was unsurprised by the comments of Hon Colin de Grussa on behalf of the Nationals WA and Liberals coalition. I was hoping that the Nationals member for the South West Region may have spoken about national parks because the member has a very interesting take on what we should do with trees and national parks. Whereas the Cook government is trying to conserve, this member has already stated that their wish is to go back to cutting them down. It clearly shows there is a huge gap between what the Nationals and Liberals coalition is saying and what the Cook government is achieving.

I congratulate Hon Shelley Payne on this celebration of conservation. This motion celebrates conservation in WA and allows us to highlight what the Cook government is doing on futureproofing and conserving more of this beautiful landscape.

I come from another beautiful country that has made sure to keep its beautiful, stunning landscapes, because it is extremely important. It preserves them for the future; however, it also invests in the involvement of local groups and local people in preserving those areas for the future. It also brings in tourists and tourism. I played tourist recently in a few of those areas. I thought I would highlight a few of those.

I was down south recently and I noticed Walpole–Nornalup National Park.

Several members interjected.

Hon LORNA HARPER: Nornalup. See, I think it should be "Lorna-up". Every time I saw it I thought it was my name, so I got a bit confused.

I had the opportunity to go down and, if anybody asks, I walked part of the Bibbulmun Track. I have said this several times now—I have walked on several parts of the Bibbulmun Track—not consecutively and not very far; however, I can state that I have done parts of it. We had the opportunity to walk around and look at the beautiful karri trees, the marri trees—the big trees. The trees are so big that I could not see the people on the other side. It was amazing to see what we have preserved down there. It is a landscape that has been there for hundreds and hundreds of years—thousands of years—before colonials came in and basically ripped half of it away. It stood there for such a long time. It has been preserved and now we get the opportunity to preserve and futureproof this area again.

We saw an adventure playground amongst the trees, which I do want to go back and do. I did not have time that day—that was my excuse. I am now a bit more adventurous and I think I will go back down and be happy to do the death slide, as we call it in Scotland; here I think it is called a zip slide. You can zip-line between trees and things like that. What a great way to see the environment! What a great way to get in amongst it; to walk amongst the trails; to walk along and realise you are on the Bibbulmun Track. We then went a bit further south to the treetop walk.

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That is another amazing place to visit. How lucky are we that we can walk in amongst those gigantic trees? They are massive. I admit I am a diminutive person with a loud voice. I am fully aware of it; however, it took my breath away to be able to stand there, in amongst the trees, and think, “These have been here for hundreds upon hundreds of years. We have preserved this for future generations.” That is amazing.

Hon Shelley Payne spoke about Esperance and marine parks. Hon Colin de Grussa asked many negative questions. I feel that he missed what Hon Shelley Payne was saying about the impact it will have in Esperance and the positive impact it will have on whole area. I have been to Esperance and it has some of the most stunning beaches you will see. They are not quite as good as some in the north of Scotland, but the water is slightly warmer in Esperance. Not much, but it is slightly warmer. I have been down to Lucky Bay, Thistle Cove and other places. Again, those areas need to be preserved for the future.

At the weekend I played tourist again and I went to Jurien Bay and visited the marine park. I have photos and, if members ask me nicely, I will show them. I put on a wetsuit, climbed on the boat, and we went out into the marine park. It was stunning—absolutely stunning—to be out there at seven o’clock in the morning to see the marine creatures and birds. It is another area that we are extremely lucky is being preserved for the future. Those were my tourist areas; however, there are also areas in and around the Perth metropolitan region. I will talk about some that are close to the East Metropolitan Region because that is kind of my jam and where I am from.

Close to where I live is Walyunga National Park. Hon Rosie Sahanna is laughing at my pronunciation as usual; however, I am not sure whether she has had the opportunity to visit Walyunga National Park. I am lucky; I can say I have. We walked the trails and we sat beside the river. It is another beautifully preserved area of our state. It is extremely important to preserve and invest in those and other conservation areas for the future. When we go, we of course follow the rules set by the local rangers to make sure that what we bring in, we take away.

Then we went for a little drive into the hills to another beautiful area and another part of the Bibbulmun Track, which is Kalamunda National Park. The Bibbulmun Track is only a short 1 000 kilometres between Kalamunda and Albany. Personally, the kilometre-and-a-half that I walked is probably enough for me. My husband has walked a lot further and, as we know, Hon Tony Buti, the Minister for Education; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests; Aboriginal Affairs, has completed the Bibbulmun Track. If members do not have the opportunity to go down south to Walpole and Nornalup, they can walk through the woodlands of jarrah, marri wandoo and butter gums and head across to Piesse Brook. There are echidnas, kangaroos, bandicoots—all sorts. There are toilets and picnic facilities. This is an area where you put your phone away, go up there and have fun.

Again, how lucky we are to have that on our doorstep and be able to visit those things. While we are talking about the future and the Plan for Our Parks, we must also think about the oldest national park here in Western Australia, which, again, is in the East Metropolitan Region—a most marvellous place to live. It is an extensive area of the Perth metropolitan region and one that is vastly maligned by people because we are not next to the beach. We may not be right next to the beach, but we are next to the Swan Valley and those beautiful national parks. John Forrest National Park was Western Australia’s first national park. It has been a bit sad over the years; however, luckily for us, there has been massive investment in the park by the Cook Labor government to bring it up to modern standards with better accessibility so that more people can access the park. I have not been up there for a while—I will be honest. I last visited before the trail improvements began; however, \$2.5 million in funding was spent on upgrading hiking trails and there will be a new off-road cycling adventure trail. That is not my thing—I will be honest. Bicycles and I do not get along too well, especially when I went over the handlebars of one as a child and managed to knock some teeth out. That has lived with me until this day. It is not the reason I speak a wee bit funny; that comes with the accent.

The park’s upgraded trail network will include trails for all ages, fitness levels and abilities. It will include 10 kilometres of new grade 3 and 4 hiking trails. Sections of the Eagle View, Christmas Tree Creek and Wildflower Walk trails will be realigned to improve trail sustainability, safety and walking experiences. The new eight-kilometre Little Eagle hiking loop will allow visitors to experience new areas of the park, including spectacular views over the Jane Brook catchment, and weave through an impressive wandoo woodland. Wow! What a plan that is! How amazing will that be when it is completed? Other improvements include sealing the Jane Brook promenade loop and upgrading the Glen Brook Trail, including new steps, footbridges and drainage that have improved the walking experience and reduced long-term maintenance requirements. I have friends who require wheelchairs to get around, and our investments in and planning for the future of parks, including improving accessibility, mean that people like my friends can take their wheelchairs along, get out and enjoy what we, people who have the ability to stroll through parks, take for granted. Making the trails more sustainable and easier to manoeuvre will ensure that children with disabilities will be able to manoeuvre through them and parents of children with cognitive disabilities will be able to see their children as the children go exploring, as all children do. Having those safety aspects is hugely important, and having parks as investments for the future is extremely special for us.

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I very keenly listened to Hon Rosie Sahanna as she talked about investment in parks in the Kimberley. The Kimberley is one of the most stunningly beautiful areas of Australia. I was lucky to go up the peninsula on the other side of Broome. Hon Rosie Sahanna took me there, around and about, and I will not try to pronounce the names because I do not want to insult anybody with my pronunciation. Hon Rosie Sahanna thinks it is really funny, so I will keep quiet about that. I will in private because she tries to teach me and I roll the Rs, but it just gets too much.

Hon Darren West mentioned the Burrup Peninsula. He is right that having a ranger from the local group of people tour us around Burrup Peninsula, show us the rock art and explain its significance to us took us to a new level of understanding and appreciation. In the same way, many of us here have done the tour in Kings Park with the local ranger and local Noongar person who take people through the history of Kings Park and explain the women's, men's and birthing areas. That gives people a new appreciation of how lucky we are to spend time in parks, plan for our future and continue to preserve these beautiful areas.

We have only scratched the surface today when talking about the Plan for Our Parks. Western Australia has so many national parks. If I remember rightly from my reading, WA has 112 national parks. That is truly amazing. I believe another 20-odd areas will come on. Please do not shoot me if I am wrong about that, but other areas will come on in the next few years.

A lot of WA has very few people living in it, so it gets very hard to consult when a lot of the area is—not uninhabited—not densely populated. If we go to areas, we talk to the traditional owners and the people who are affected. I am always very disappointed when people ask about the fishermen, the timber growers and the like. Yes, it is sad when we move on from older industries to more modern ways of doing things; however, we have to remember that we are just a blip on the landscape in WA. Colonisation of WA started in only 1826. We have not quite reached 200 years since colonisers arrived in Albany, but traditional owners have been here for 60 000-odd years. To make sure that we keep this land as pristine as we possibly can in the future—because we have done quite a bit of damage in the past, cutting down trees—we need to talk to, and we are talking to, traditional owners about how to preserve this beautiful country for the future. Whilst doing that, we can have new industries, new jobs and more tourism, and make sure that we are preserving everything.

I would like to thank Hon Shelley Payne for her motion highlighting the Plan for Our Parks program and for giving us the opportunity to wiggle our way through that and talk about some of WA's 112 national parks and how we are preserving them for the future. How lucky are we that the Cook government is willing and able to put that much money in and continue to invest?

HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan) [2.55 pm]: I will just be brief. When motions of this sort come through, it makes me think back to when I was in opposition and sitting in a chair near the door. When a motion of this nature came through and we in opposition truly disagreed with it—I think there were nine of us at the time—all nine of us would be railing against the motion. We would try to make an amendment, and then we would get up again and speak on the amendment. We would fight such a motion. From the non-government contributions so far, I take it that the crossbench agrees with the motion because it has not railed against it and the opposition, in its heart of hearts, believes that it is a good motion. I also believe that it is a good motion.

I have two small points to make. I have a little bit of a connection to the Abrolhos Islands. I have family who live in Kalbarri and have a long association with the crayfishing industry. In season, they often go to the Abrolhos Islands with a lot of the fishing fleet and provide some of the services to the fleet that works from the Abrolhos Islands. They work from a number of small cabins there. They, obviously, told me how beautiful and pristine it is. This makes me think that it is pristine but we cannot guarantee that. A lot of individual dedication has made sure it remains pristine. To have a plan and bring it into a conservation estate will mean that we can rely on it remaining there for years to come. Apart from the crayfishing industry in that area, there are other opportunities to have an ongoing tourism industry and such. It is quite important to make sure that there is a plan, and this is one step on that path—or so I believe, anyway. I am very happy for it to be so because I have very fond memories of Kalbarri, crayfishing and the Christmases we used to have there.

Another point I want to reinforce, which I think is a particularly good point, is that if we do not plan these reserves, we often get to a point at which we have built over any opportunity to have those reserves. Kings Park is a particularly notable point. Can we imagine if Kings Park had not been excised from building? What value would the land now have for construction and such? If people had not had the foresight to excise that land to make sure that our generation and many future generations can enjoy it into the future, it would be just another extension of Perth. It would be a concrete jungle. As it now stands, we have an opportunity to use the park for other means. It is one of the attractions that draws people to Perth, rather than all just heading down south to the wineries or up north to the fabulous things available up there. Kings Park is quite important to Perth.

I thought the reference to New York was also very stark. I have had the opportunity and the pleasure of being in New York and have walked through Central Park. When you look outside of that green triangle in the middle of

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the island, every square centimetre is utilised for office buildings, high-end accommodation and such. If that area had not been excised and the borders strictly adhered to, I can imagine how it would be now; there would be a couple of small green patches and the rest of New York would be a concrete jungle. As much as I am in favour of progress and expanding and building new infrastructure, I also recognise that we need to plan to have green space within that. It helps in many different ways—importantly, with mindfulness and peace. When we are trying to develop a suburb, we have to plan to have green space put aside. We cannot just give developers the go-ahead.

I think that this is a particularly good motion. I was disappointed that all but one of the speakers on this motion were government members. If there was genuine disagreement with this motion—disagreement with commending the Cook government or the implementation of the plan—I would have expected a line of speakers to get up and rail against it and put their views on the record. I do not just mean the opposition; I also mean members of the crossbench, who say that they are important to this house and to good government. As I said, I can only expect that they agree with this motion, because they have not come into this place and railed against it, so I suspect that it is supported.

HON SHELLEY PAYNE (Agricultural) [3.02 pm] — in reply: I thank all the members who made a contribution today. As Hon Martin Pritchard said, that was mainly government members. I thank them for taking the time to talk about the great work that our government is doing. Hon Rosie Sahanna talked about the Kimberley being one of the last remaining wilderness areas and all the natural attractions up there. We are doing a lot of important work with our joint management with traditional owner groups in the Buccaneer Archipelago and other parts. I thank Rosie for her contribution. It made me think. I talked a lot in my contribution about the work we are doing with traditional owner groups and the \$100 million we put into Aboriginal ranger programs, but I did not take a minute to thank all those traditional owners who are working on the ground to build capacity within their own organisations to start these Aboriginal ranger programs and make them successful.

People like Julie Hayden and Johnny Rodd down in Katanning are doing amazing collaborative work, working with ranger programs in all the surrounding areas. I commend the team at Esperance Tjaltjraak Native Title Aboriginal Corporation—Gail Reynolds-Adamson, the chair, as well as Peter Bednall, the CEO. Jennell does a lot of work down there. Doc Reynolds and the whole team do an amazing job. As I mentioned, Robbie Minter has been successful in the Aboriginal ranger program. Just this week he received a grant for all the work he is doing down there. It is not easy for these people; they are out in the regions, dealing with the same issues we are all dealing with out in the regions, plus, on top of that, trying to build capacity and support their own people. It is a lot of work and I commend them for it.

I thank Hon Pierre Yang for his contribution, particularly about our long commitment to protecting the environment and how important it is to talk about the environment and what we are doing, as well as noting the lack of representation on this by the opposition.

I thank Hon Sandra Carr for talking about the importance of visionary planning and how great it is that we are doing this and expanding our conservation estate. She also talked about the Abrolhos Islands and the opportunity we have to share and talk about our history in those parts. I look forward to doing that in conjunction with Aboriginal people into the future. I do not know whether many members have watched *Shipwreck Hunters Australia*, which is a series on Disney+ that was filmed here in WA. One of the episodes is on the Abrolhos Islands and a lot of the episodes refer to the history of our marine areas. I give a shout-out to Johnny, Andre, Nush and Ryan. They are WA locals who have been part of that *Shipwreck Hunters* series with Disney+. I say well done for that. Hon Sandra Carr also mentioned the disability access investments in Abrolhos. I say as well that it was a \$2 million initiative of ours to improve disability access in our national parks. That is another great initiative that we have done to improve our national parks.

Hon Lorna Harper gave a very important contribution about using national parks and how important it is for people to get out and experience our natural environment in these areas. I talked a bit about the diversity of our natural environment as well.

Hon Sandra Carr also talked about projects on agricultural land. I give a shout-out to Wheatbelt Connect, which is working across the wheatbelt. I met Sam the other day at the Wagin Woolorama. That is a collaboration between Qantas, ANZ and Inpex looking at not just buying good quality agricultural land and planting it out with trees for carbon credits, but actually working with farmers to look at areas of their land that are maybe not very good for farming that they can help to rehabilitate and use for things like carbon farming and carbon credits. There are also some interesting projects with Qantas looking at future sustainable fuels using mallee and things like that. It is very exciting.

I thank Hon Darren West for his contribution, particularly about jobs, noting the 280 jobs that will be created. Thirty of those jobs will be along the south coast. He also referred to our work with traditional owners.

I have only a minute left, but I want to respond to some comments by Hon Colin de Grussa. He raised some reports such as the Wilson report. He spoke about the lack of scientific data but forgot to mention the University of Western

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Australia's important work. I mentioned its report *Characterising the fish habitats of the Recherche Archipelago* and the great work it did. He also mentioned the economic impact assessment. It is up there online for anybody to go and have a read. It did not recommend at the end of that report that more work needed to be done. The key findings are there; they are positive findings with the outcome of this report. I am glad that at the end of his contribution he encouraged people to have their say, because throughout the last two years, I have not heard any positive contribution to the development of this park from anyone in the opposition. I am glad that he is now encouraging people to have their say.

Question put and passed.