

APPEALS CONVENOR — ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for the Environment) [9.02 am]: I rise to inform the house of the recent appointment of Mr Anthony Sutton as the Western Australian independent Appeals Convenor. Western Australia is experiencing some very exciting and prosperous times. It is impossible to ignore the fact that our economy is booming. However, with this come many challenges, including a need to ensure that all of the community benefits from the boom while at the same time ensuring that our environment is not sacrificed for the sake of it. The level of exploration activity underway in Western Australia is unprecedented. The number of applications before government, the complexity of those applications and the haste with which industry would like those applications dealt with pose enormous challenges for us all.

Checks and balances are in place to ensure that developments are properly assessed. This includes an independent Environmental Protection Authority and an independent Appeals Convenor. The role of the Appeals Convenor is to give advice and make recommendations to me on environmental appeals made under the Environmental Protection Act 1986. It is an important role, and it is crucial that we attract highly skilled people to fill this role. Mr Garry Middle, who leaves us to take up a position of associate professor of urban and regional planning at Curtin University of Technology, is one such person. I place on the record my immense gratitude to Mr Middle for his tireless work and excellent advice over his two years in that position. I believe that Anthony Sutton is an excellent replacement. He is an extremely accomplished practitioner in the field of environmental management. Most recently, Mr Sutton worked as manager of strategic policy and planning with the Swan River Trust. He has worked across a range of fields, including forestry, plant research, nature conservation, environmental planning and impact assessment, waterways and catchment management, salinity, environmental management and, most recently, strategic planning and policy development. From his time with the Swan River Trust as environmental manager, with the Geographe Catchment Council and with the Cockburn Sound Management Council, Mr Sutton brings with him a thorough understanding of the delicate balance between promoting sustainable development and protecting our precious environment.