

CONSERVATION WEEK

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah — Minister for the Environment) [12.09 pm]: I wish to inform the House that this week is Conservation Week, an annual event promoted by the Conservation Council of Western Australia and affiliated organisations to celebrate community efforts to conserve the nature of Western Australia. Conservation Week recognises the efforts of community organisations, groups and individuals in protecting Western Australia's environment. Western Australians have a strong passion for their environment, and their involvement plays a significant role in safeguarding our landscapes and wildlife. Conservation Week gives us all an opportunity to take a step back and acknowledge what we have achieved and to consider what more we can do. There are now many programs throughout the state that are working towards the protection, enhancement and sustainability of the environment. These include the award-winning wildlife recovery program, Western Shield; the \$15 million biodiversity initiative, Saving Our Species; the expansion of biological surveys; and the implementation of recovery plans for threatened species and ecological communities. Vital to the success of these programs are strong partnerships with community organisations; for example, Land for Wildlife and the State Cane Toad Initiative both rely heavily on community involvement. Another aspect of community involvement that is evolving at a rapid pace is eco-education and the increasing awareness of the environment and climate change among Western Australian young people. Volunteer programs at many organisations, including the Department of Environment and Conservation, Perth Zoo and Kings Park, are excellent examples of the importance of community support. For example, the DEC program alone has around 4 000 active volunteers contributing approximately half a million hours of support to conservation. The environment is our greatest asset and it is important that we all continue to work together to implement long-term actions to conserve our biodiversity for both present and future generations to enjoy. I commend the Conservation Council of Western Australia and all those involved for hosting Conservation Week and encouraging all of us to act now for the future.