

RESERVES BILL 2023

Second Reading

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [4.12 pm]: Before I was interrupted by question time, I was giving a bit of history of the Helena and Aurora Ranges scenario. Of course, Hon Gary Gray, a well-known member of the Australian Labor Party, was with Mineral Resources Ltd at the time but has now moved on to Ireland, I believe. He was certainly a strong advocate for the potential for mining of the Helena and Aurora Ranges and lobbied Minister Dawson on it. An article that I have here with me states —

MinRes last week ratcheted up pressure on the Government to allow the plan, announcing that it would create a conservation reserve if it was allowed to progress its plans to extend the life of its Yilgarn operations by building the Jackson Five and Bungalbin East mines.

Of course, that all merges into the scenario north of the Esperance port. The member for Kalgoorlie is well aware of the landscape around that area. Mineral Resources was looking to use this as a supplementary source so that it could continue to ship iron ore out of Esperance port. The article continues —

Environmentalists want the area declared a Class A nature reserve. A letter signed by 50 scientists said the range had “global heritage significance” ...

Mr Dawson is poised to announce whether the Chris Ellison-led company can appeal against a June ruling by the Environmental Protection Authority that the proposal was not environmentally acceptable.

This article from Monday, 20 November 2017 continues —

MinRes project manager Sean Gregory last week tried to blunt attacks by the environmental lobby by saying his company would work with the State Government to establish a conservation reserve if the mines were allowed to go ahead.

As we know, Minister Dawson decided that that was not going to happen. In another article, Emeritus Professor John Bailey, a past member of the Environmental Protection Authority and chair of the Conservation Commission of WA, said —

... the Helena Aurora Range was the most significant intact banded ironstone formation range left in the Yilgarn region, 500km northeast of Perth.

Contrary to that, the article states —

Yilgarn Iron Ore Producers Association chief David Utting rejected claims the range was unique.

“It is not a unique area. There are also not endangered species of animals and plants there that stand to be wiped out,” he told ABC radio.

Obviously, we had both sides of the argument. We are now seeing the result of the decision by Minister Dawson. My question to the minister is: how would it unfold if, many years from now, there were a scenario in which certain parties decided it was appropriate for this formation to be mined should the Pilbara or other areas ever run out? Obviously, that would not be the intention of the current government, but how would this unfold if a future government, five, 10, 15 or 20 years down the track, decided that it would like to remove the conservation park and allow the Helena and Aurora Ranges to be mined?

Madam Acting Speaker would be aware of the proposed south coast marine park in my electorate—one of the favourite subjects of the environment minister across from me. I do not know whether “debacle” is quite the right word to describe the consultation process, but it certainly has left a lot to be desired. Many people from Kalgoorlie come to the south coast to fish, go swimming and the like. We have a fantastic piece of coastline there. Esperance beaches are without doubt some of the best in the world. I saw this again recently when I was visiting the Bremer Bay progress association; its members were very upset with the way in which the minister and his department had handled the consultation, or lack of consultation as I put it. We have seen a scenario unfold in which this government has been focused on adding to the conservation estate; it set a goal and will press on regardless. The Minister for Fisheries and the Minister for Environment are in dispute over what is going on with the south coast marine park. Members of the community are not happy with the consultation process. People are leaving the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and other departments. The people of not only Esperance, but also Kalgoorlie, Bremer Bay and all those communities along the south coast are very concerned about the way that things have progressed. I just thought I would mention that in the context of this government once again aiming to add five million hectares to the conservation estate. The government does not seem to quite get it in many ways. I think this is the fruition of the decision made by Minister Dawson in his former role as Minister for Environment. Once again, I want to point out the scenario that played out with the proposed south coast marine park. My

constituents in not only Esperance, but also Hopetoun, Bremer Bay and other areas along the south coast are unhappy about that. The department did one piece of consultation. It asked the fishermen where the best areas were to fish and the department then used that information to outline the sanctuary zones. It was a very disappointing performance in that respect. If that is the way the information was used, it is a real disappointment.

I move on to the Catalina Project. As I said earlier, the member for Burns Beach outlined his thoughts about how that has evolved. Obviously, it is a very interesting history because seven local governments banded together and are joint owners of lot 9504, which covers 432 hectares in the local authority district of the City of Wanneroo. The share of the land by the participant local authority is as follows: the Town of Cambridge has a one-twelfth share, the City of Joondalup has a two-twelfth share, the City of Perth has a one-twelfth share, the City of Stirling has a four-twelfth share, the Town of Victoria Park has a one-twelfth share, the City of Vincent has a one-twelfth share and the City of Wanneroo has a two-twelfth share. The purpose of Catalina Regional Council is to undertake the rezoning subdivision, development, marketing and sale of the Tamala Park land. The objectives of the CRC are to develop and improve the value of the land; maximise, within prudent risk parameters, the financial return to the participants; to balance economic, social and environmental issues; and to produce a quality development, demonstrating the best urban design and development practice. I find it interesting that even the Town of Victoria Park and the City of Perth are joint shareholders in that development, which is quite a way from those councils geographically. I go back to the original minutes of 2006. The representatives on the CRC were Mayor Marlene Anderton for the Town of Cambridge; Commissioners John Paterson and Peter Clough for the City of Joondalup; Councillor Eleni Evangel for the City of Perth; Mayor Terry Tyzack, Councillors David Boothman, Trevor Clarey and Bill Stewart for the City of Stirling; Councillor Vin Nairn for the Town of Victoria Park; Nick Catania for the Town of Vincent; and Mayor Jon Kelly and Deputy Mayor Sam Salpietro for the City of Wanneroo. Looking at the minutes, I could see that there was quite an extensive voting process. There was not a lack of agreement, but certainly a couple of rounds of voting was required. There was a tie and eventually Deputy Mayor Sam Salpietro was appointed chair of the Tamala Park Regional Council. It is interesting how this has evolved. As I said earlier, I was not aware of this before. As the member for Burns Beach pointed out, it is about a triangle of land that resulted from the alignment of the freeway and about unlocking 10 hectares of land isolated by the Mitchell Freeway extension for future housing development in the northern corridor. This legislation has been requested by that particular council since 2006.

Aside from that, the bill contains omnibus amendments that, for drafting efficiency and to minimise the impost of the Parliament's time, seek to also amend five other A-class reserves. In the Shire of Harvey, 1.4 hectares will be excised to amend a historical oversight by removing an area of the reserve that presently extends across part of the existing and proposed Dampier to Bunbury natural gas pipeline. That is obviously important. As the member for Cottesloe pointed out in question time today, we are concerned about the state's gas reserves and the domestic gas situation. We are concerned about what we see as an evolving mess in the world of Collie, the world of energy, the world of coal and the world of importing coal. We hope that we do not have a hot summer with many power failures this year. It is important that gas is part of the mixture. Reserve 10003 is in the Shire of Plantagenet. Approximately 20 hectares will be excised from that reserve to address a historical encroachment of a landfill site. I am familiar with that in my former role as the chairman of the Great Southern Development Commission and being familiar with the Mt Barker town site and the landfill site. I think that is important. The City of Greater Geraldton in the Yamatji land estate provided for registration under the Yamatji Nation Indigenous Land Use Agreement. The other excision is the Lane Poole Reserve in which 3 000 hectares of land within the Lane Poole Reserve near Dwellingup will be upgraded to the status of national park.

The explanatory memorandum points out —

This recognises the conservation and recreational values of the reserve and realises the intent of the Lane Poole Reserve and Proposed Reserve Additions Management Plan 2011, current and past forest management plans and the Draft Forest Management Plan 2024–2033 ...

As we know, this government once again has obliterated many families and many timber milling families in the south west of Western Australia from making a living with the government's forest management plans. It is disappointing, being a regional member. I worry for the member for Warren–Blackwood when her government gets absolutely smashed by those communities in the south west, including Pemberton, Nannup and Manjimup. Wherever I go, the people of Warren–Blackwood are not happy. That is unfortunate, because I like the member for Warren–Blackwood.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is unfortunate that at the ballot box in March 2025, I suspect —

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I cannot quite focus while I have the member for the smallest electorate in Western Australia interjecting on my left side.

Mr S.A. Millman interjected.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I will say that I like the member for Warren–Blackwood and it is very unfortunate that her government has made a mess of those communities, the family-owned timber mills and the furniture producers. I can see what will happen. People all over the south west will be looking around for firewood. The next thing will be the firewood scenario. Those timber mills were promised timber right through to the end of this year. A couple of months ago, the minister all of a sudden pulled the rug out from underneath them. Unfortunately, the member for Warren–Blackwood will pay the price at the ballot box in March 2025. It is unfortunate, but that is the reality when her government does that to those communities. When the government does that, what else can she expect? I just want to point that out, because this is obviously partly concerned with the draft forest management plan. There are some beautiful parts of the electorate of Warren–Blackwood. People down in Donnelly River village, for argument’s sake, need that firewood. All those cottages have firewood requirements. Under the stewardship of this government it will be a real challenge to supply firewood throughout the south west. We will see that evolve over the next few months and there will be implications.

Aside from all that, I want to say that in general terms the opposition supports this bill. Obviously, I wanted to point out some of those aspects that concern me with this government’s aspiration for five million hectares of reserves and parks. Sometimes it just needs to have a bit of a think about the implications. Whether it be the South Coast marine park or the member for Warren–Blackwood’s future, this government needs to have a bit of a think about the flow-on effects and the communities. We have looked at the maps, the Catalina Regional Council scenario, land development et cetera, and I understand why these reserves and changes need to be made in light of those. As I said, the opposition will support this bill. I leave my contribution there.

MS C.M. ROWE (Belmont) [4.32 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Reserves Bill 2023. This bill will make a substantial difference to Western Australia’s ecological landscape. I wish to recognise the efforts that our government continues to undertake to preserve our state’s rich and unique environment. Not only do I commend the Minister for Environment for his profound commitment to his portfolios, it is encouraging to see the Cook government’s approach to conservation in WA expand across multiple portfolio and in particular to the Minister for Lands, and I congratulate him for his carriage of this bill. In doing so, I believe it is important to recognise the aspects of this bill that demonstrate how the Cook government is protecting and strengthening WA’s natural environment. The Reserves Bill 2023 endorses this notion by elevating the protection of Mount Manning Conservation Park to a class A national park. The change in status from a conservation park to a national park signifies a commitment to higher standards of protection and preservation for the Helena and Aurora Ranges, which are located approximately 400 kilometres east of Perth, and ensures the protection of these ranges for future generations. It is also an important step as this is part of the second stage of establishing the Helena and Aurora Ranges as a national park.

The Helena and Aurora Ranges are 2.5 billion-year-old banded iron formation ranges that have outstanding landscape and cultural values. Upgrading an incredible 145 000 hectares to a class A national park will do invaluable work to protect the flora and fauna that are part of these ranges. The Helena and Aurora Ranges are an ancient landscape of great biosecurity, which encompass the Great Western Woodlands as well as culturally important sites. This pristine landscape contains caves, mature eucalypt woodlands and rocky outcrops, and has the largest and highest banded ironstone formation in WA. The Helena and Aurora Ranges are the jewel in the crown of the Great Western Woodlands, which is regarded as the largest remaining area of intact Mediterranean woodland left on Earth. It contains 3 000 species of flowering plants, about a fifth of all known flora in Australia. Importantly, this pristine region is home to five endemic plant species as well as a critically endangered flowering plant that is found in only the Helena and Aurora Ranges. The Helena and Aurora Ranges are also home to over 100 species of reptiles, birds, insects, mammals and arthropods, making it an ecologically significant area due to the breadth of flora and fauna. It also provides a habitat to a threatened species of bird, the malleefowl, as well as a range of marsupials, including the long-tailed dunnart, echidna and pygmy possum.

Beyond the environmental benefits, there will be significant cultural benefits to upgrading Mount Manning Conservation Park. National parks provide great opportunities for outdoor recreation, such as bushwalking and birdwatching, among other forms of ecotourism. Preserving a greater amount of land for the Helena and Aurora Ranges will enable more people to experience the unique beauty that the range has to offer. It also creates potential to attract tourists to witness its incredible landscape, which would contribute to the sustainable development of the region and provide economic benefit. Preserving this area as a national park is also culturally symbolic as it will help to protect the heritage of local Indigenous communities. There are nine registered Aboriginal sites within the proposed national park, including mythological sites, ceremonial sites, paintings and engravings.

The protection of the Helena and Aurora Ranges and the intention to add 145 000 hectares to the national park coincides with our government’s ambitious agenda to create five million hectares of new national marine parks and national reserves through the Plan for Our Parks initiative. Plan for Our Parks was proposed by our government in 2019, and it is really exciting to see some of these plans now coming to fruition. Adding five million hectares

to WA's conservation estate is not only an ambitious, but also an important initiative as we look towards a more sustainable future. It is exciting to see the Cook government endeavour to achieve such a valuable initiative for our local communities.

The ecological significance of the Helena and Aurora Ranges cannot be overstated due to the rich biodiversity it supports, the high concentrations of endemic rare flora and unique vegetation communities, the diversity of fauna and their habitats, the mature eucalypt woodlands and the beautiful land formations. I am proud that this has been recognised by our government. This bill sets out to strengthen conservation in our state. The strategy not only recognises the commitment of the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Lands to creating a more sustainable future for WA, but also more broadly reflects the entire Cook government's approach to preserving our state's natural environment. I am deeply proud of our government for taking action that will provide the best ongoing protection of this significant national asset for future generations. I commend the bill to the house.

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [4.38 pm]: I would like to speak in support of the Reserves Bill 2023. As Minister for Environment, I am very pleased that this bill will result in over 150 000 hectares of native forest ranges and woodlands having increased protections. I will go through in a moment how that will be, but I just want to make some comments about the member for Roe and his contribution. The member for Roe is a likeable chap. He is a good bloke.

Mr J.N. Carey: He's like the former member for Kalgoorlie.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is right. The former member for South Perth was a good bloke too. The member for Roe is the only smiler in the bunch, which is great. It is good to see a happy face on the other side of the chamber occasionally. Maybe he does not know how bad it really is over there. He is a good enough bloke. Sometimes I think he comes in here and goes through the motions, delivering the lines, the same old stuff—made up, half baked, not in touch with reality, kicking the can along and doing his job. He does a great job and I appreciate the effort the member makes. But we really have to question some of the things he came up with, including proposing to mine a national park of such significance. I was wondering where he was going. He praised the government for being a staunch defender of the environment, then he suggested that we might want to mine there in the future. I was a bit confused. Then he mentioned the member for Warren—Blackwood and her amazing electorate, suggesting that her constituents are not into national parks and conserving nature. I am afraid that that is not my experience of Margaret River and the electorate. I have engaged with our brilliant advocate down there. She is popular because she engages all quarters. The feedback I get is that they understand climate change and the importance of the issue. That goes for farmers as well because they are absolutely on the front line of climate change. They understand the imperative to act and to be responsible.

I am a bit confused about the Nationals WA. If we go on to their website and try to find the name of the shadow Minister for Climate Action, we come up with Shane Love, the Leader of the Opposition. If we go on to the parliamentary website, we see that the member in the other place, Hon Louise Kingston, is the shadow Minister for Climate Action. It appears that the Nationals have two climate action shadow ministers. That is a great contribution—two climate action shadow ministers in the one party! As Minister for Climate Action, I think that is a great result. The Nationals have obviously worked out that they have a lot of ground to cover and a lot of sins to be forgiven so it has made two members the shadow Minister for Climate Action. I eagerly await the progressive policies coming out of the National Party with not one but two shadow Ministers for Climate Action, according to the web.

The member for Roe went on to talk about our favourite topic—the proposed south coast marine park. He seemed to question and undermine the government's ambitious program about adding five million hectares to the conservation estate. The consultation process on the south coast marine park has outdone every former process that this government has ever undertaken for the creation of a marine park. It is extensive. It is ongoing. The member made these criticisms as if some maps are already out there and some finality to the process has been reached. It is still a work in progress. I am proud of the rigorous contributions that we have had from all sectors. Yes, we have recreational fishers, who have very strong views. We have heard from the commercial sector. Equally, traditional owners have very valid contributions to make. Townspeople and conservationists have all been saying what they want to come out of the process.

The problem with the opposition, in the hunt for a cheap headline, is that it latches on to one single line—often one single person saying outrageous things. They forget that there are other stakeholders. The government lives in a real world. We have to work with the entire community. We have to land on outcomes that deliver for as many people as possible. As I have said before—I said it down in Esperance when I went to the last community reference committee meeting—if people have a list of tick boxes, chances are that not everyone will get every box ticked because that is the fundamental nature of consultation and collaboration. We never let one person get everything they want, resulting in other groups missing out. That is not the point. That is not the process. We have to make a hard decision. It is about striking the right balance, getting the balance right and making a decision that means we can move forward with a marine park that protects the environment, gives commercial fishers an opportunity to continue in their endeavours and gives recreational fishers the opportunity to fish.

When I was down there, I was hit over the head by conservationists because they wanted more.

Mr P.J. Rundle: Is that the Hughes Charitable Foundation from America?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: No, it was locals in Esperance, who said, “We want this. We want that.” They have a tick-a-box list to go through.

I was also interested in small businesses because small businesses are so important all over Western Australia, including down in Esperance. Recently, a group of small businesses got together and put an advertisement in *The West Australian* urging the creation of a marine park that had sensible outcomes. These were businesses that provided dive experiences and tourism experiences for people who wanted to dive and explore reefs. People from lots of legitimate organisations and businesses that have a valid interest in this process were saying that they want a marine park that works and that has appropriate sanctuary zones. This is the balance that a grown-up government deals with. It is very easy for the opposition to latch on to something and make an extreme comment, but we have to talk to the entire community. We have to deal with all stakeholders and we have to come out with a decision that has the right balance. That is what we are doing with the south coast marine park and we will keep doing it. If the member for Roe wants to be part of the process and be a contributor rather than knocking us all the time, I advise him to talk to the whole community and let it know that when the indicative maps come out and there is an opportunity for extended public comment, people who have already made a contribution through the various processes can come back and have another say. We can get as many people as possible to have their say. They can be people from all sectors—all parts of Western Australia—who have an interest in protecting the environment for the long term.

I have a strong belief that one day, in years to come, whoever the member for Roe is or whether the electorate of Roe still exists —

Ms R. Saffioti: It will still be the current member.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: It might be.

Mr P.J. Rundle: We lost the seat of Wagin because Baldivis was created.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: And what a wonderful addition that was to our state! What a great democratic outcome that was.

I believe that in future years, everyone will be championing the new marine park—commercial operators, recreational fishers, conservationists and local businesses—because marine parks offer a premium and highlight the value of what is down there. It is amazing. There are creatures down there that do not exist anywhere else in the world. It is such a hotspot of rich diversity. The member should be proud of that. He should want to protect and promote it in a balanced way that caters for all sectors and their interests.

We are considering the Reserves Bill. The member for Roe mentioned Mt Manning Range Nature Reserve, which is located 400 kilometres east of Perth and 100 kilometres north of Southern Cross, being converted to a class A national park. This is a fantastic outcome for Western Australia. The creation of a new Helena and Aurora Range national park is a strategic priority for the government’s ambitions in its Plan for Our Parks. It is the most important and massive addition to the conservation estate in our state’s history. It is not just happening in the south west; it is happening all over Western Australia—the Kimberley, the goldfields, the midwest and the Pilbara.

We are adding to the conservation estate. It is a very particular and careful process. It involves consultation with traditional owners. When national parks are finally created, people will want to be out on country with traditional owners to see how they celebrate. They see it as almost the next edition of a native title settlement. They celebrate because they know it is about their ability to protect their own country. It is about their ability to provide meaningful jobs for their own communities, protect the country and provide tourism opportunities. It is going to play a great role in educating not just Western Australians and Australians, but also people from around the world about the amazing state we have. It is something that we will all be proud of, and we can do it sensibly and sustainably.

Stage 1 of the Helena and Aurora Ranges national park proposal involved converting almost 150 000 hectares of the Mount Manning Conservation Park. This bill will address stage 2 of the Helena and Aurora Ranges national park by enabling a further 147 292 hectares to be added through the upgrade of the Mount Manning Conservation Park. It is almost another 150 000 hectares. At its completion, there will be a total of just short of 300 000 hectares of woodlands, sand plains, granite outcrops, and the Helena and Aurora Ranges, Mt Manning and Hunt banded iron formations, which members referred to earlier. The banded iron formations will be protected in the Helena and Aurora Ranges national park. These ranges rise majestically from the semi-arid flat surrounds. They are a prominent and striking landform and they will create visitation, as they already do. They are well recognised for their rich diversity and cultural values. From years of scientific studies, we know that each range is home to a unique suite of plants and animals not found together on any other range. The distribution of many of these plants and animals is threatened or restricted. Examples include the malleefowl, the ironstone beard-heath and another creature that I will not attempt to pronounce. The Helena and Aurora Ranges are a jewel in the crown.

A member interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: I will have a go—Bungalbin tetratheca. How was that? Was that close enough? Is the member for Thornlie here to confirm that?

The ranges are the jewel in the crown of the great western woodland and are regarded as the largest remaining intact Mediterranean-climate woodland left on earth, containing about 3 000 species of flowering plants, or about one-fifth of all known plant species in Australia. It is a very special place worth protecting.

Mr R.S. Love: A fifth?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Does the Leader of the Opposition want to question the science?

Mr R.S. Love: It doesn't mean that they're only found there, does it?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Okay; let us knock them out, then. Is that what the Leader of the Opposition is suggesting?

Mr R.S. Love: No. That fifth is just found there.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Why does the Leader of the Opposition hate native plants? Why would he question me pointing out such a rich and valuable diversity of native species in one place? It is a great thing to talk about. Do not question it.

The Stirling Range, Lesueur and Fitzgerald River National Parks are already class A national parks, and this bill will take us one step closer to protecting the Helena and Aurora Ranges in a class A national park.

Mr R.S. Love interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: The member is obviously getting bored of the Helena and Aurora Ranges national park, so I want to talk about Lane Poole. How good is Lane Poole? I went there many times with my kids when they were going to primary school. I know that a certain former Premier used to go down there all the time—and probably still does.

Ms R. Saffioti: No; I think he's probably upgraded from there.

Ms J.L. Hanns: He comes to Collie now!

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Maybe when he is catching up with an old Collie colleague, both of them will hop in the tent overnight and have a good old time!

The second important reserve proposal is, of course, to change the purpose of reserve 39820, as part of the Lane Poole Reserve, from conservation park and the agreement defined in section 2 of the Alumina Refinery Agreement Act to national park. We know that Lane Poole Reserve is important. It is a very important source of recreation and nature-based tourism. It contains visually striking landscapes and forests, waterways and water bodies, and granite outcrops. It is about a 100-kilometre drive south east from Perth, near Dwellingup. I urge people travelling to Lane Poole to stop at the Blue Wren Café and have one of its famous sausage rolls or breakfast and they will have a great time.

Several members interjected.

Mr R.R. WHITBY: That is not a paid endorsement either! Come on; this is serious folks!

There are nine camp sites available within the reserve, complemented by more day-use areas. It is a fantastic local asset.

The rest of the Reserves Bill, as the Minister for Lands will point out shortly, is about tidy-ups and adjusting boundaries where they make sense. There are some minor areas where conservation areas will be taken into important areas, such as railway reserves or, in one case, the important landfill facility, or the Dampier to Bunbury gas pipeline. Indeed, it will allow us to build more housing in our north. That is an appropriate adjustment. It will deliver positive outcomes for the community. The balance is that, overall, there will be an extra 150 000 hectares in the state's conservation estate and it is some of the highest quality landscape to be found in Western Australia.

I thank my colleague the Minister for Planning for his stewardship of this important legislation and I commend the bill to the house.

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands) [4.57 pm] — in reply: I am, obviously, finishing the debate on the Reserves Bill 2023. I want to thank all members for their contributions to the debate, including the unusual member for Roe, the member for Burns Beach, the member for Belmont, the member for Baldivis and the Minister for Environment.

As we know, this bill will consolidate a number of proposed amendments to six class A reserves and a conservation park. As the environment minister and the member for Belmont outlined, it will facilitate the creation of the Helena and Aurora Ranges national park in the goldfields region, which we know, as it has been detailed, is an area rich in biodiversity. This is a major achievement as part of our government's Plan for Our Parks to add five million hectares to our estate. It is disappointing that the member for Roe appeared to criticise that aspiration.

A member interjected.

Mr J.N. CAREY: He said some nasty things actually, member. He was pretty nasty. I find it bizarre.

We know that Western Australians deeply care for their environment and, in particular, they deeply care for conservation. There is a clear line in this house between the Labor Party, which has always had to make the significant conservation decisions for our state, and the Liberal and National Parties, which will always go to political expediency and, at the first noisy voice, grasp onto it. This is how history will see the member for Vasse and the member for Roe. They will be viewed as being on the wrong side of history. Whether it is the logging of forests or the protection of major marine life or the ranges in Western Australia, we will be able to point to the government that made all the major environment conservation gains in Western Australia—and it is a Labor government. It is never a Liberal or National government, because they react to the first noisy voice, even if that noisy voice does not represent the majority of Western Australians and their aspirations. We see it again and again. We see it in the planning debate. In this time of most significant challenge in housing supply, the Liberal and National parties are proposing to make it harder to approve housing in Western Australia. In the Aboriginal cultural heritage debate they talked about property rights. The member for Vasse had the audacity to talk about property rights, yet is now against moves to cut red tape for housing supply. She is allowing the member for Cottesloe to dictate critically needed policy.

Ms C.M. Tonkin: Policy-free zone.

Mr J.N. CAREY: That is true. The opposition—the Liberals and the Nationals—on a range of fronts, has no policy. In this debate, we hear them criticise us for having an aspiration to add five million hectares of conservation estate, to leave a legacy for future generations. Seriously, what is the opposition's vision for conservation? I could not tell you, because it has no policy. What is it, Minister for Environment?

Mr R.R. Whitby: What's that?

Mr J.N. CAREY: What is the opposition's policies on environment?

Mr R.R. Whitby: I can't tell you.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Nobody can tell you! What is it, member for Roe? Name a policy. I am waiting.

Ms L. Dalton: Whaling.

Mr J.N. CAREY: Whaling—maybe whaling! The latest member of the Nationals WA bemoans the fact that we cannot cull whales anymore! It is so absurd, and so bizarre, that in the twenty-first century, as we are trying to grapple with serious issues of conservation, we have a member of the National Party complain in their maiden speech about the lie that resulted in the banning of whales being killed. That is the member's legacy! That is the member's party. It is a party of the future, a party of aspiration and party of vision! People want to know.

Mr P. Papalia: Satire doesn't work in *Hansard*.

Mr J.N. CAREY: I do take that note. That was clearly being satirical because nobody actually believes that! As we have heard, a key component is elevating Mount Manning Conservation Reserve to a class A reserve. That will add 140 000 hectares to the existing national park, boosting the health of the ecosystem, securing biodiversity and protecting our state's natural heritage. I can confirm for the member for Roe that the iron formations in that area are definitely 2.5 billion years old. I thank the member for Burns Beach, Mark Folkard, for his history of the proposed excision of 10 hectares of land in Neerabup.

As the Minister for Housing, I am excited about that. I know it has been a longstanding issue, but this will provide for more housing in the northern suburbs. The member for Roe raised the previous Minister for Environment's decision. He seemed obsessed with the former Labor member for Brand and his lobbying efforts—whatever floats your boat! We stand by it strongly. It shows leadership by the former and current Ministers for Environment that that mining proposal was not supported by the Environmental Protection Authority. That decision was upheld by the Minister for Environment at the time.

It is very clear that we do not want to mine those ranges. The member for Roe seemed to suggest, from his line of questioning, that a future Liberal–National government may want to mine those beautiful ranges. Is the member suggesting that he does wish to mine those ranges in the future?

Mr P.J. Rundle: Not necessarily, I was asking —

Mr J.N. CAREY: “Not necessarily.” I want to put it on the record. He said he could not rule it out! They are extraordinary formations, and right there and then, the member could not rule it out. Either he has no authority in his party, or he has no policy. I suggest it is both. Can I be clear? As is well known, and on the public record already, any future mining proposal would require a parliamentary process and would be subject to disallowance. That is a very high level. I think the member would agree with that. By doing that, it is put in the highest level of public discourse and debate in Western Australia. I would challenge any future government, including a Liberal–National government, if it proceeded with or even considered such a proposal.

I note the member for Roe's comments about the consultation process. There was significant consultation on all the amendments with a range of relevant stakeholders, including local governments. Regional local governments, in particular, want and strongly support these amendments. It has gone through a number of due processes, including environmental management plans, native title negotiations and establishing a railway line corridor.

This bill, in effect, is aligning the land tenure—Minister for Environment, I am here in my capacity as Minister for Lands, not Minister for Planning, but, you know, do not worry about that.

Mr R.R. Whitby: I describe you as both.

Mr J.N. CAREY: That is all right.

This will bring land tenure arrangements into line with the processes that have already occurred. I thank all members again for their contributions. This is exciting. This is about realising our aspirations for the environment. The passage of this legislation will mean a major legacy for Western Australia and something that everyone, except perhaps the member for Roe, should be deeply proud of.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Leave granted to proceed forthwith to third reading.]

Third Reading

MR J.N. CAREY (Perth — Minister for Lands) [5.08 pm]: I move —

That the bill be now read a third time.

MR P.J. RUNDLE (Roe — Deputy Leader of the Opposition) [5.08 pm]: I confirm that we support the bill, but I was pointing out that we differ on some things. We will also stand up for our regional communities. I understand the conservation role. I understand the government's aspiration to build up the conservation estate, but we have concerns about the way our regional communities have been dealt with over the seven years of this current government. That is what I was trying to point out. We will continue to stand up for our regional constituents. Thank you.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.