

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION ACT — THREATENED SPECIES LISTING

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldvis — Minister for Environment) [9.20 am]: Today I would like to inform the house of the first listing of threatened species made under the Biodiversity Conservation Act, as published in the *Government Gazette* of 30 September 2022. This listing reaffirms that the protection of unique Western Australian biodiversity is a key priority of the McGowan government. The listing of these species under contemporary legislation enhances their protection and provides an opportunity to reflect changes in scientific names for some species, and to better align the Western Australian and commonwealth protected species lists. This listing has enabled repeal of the threatened and specially protected species notices made under the superseded act. The Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 provides greater protection for threatened species through significantly increased penalties for illegally causing them harm. Furthermore, the new processes for listing species under the act elevate the standard of scientific rigour in assessing the eligibility of species for listing and include provisions for improving public consultation.

I would like to acknowledge today the role of the Threatened Species Scientific Committee of independent scientific experts in reviewing the conservation status of these species and providing me with expert scientific advice on their listing. This new list of threatened and specifically protected species under the act keeps our assessment up to date as threats change and our scientific understanding improves. Responding to ongoing learning and improved knowledge means that the protection afforded to our most threatened plants and animals can keep pace with our changing landscapes and seascapes.

Since 2015, Western Australia has been working with the commonwealth and other state and territory governments on implementing a national common assessment method for listing threatened species and working towards establishing a single operational list of threatened species to improve consistency in environmental assessment processes and conservation priorities. In Western Australia, we can be proud of the many ways we are demonstrating leadership in safeguarding our unique biodiversity and natural assets for future generations. The first listing of species under the Biodiversity Conservation Act is yet another example of the commitment of the McGowan government in delivering conservation of the unique plants and animals we have in Western Australia.

Finally, I thank the staff at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for their work on this listing process, as well as the Threatened Species Scientific Committee for its advice to me on this important matter.