

**SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2022**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 22 November.

**DR J. KRISHNAN (Riverton)** [12.37 pm]: I rise today in support of the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill 2022, as part of the Streamline WA initiative. I carefully listened to other members' contributions. The member for Willagee shared his experiences of enjoying camping by the river, fishing and then cooking fish and crab on occasions. The member for Thornlie spoke at length about his passion for the environment. I was quite impressed with his connections and the in-depth knowledge he has about bird rescues and the damage done to birds caused by young kids using fishing rods and the birds then getting trapped in the fishing lines. I also listened to the member for Churchlands. It is very sad that her electorate is not surrounded by any rivers. The member is welcome to come to Riverton any time. We will welcome her with open arms to enjoy the Canning River.

The entire northern boundary of my electorate of Riverton is surrounded by the Canning River. I am very fortunate. Unlike other members who were fortunate to live by the river or grow up by the river, I grew up in the mountains and hills in a pea-growing area where rivers were a rarity. When I came to Perth, I was quite interested in and got excited about the way the rivers and riverbanks looked. I made some inquiries about living in that area, on the riverbank, but I realised that it was so expensive I could not afford it. I am really proud to be in Riverton, with the Canning River there and the Shelley foreshore—a key landmark in my electorate. Such areas provide huge health benefits. When I get there in the morning for a walk, the enthusiasm and mood I get from people greeting each other as they walk is a great start to the day—although I should admit, I do not do it as often as I should. It builds our society in a warm, positive way in which people feel really good about being in such a place at such a time.

A lot of recreation happens in that area. I was very fortunate to be invited to the season opening of the Shelley Sailing Club. I learnt a lot about what happens on the water, how the process takes place, how they follow the wind and where they turn. It was an exciting learning experience. As I have already mentioned, my childhood was in the mountains. If I was asked, I would say that I am an expert in climbing trees; that is how I enjoyed my childhood, plucking oranges. But ask me about rivers, and I will say that I do not have expertise. Unfortunately, with subdivisions, increased occupancy and land infill, some kids are not even aware of how a garden or a lawn grows. I recently visited Shelley Primary School and was fortunate to have the state Governor visiting with me for a tree-planting event in commemoration of the Queen. At that time, I was surprised by the feedback from the teachers about kids who were not even aware of tree planting. It is a huge education opportunity to have such precincts in the electorate.

I am involved with a few volunteer groups in the Canning River area. One of the groups meets regularly on Monday mornings, and I would say it is a community-building exercise. I felt, after a couple of visits, that it is better than going on holiday. They all bring some morning tea and carry the required material in their cars. They group together to do some conservation work; they water plants and pull up weeds, work for about two or three hours, gather together again and then disperse. Looking at them working I thought, "You would be more organised if you had a trailer with all your materials there to bring in, enjoy what you do, and go back." It is a volunteer group, and I was fortunate enough to be able to make that election commitment and deliver it for them, so that they could work more efficiently.

Without people like that, the continuation of conservation would not be possible. Because those people give up their personal time and effort to conserve such areas, we are able to enjoy the benefits. It has made me realise that the river does not belong to only the people who live there; it belongs to the world. Anyone is welcome to come along and enjoy the benefits of it.

Another volunteer group took me on a long tour. Initially I thought I was in a rush, but I decided to cancel my next meeting to gain an in-depth knowledge of what the volunteers were doing. They are particularly focused on land erosion; they do not want any problems in that area, and they are contributing their volunteer time to prevent erosion by undertaking a planting program. To my surprise, I would say that the majority of that volunteer group are seniors. They have plenty of time, and their passion for contributing to such a cause really touched my heart.

There are many activities that happen by the river. Since coming to the Swan River, one of the best activities I have enjoyed—and I recommend this to members, if they can find the time—is a walk that starts at the jetty in South Perth, goes around the Causeway, comes back via Riverside Drive, under the Narrows Bridge and then back to the South Perth jetty. It is a 10.5-kilometre walk that takes approximately one hour and 20 minutes. It is the most scenic, enjoyable walk that one could ever experience. It is because of the efforts that have been put into preserving the beauty of the Swan River that we are still able to enjoy it. I have also participated in the Rotary Walk for a few years as a fundraising effort. One can enjoy the experience while also contributing to a charity, so there is a double benefit, let alone the health benefit. The Indian community hosts a landmark event in Langley Park every year, a holy festival called the Festival of Colours. People around the world celebrate the Festival of Colours, but I would say that Langley Park, by the Swan River, is the best location in the world for a holy festival to be celebrated.

The amendments contained in the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill 2022 are not designed to lose control over the conservation efforts, but to make them more convenient. Part of the government's Streamline WA initiative is to make it easier for businesses to undertake tourism, hospitality and leisure activities so that we can make this state more vibrant and more useful, welcome more people and get Western Australians more active. The bill will not change the rigorous assessments and efforts undertaken by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. It will make no major changes to the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Act 2006, which works effectively. The idea is to support tourism and hospitality businesses by making it easier for them, reducing confusion and streamlining processes to make things better.

The bill has two key streamlining effects. Firstly, it will remove duplication from the process of applying for a licence and a permit—licences for approved development and permits for other activities. Secondly, it will remove the requirement for the minister to conduct further consultation on changes to the Swan and Canning development control area and the Swan Canning Riverpark. Changes have already been made by the metropolitan region scheme, and have already been approved by the Planning and Development Act 2005. There will be a transitional arrangement for people who already have a licence or permit so that it will not be made more difficult for tourism operators or licence holders to transition. The bill will also insert a new regulation-making head power in section 136. This will give the CEO of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions the power to include insurance as part the granting of permits, which is not the case at the moment. There are more amendments.

In summary, the bill will introduce reforms that will enable DBCA to focus its regulatory efforts on protecting the outstanding values of the Swan and Canning Rivers, which will benefit the people of Perth. The intention of the Streamline WA initiative is to make things better, and this bill will make things better for tourism operators, the hospitality industry and related industries. I commend this bill to the house and thank you for the opportunity to speak, Madam Acting Speaker.

**MR M.J. FOLKARD (Burns Beach)** [12.50 pm]: I rise to speak to the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill 2022, which brings together several acts that relate to the Swan and Canning Rivers to provide better oversight and enhance tourism, planning and development. I am not going to talk much more about that as many members who have spoken before me have unpacked those things, and I think it might be duplication if I were to do so.

I grew up on the Derbarl Yerrigan. The Canning River has a special place for me, as my mother's ashes are spread somewhere along the river. When she passed, my brother, who had the ashes, wanted us to come together. I said to him, "No, don't. You know where you will spread them; don't tell us." Every time we look at the river, that is Mum. As I said, it is a special place for me.

The river is a place of safety. It is a place that made me tough and taught me resilience. What do I mean by that? It taught me to be tough in the face of adversity. When I was a young kid, we lived in Shelley in the electorate of the current member for Riverton. I used to go to school at Aquinas College. I had two younger brothers. We were not rich. For us to get to school, we used to swim the river each day. Talk about building a bit of resilience! Some days it was cold, some days it was deadset freezing, but we would still swim the river. We used to hide an old foamie in the reeds. My two younger brothers and I would walk down to the river, my brothers would climb onto the surfboard, and I would push them across at Salter Point, which was about 50 or maybe 60 yards across. If we got the right tide, it was quite a fast swim; if we got the wrong tide, it could take us a little bit longer. We used to swim across, get off and hide the foamie in amongst the reeds on the other side, and then walk along the river's edge up to Nanna's place where we would have either a hot shower or a hose down, depending on the time of year. Nanna would have breakfast ready for us—a big bowl of porridge with heaps of honey and a bit of milk—and then we would wander off to school. I was not exactly the most well-behaved kid at school. I can remember my teacher giving me a whack across the hand for forgetting my homework or something along those lines, and I laughed at him. He got a little bit upset. I said, "Mate, is that the best you can do, because I've got to go swim the river to go home?" He realised, "Oh, shit; a strap is not going to work with him!" He was right; it never did. I used to look across at the kids who were a bit more well-off than us and they used to row across in their dinghies, and then there were the rich ones who had a little motor for their dinghies. I would think, "Really?", as we would swim across and run up to Nanna's.

I grew up in Aquinas Bay. I can remember hunting for mullet using kylie. Everyone is going to go, "What's a kylie?" "Kylie" is the Noongar word for boomerang. I remember that we were playing down at the beach and I saw a couple of traditional owner kids down there, throwing things in the water and stunning the mullet. I thought, "What's this?" We went up and spoke to them. They used to get old brick straps and fold them over, whack them with a brick to make them nice and flat, and then turn them into a steel boomerang. There was so much mullet back in the river in those days that we used to throw the kylie at the mullet and stun them. A mullet would come up and we would grab it, and that was that night's dinner. Members might question that, but the mullet were 12 or 18 inches long; they were a good size. Anyway, we got a bit of a passion for mullet. This was back in the days when you could net in the river. You cannot do that now. I do not know how we ended up with a length of about 40 metres of two-gauge net, but we used to put that out and catch a couple more mullet, which was great. We would take the mullet home, fillet it and Nanna used to pour a little bit of port on it. That was often our lunch or afternoon tea when we got home.

We used to do that. We then got a bit greedier, because we could not catch enough mullet. All the cousins would say, “Hang on; there’s a good feed at Nanna’s place. Have the kids got any fish?” We got hold of this net, which was almost like a rag net that we tied all together. I am not sure where we found it, but we started catching a couple of dozen mullet, which was great; we could feed the family.

As we were doing this, we would catch small cobbler. Cobbler are beautiful fish that have no bones and a lot more of a salty white flavour. I remember that we were dragging the net out and my younger brother trod on one of them. Cobblers have a spike in the top of their head, and when you tread on it, it is like someone has put a fire inside your foot because it gets really, really painful. I can remember carrying my brother up the stairs. Nanna, in her wisdom, put his foot in a bucket of really, really hot water. She left it in there for half an hour, then took his foot out and put it into a bucket of ice-cold water. This hot and cold broke down the toxins from the cobbler sting. Normally, it takes a couple of days to get over it, but by using the hot and cold water in the bucket, it helped to break down the toxins really quickly. It is interesting that the treatment for marine stings used by Surf Life Saving these days is to take the kids and put them under a really hot shower. It still works; it breaks down the toxins. They use that when a kid gets stung down on the beach, together with a bag of ice and Stingose, and it is happy days for them. I learnt this from my Nanna as a young kid, 40 or 50 years ago. If anyone says that it is a modern treatment, I tend to have a bit of a giggle. I remember the days when vinegar used to solve the issues with stingers on the beach. The kids would end up smelling like fish and chips for the night! Anyway, I digress.

I also learnt to sail on the river, and I became a very good sailor. I had a little Flying Ant. Normally, that is a two-person crewed boat, but I used to crew it by myself. I became a very good, very proficient sailor. Aquinas Bay has sandbanks and all that sort of stuff to navigate. I had to do all sorts of things by myself—lift out the keel and all that. I learnt these skills for life. My father took me down to the junior sailing program at the South of Perth Yacht Club—I think I was about eight or nine at the time—and people tried to teach me to sail a Pelican. I realised that I could not do it because —

**Ms M.M. Quirk:** It kept on squawking!

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** It kept on squawking? No! It is a lovely little sailing vessel for training kids. I could sail the damn thing by myself, but it needed two people to crew it, so I thought that was not going to work for me.

I have carried my sailing skills with me for life. I was down in Esperance many years ago during the super 15s national keelboat championship. I had never sailed on one of those boats before, but my brother-in-law was running late and I got hooked into crewing on one of the vessels. There was a fleet of 60 and we finished in the top 15. I had not set foot on that style of yacht before, and I still have a laugh with my brother-in-law because he has never beaten that top-15 finish. I learnt skills and watermanship out there. I sailed my little Flying Ant to death. I cracked the keel on it a couple of times. I cracked the centre box and I learnt how to use fibreglass and repair it. For me, the river is more than just a space of water.

I note from the plans I have seen recently that parts of the river will have patches of mussels to filter the river water. I would like to see some more information about that because I think that anything that is a nutrient harvester, for want of a better word, is a good thing. I will follow the updates on this to see how it is going. I have a passion for the river and its cleanliness. My personal point of view is that it is important. I remember as a kid Nanna growling at us because she used to see all the stuff from the ski boats wash up from the river. One of our jobs, 30 or 40 years ago, was to emu-bob the river edge with the net. I can remember walking with onion bags full of rubbish that we picked up from the river, which was really sad, but that is the way it was.

I can remember prawning as a kid and filling an old two-gallon bucket full of prawns in about two sweeps of the river. There were thousands of them. We did not take more than what could feed us; that was the key. We would have our little bucket, and all the mob would come over—all my cousins were there—and we would boil up the prawns. I can remember scooping out the sand with our hands. We would lay out a little plastic sheet and empty out the prawning net. It was a good way to tell how healthy the river was back then. We would fill up a net and then go through it and pick out our prawns. We would put the small cobbler that was in amongst them into a bucket and released him after we had finished prawning—not before, because you did not want to tread on him! I do not remember us walking with shoes in those days as we were trawling. There was always a big fight about who got the river side of the poles because, obviously, whoever walked in the deepest end got wetter than the others, and then the sea breeze came in in the afternoon. We played paper–scissors–rock to work out who got the wrong end, and out we used to go. When Nan passed, we were going through her home and found the prawning nets still underneath her house; we had three of them.

They were wonderful nights—hot summer’s nights with fresh prawns. There was none of the butter and flash sauces that they have now—just a bit of vinegar and salt. All my mob were raised on these magnificent feeds. The health of the river is very important and, to be frank, I would like to see more of the mussel filters that we are putting in. I will not say they will clean up the river, because I think the river is pretty good, but I have not been down there

recently. I can remember when I was a kid finding the steel cans that were thrown overboard—you could tell they were the old Swan cans. They used to cut the crap out of our feet if we were not paying attention.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** Member, I am not sure that that is terribly parliamentary.

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** My apologies, ma'am, but they did cut deep and they did hurt lots.

I look towards the river now. I learnt to dive in the river. Andy Frewd was a naval clearance diver who taught us how to dive when I was at Christ Church Grammar School. I went to plenty of good schools—a failure at all! We learnt to dive at Blackwall Reach and we used to catch the blue swimmers there. Some of them could wrap around from kidney to kidney—they were huge. We used to swim out there with little crab pots. We would swim under the Rottneft ferry with our dive gear going across from one side to the other. There were none of the dive safety flags back in those days.

The river has such an iconic view for Western Australia, not only Perth, and its health is the key. One of the things that drives the bill is the modernising of the river. I would love to see more ferries being used on the river. A line of posts runs down the centre of the estuary in Shelley. The posts were there to help bring down the produce from Canning River to Fremantle. There used to be huge punts and fellows used to pole them across the open waters and then down Canning River, out through the Swan and down to Freo where they were loaded onto ships. Things like jarrah and wool and other things from the early days of WA were carried. I do not want to call the river infrastructure, but it is such an important river. It is not the size of the Murray River or anything like that, but it is our river and its health and protection sits strongly within our community.

I can remember seeing schools of mullet that used to turn the river silver. I used to sit in Aquinas Bay on a dead flat winter's morning, drinking a hot cocoa at Nanna's place, which overlooked the estuary. I cannot remember whether we swam in the river, but I can remember the whole bay bubbling with silver from the mullet and pods of dolphins chasing them. I watched the spectacle of the mullet flying out of the water. I have not seen that since. I am told that the river is getting healthier and I suggest that the only way to tell is from the number of dolphins that are returning to the river.

Madam Acting Speaker, may I have a short extension?

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** You can have an extension, member. It is such poetry, I would like to hear more.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr M.J. FOLKARD:** Thank you.

The return of the mullet is very important. Blue swimmer crabs were everywhere. I remember walking down the front with little scoop nets and an old tin suitcase and scooping the crabs at the right time of year and flipping them in the back, and never being checked whether they were the right size or whether we had a gauge. Today people must have a gauge for just about every seafood they catch, whether it be crab, abalone or the like. I would like to see more of that. I know the minister is across this: I would love to see better management of the inflows. One of the biggest risks the river faces at the moment is not through population growth, but nutrients transitioning into the water flow, whether they be from the farmers in the Avon Valley or overflows from stormwater drains closer to the city. We really have to get on top of the protection of the water column.

I know that the team down at the Swan River Trust with their boats and that sort of stuff do a brilliant job of removing the rubbish and litter from the river, including a lot of shopping trolleys. I think we will find lots of scooters and e-scooters laying in there. The sooner we can get those out, the better we can protect our water quality. Who can forget the blue-green algae in the upper parts of the Canning River leading to the old dam and, more importantly, the blue-green outbreaks around the University of Western Australia and the Royal Perth Yacht Club. That worries me. If that continues, it is a sign that we have not got it right. As I said, we need to get the balance of that water right.

Another thing that worries me is we do not see kids running around down by the river as much as we used to. I have a little bit of heartache about that because playing by the river taught me so much. It taught me resilience, as I said earlier. I will never forget my memories of kylie-ing for those mullets. They were happy times for me, but we do not see that now. We do not see kids having that interaction. If we see a kid wandering around with a gidgee or something along those lines, everyone thinks the kid is up to no good, but he is just going to have a bit of fun on the river. I sit back and think, "Really?"

We need to bring our community closer and make our communities appreciate the great value of these areas of nature. Traditional owners have known this for hundreds of thousands of years. We have only been here for a freckle—absolutely nothing in comparison. I suggest that the knowledge that the traditional owners have about the Derbarl Yerrigan is phenomenal. Some of the old stories talk of the way of the dolphin, the mullet and the crab.

I am very appreciative of anything we can do to improve the way we develop our waterways. This bill will add to the quality of the planning and development. I think that tourism is a good thing. We are so blessed with the fact

that the whole of our city and metropolitan areas are based on our river. Our electoral system is based on the river. Members may not realise that, but when they reallocate our electoral boundaries, it starts from the river and flows out from there. It has such an impact on our lives.

I rose to contribute to this debate today because I have such a passion about this issue. We need to keep an eye on our waterways. I get angry when I see chemical inflows and all that sort of stuff. I do not think that is right. That needs to be managed. We have good people who have their heads across it. Hopefully, these tools will empower the minister to take the protection of our river to another level, and, more importantly, enhance this amenity for everyone. Thank you. I commend the bill to the house.

**MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley — Parliamentary Secretary)** [1.13 pm]: I rise to also make a contribution to the debate on this excellent legislation, the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill 2022. I do so tremulously, following in the footsteps of the member for Burns Beach, with his bucolic and picturesque description of his childhood on the banks of the Swan River—something that so many people in Perth and Western Australia get to enjoy. I am not sure I can match the standard that has been set by the member for Burns Beach, but he touched on a couple of things in this legislation that I think are very important, and I commend the minister for those.

The member for Burns Beach identified quite clearly and articulately in his contribution, for which I thank him, that this bill will do a couple of really important things. It will cut red tape, which this McGowan government is committed to doing, encouraging more people to use and access the Swan and Canning Rivers. In doing that, it will create more champions for preserving our environment. As the member for Burns Beach articulated, these river systems are part of not only the physical heritage, but also the social, cultural and, for many people, spiritual heritage of this place that we live in and love. If this legislation does exactly that, once again, it is legislation for which this McGowan government should be commended. Although this legislation will encourage participation and use of the river, it will also protect the environment, which our legislation as a whole has done and will continue to do.

The contribution just made by the member for Burns Beach about the changes to the marine life forms in the Swan and Canning River system brings to mind the important role that we play in protecting our environment. Part of that role is about finding and striking the right balance. Already, on three separate occasions today, we have had that balance between our use of waters and recreational fishing highlighted for us. When Madam Speaker opened the day's proceedings and called for petitions, the member for Cockburn stood up and tabled a petition from 400-odd signatories referring to the environmental damage that can be caused by fishing lines and hooks being left in the river environment. However, he did not do that to condemn recreational fishers, and I know that this government does not condemn recreational fishers. The second time the importance of fishing and watercourses in our communities was identified today was when the Minister for Fisheries made a brief ministerial statement about the Pemberton hatcheries, saying that fishing is a great part of the Western Australian experience. Now we come to the third occasion, as we talk about the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill. In all these ways—the petition from the member for Cockburn, the brief ministerial statement from the Minister for Fisheries and the contribution from the member for Burns Beach—we can see that our waterways, watercourses, lakes, rivers and oceans require us as legislators to identify the right balance.

The reason I am so pleased to speak on this legislation is because, once again, I think that the McGowan government is striking the right balance between protecting our environment and allowing access to these beautiful parts of our landscape.

I want to locate the importance of protecting our environment in a broader context. Unfortunately, I need to bring the good vibes down ever so slightly, because we are facing an incredible challenge with the environment right now in Perth, Western Australia, Australia and globally. I make this point knowing that the hardworking minister who has brought this legislation to the house has just returned from the United Nations Climate Change Conference—COP27—in Egypt, at which climate change was on the agenda. It is imperative that people like our Minister for Environment attend national forums like that so that the issue of climate change can be properly canvassed. I make this point because only yesterday, the Bureau of Meteorology and the CSIRO tabled their most recent climate report. I am going to read an article from *The Guardian* that addresses the tabling of the report. It is titled “Australia faces worsening extreme weather events latest BoM and CSIRO climate report finds” and it is authored by Graham Readfearn. The article states —

**The continent is now 1.47C hotter than it was in 1910 and sea levels around the coastline are rising at an accelerating rate**

Extreme weather events including torrential downpours, searing heat and dangerous bushfire conditions are all getting worse across Australia, with even more challenging events to come, according to the latest snapshot of the nation's climate.

The continent is now 1.47C hotter ...

Many of the changes are being driven by rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere caused mostly by the burning of fossil fuels.

The report ... provides a snapshot of changes on land and ocean, including temperature, rainfall, storms and droughts.

The environment minister —

That is the federal environment minister —

Tanya Plibersek, said the report was “sobering reading” and the science minister, Ed Husic, said it “reinforces the urgent need for action on climate change”.

Research director of the Climate Science Centre at CSIRO, Jaci Brown, said: “There are no surprises here and the story hasn’t changed. It’s happening, it’s serious and we need to do something about it.”

It is happening, it is serious and we need to do something about it. That is why I commend the federal Labor Albanese government for actually taking the steps necessary to tackle climate change. The article continues —

The Albanese government took to the summit an improved emissions target of 43% by 2030, based on 2005 levels ...

On Tuesday evening, the government announced it was adding \$500m to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation to commercialise renewable energy, improve energy efficiency and develop other clean energy technologies.

I pause there to reflect on how what the federal Labor government is doing to protect our environment echoes what the state Labor government is doing. Right off the bat, we are tackling the challenges presented by our deteriorating environmental conditions by being sensible and pragmatic. We are commercialising renewable energy. There clearly needs to be an economic imperative to the way we respond to the challenges of climate change, just as it is also important to have a commercial element to the preservation of the Swan and Canning Rivers. That includes commercialising not only the intellectual property around renewable energy, but also renewable energy generally. We are also seeking to improve energy efficiency and develop clean energy technologies. These moves will create hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs.

I now return to the article. The article refers to the changes in the day and night-time temperatures in Australia and states —

As an example, the report says there were 33 days in 2019 when the national average maximum temperature went above 39C. This was more days in one year than in all the previous 58 years.

Trends in daily rainfall were mixed around the country, the report said, but an increase in the amount of rain falling in sudden downpours over several hours was now “very clear over recent decades”.

We only have to look at the devastating floods on the eastern seaboard to see the consequence of that. The report quotes a senior scientist at the bureau as saying —

“Pretty well everything we report here is consistent with what we would expect with human-caused climate change,” ...

We can see how urgent the need to tackle climate change has become. It is not just the federal government that is responding to the challenges of climate change. It is also the state government and the state Parliament. On the question of what the state government is doing to tackle climate change and preserve our environment, I want to identify a number of items. The McGowan Labor government has made the historic decision that it will retire all Western Australian government-owned coal-fired power stations by 2023, and it will transition the Western Australian energy generation system to a greater use of renewables and make sure that electricity reliability and affordability continues to be paramount. The government is also delivering major investment in the south west of the state with an extraordinary \$3.8 billion for new green power infrastructure, including wind generation and storage. This is a responsible plan to phase out coal-fired power, boost our green power infrastructure and reduce carbon emissions.

In addition, the McGowan government is taking the next steps towards achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by committing to a whole-of-government 2030 reduction target of 80 per cent below 2020 levels. Action on climate change is crucial to diversifying the Western Australian economy, creating long-term jobs, managing environment impacts, and protecting the health and wellbeing of Western Australians. There has also been a \$500 million state budget boost to the climate action fund, which will take the total value of that fund to \$1.25 billion. The McGowan government has also provided \$60 million to accelerate the use of zero-emissions vehicles. I understand that today, the federal government also passed legislation to remove additional taxes on electric vehicles to make them more affordable for purchasers. Labor is the party that cuts not only red tape, but also taxes. The government has set aside \$1.4 billion as a down payment for a new renewable-power desalination plant to support the government’s 2030 emissions target.

That is not all that we are doing to protect our environment and tackle the challenges of climate change. We also have our incredibly successful Plan for Plastics. That plan has phased-out a range of single-use plastics. We have also introduced our container deposit scheme, which has been embraced and is well loved by the community, and particularly by organisations in my neighbourhood like the Rotary Club of Mount Lawley and Yokine Districts Bowling Club. Our government has also announced the end of logging of old-growth native forests in our south west by 2024. We have introduced the Plan for Our Parks, which will create five million hectares of new parks. We have also created and expanded our Aboriginal ranger program. In these ways, the McGowan government has demonstrated its commitment to preserving and defending the environment of Western Australia.

People who know all about the importance of our environment, given that they are fortunate enough to live in the beautiful suburb of Yangebup, are the students, staff and parents of Yangebup Primary School, who are in the Speaker's gallery as guests of the member for Cockburn. Another great primary school is Coolbinia Primary School, which is in my electorate of Mount Lawley. I want to welcome, on behalf of the member for Cockburn, the students, staff and parents from Yangebup Primary School. If you stick around long enough, I am sure you will get to hear the member for Cockburn make a contribution on this very bill, and perhaps one even more apt than mine.

It is not just the government in Western Australia that is looking at ways in which it can promote awareness of climate change and protect our environment, but also the Parliament. I want to commend members of the Education and Health Standing Committee of the forty-first Parliament for their second report, *Making hope practical: Report of the inquiry into the response of Western Australian schools to climate change*. I want to commend Coolbinia Primary School in particular. I have often spoken in this place about that school. That school is very fortunate that a beautiful area of remnant bushland is located right next to it. Dr Elaine Lewis, a cross-curriculum educational leader at Coolbinia Primary School, was one of the key witnesses in the committee's inquiry. She talked about the work that is being undertaken at Coolbinia Primary School to promote awareness and understanding of climate change and the importance of the urban tree canopy. The committee report commended Dr Lewis for her work. I want to re-emphasise that.

The reason that bit of bushland in Coolbinia is so important is that in the time since colonisation, suburbs and houses have been built and developed throughout what the Noongar people describe as Boorloo, or the metropolitan region of Perth. A network of lakes, wetlands, parks and bush is vital to the remnant ecosystem. The Coolbinia bushland is part of that. The Inglewood triangle, which I have spoken about previously, is also part of that network. It runs from Herdsman Lake and Lake Monger through the electorate of Mount Lawley—through Yokine Regional Open Space, Coolbinia and Inglewood, past Ron Stone Park, where there is a beautiful lake, and all the way down to that part of the electorate of Mount Lawley that is on the shores of the Swan River. Running between the old East Perth power station and Banks Reserve, all the way up to Maylands Yacht Club at Bardon Park, is what has been classified and identified as a Bush Forever site. Together with Dianella Regional Open Space, this is an important part of the network of bush and water reserves that provides a habitat for our beautiful local fauna.

This is where I want to emulate the efforts of the member for Burns Beach. Bardon Park and Banks Reserve are incredible community assets and facilities. Bardon Park has play equipment, barbecues, sandpits and climbing frames. It is visited periodically by food trucks, which include a woodfired pizza truck down in Maylands. That is all in Bardon Park, which is bordered by Fourth Avenue and is near Mercy Hospital. At the other end of the foreshore in the electorate of Mount Lawley is Banks Reserve. That reserve has a beautiful natural amphitheatre that leads down to the river. Banks Reserve provides incredibly important local community vibrancy for my constituents who live on the banks of the river on the eastern side of Guildford Road and the railway line in East Parade. It also provides wonderful amenity, with new nature play equipment, basketball courts, picnic tables and facilities for families to hold functions and events. The City of Vincent also has the Summer Concerts series, which utilises the natural amphitheatre. It is in close proximity to Optus Stadium, across Matagarup Bridge or the Graham Farmer Freeway footbridge that runs straight across to the other side of the river. Its proximity to other areas makes this a well utilised park.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** That is why it was incredibly important for me, in the context of the last state election in 2021, to have a conversation with the Mayor of the City of Vincent, Emma Cole, to try to see what assistance and support a re-elected McGowan government could provide to the City of Vincent to revitalise and invest in Banks Reserve. The City of Vincent was more than happy to come to the table, as it were, to help us invest in new picnic infrastructure—new tables and chairs, a new gazebo and a covered pavilion area—for the use and benefit of all those people who live on the eastern side of Guildford Road and the railway line in Mt Lawley. They have the great benefit of being in close proximity to the river.

That brings me back to my initial point; that is, this is legislation that will really strike the right balance between preserving and protecting our natural environment and the Swan and Canning Rivers system that we are blessed with. It does so in a way that will not shut off people's access to the system; they will be able to use and enjoy the

rivers. The bill will facilitate that in a harmonious way, striking the right balance for both the environment and the community. For members in the chamber,

I have described the relatively small section of the Swan River foreshore that I am fortunate enough to have in the electorate of Mount Lawley. When I heard that the member for Burns Beach was going to make a contribution, I wondered how he would make the leap from the northern coastal suburbs all the way down to the Swan and Canning Rivers. He let us in on a secret with —

**Mr J.R. Quigley:** It's easy by chopper!

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Yes. He referred to his childhood and education at Aquinas College.

A fact sheet put together by the Parks and Wildlife Service states —

- The Swan and Avon rivers are actually the same river, sometimes called the Swan–Avon. The Swan River joins the Avon River at Walyunga National Park. The combined Swan–Avon River is 280 km long and flows from near Wickiepin to the Indian Ocean at Fremantle. The Swan–Avon River drains a total catchment of approximately 126,000km<sup>2</sup>.
- The Canning River begins in Wandering and flows through Armadale to Applecross, where it joins the Swan.

When I think about the three kilometres of shoreline that I have in the seat of Mount Lawley, this becomes an incredible statistic —

- The combined shoreline of the Swan and Canning rivers is more than 300km long.
- There are 31 major sub-catchments in the Swan Canning Catchment. Drainage patterns from each of these are influenced by local climate and catchment characteristics such as land formation and soil type ...
- Major Swan River tributaries include the Helena River, Wooroloo, Susannah, Ellen, Bennett, Henley and Jane brooks, Blackadder Creek, and Bayswater and South Belmont main drains. The Yilgarn, Mortlock and Lockhart rivers are the main tributaries to the Avon River. Tributaries entering the Canning River include the Southern River, Churchman, Munday, Bickley, Yule and Wungong brooks, Mills Street Main Drain and Bannister Creek.
- The deepest point of the Swan River is about 21m near Mosman Bay. This is a popular scuba diving spot.

I hope it was where that clearance is greatest that the member for Burns Beach was able to dive underneath those ferries! I have to say, as a work health and safety lawyer, I was particularly concerned by the description he gave of diving underneath the Rottneest ferries as they sailed along! Thank God we have moved into a much safer environment these days.

The fact sheet continues —

- The Swan and Canning rivers become an estuary at Walyunga National Park in the Swan River and the Kent Street Weir in the Canning River, which is as far as estuarine effects in terms of tidal forces and marine salinity can be detected.

I just want to finish by acknowledging that for the traditional owners, the name of the Swan and Canning Rivers is Derbarl Yerrigan. From some quick research that I did before making this contribution, I understand that Derbarl Yerrigan describes the flowing point where the salt water meets. When we talk about the estuarine characteristics of the Swan and Canning Rivers system at Walyunga National Park and at Kent Street Weir in the Canning River, it brings to mind that description of the estuarine characteristics that the traditional owners, the Noongar people, had in mind when they described the Swan River as the Derbarl Yerrigan.

I conclude by saying that I am proud to be part of a government that recognises the immediate challenges of climate change. I am proud to be a member of a government that recognises not only the importance of the environment portfolio, but also that there is a balance to be struck between protecting these areas and allowing people to access them for use, enjoyment and amenity. This legislation, once again, achieves that balance for which the McGowan government is now becoming renowned. For that reason, I commend the legislation and the minister. I commend the bill to the house.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms M.M. Quirk):** Member for Jandakot.

**MR D.A.E. SCAIFE (Cockburn) [1.35 pm]:** Cockburn!

**The ACTING SPEAKER:** Cockburn—sorry.



**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** That is all right. Acting Speaker, you are normally on the receiving end of people getting the wrong electorate name, so I take no offence. The member for Jandakot is a very good bloke after all, so I am happy to be in company with him.

I rise today to make a contribution to the debate on the Swan and Canning Rivers Management Amendment Bill 2022. I will start with a few thankyou actually. The first is, obviously, a thankyou to the minister for bringing the bill to the house. As I have said before, sometimes we have to deal with dry legislation, but, at the end, these bills underpin important policy issues. The member for Mount Lawley has stepped us through this government's commitment to protecting our natural estate, including the Swan and Canning Rivers, and combating climate change. Bills like this actually underpin that important work.

The second thankyou I want to give is to the advisers. I want to not only thank them for their work on this bill, but also acknowledge that often when we are in these debates, particularly when the member for Mount Lawley and I are contributing, I feel a little bit sorry for the advisers. I will not elaborate why, but members in the chamber will understand why! I appreciate their patience as advisers. They have done the heavy lifting on the bill. I am not going to suggest that our job is easy; to quote from the famous Liam Neeson film *Taken*, it does take a "particular set of skills" to do what the member for Mount Lawley and I do, but I thank the advisers for their work and their dedication, I will say, during debate on this bill.

The third thankyou that I want to give is to the member for Mount Lawley. I have said before that I followed the member for Mount Lawley to a few different places. He made the mistake of hiring me as a junior lawyer at Slater and Gordon, and then he tried to escape me by being elected to this chamber. Four years later, I snafued him on that one and got elected to this chamber as well. I want to thank him. I do not know whether we should say we are a dynamic duo or a gruesome twosome, but I appreciate the member for Mount Lawley, particularly because I just had a school group in. I want to thank the member for Mount Lawley for acknowledging the students from Yangebup Primary School. I also want to thank him for holding the fort for a little bit while I was seeing off my guests. I very much appreciate that.

With those matters aside, as I said at the outset, this bill is obviously part of the government's commitment to the Streamline WA agenda. It is part of our commitment to ensuring not only good practice regulation, but also easy regulation when it comes to Western Australia's framework. Whether they are environmental approvals, mining approvals, exploration licences, transport duties or transport licences—any regulatory impost or process of the state—those regulations are necessary because they have important roles to play in protecting either our natural environment or industry. We also want Western Australia to be a place where it is easy to do business and it is easy and predictable for industry, the public, conservationists and community groups to know what the regulatory process is. We want to make sure that that regulatory process is easy. That means that the process can be navigated more easily by stakeholders, but it also means that the process can be held to account more easily, because a simpler process is easier for stakeholder groups to engage with and to hold to account.

As I said, that regulatory framework really underpins a lot of the important work that we do in a lot of different sectors, but particularly in this case in the management of our natural assets. When I volunteered to speak on this bill, I thought that some members might say, "What right does the member for Cockburn have to speak on a bill about the management of the Swan and Canning Rivers given that they do not pass through his electorate?"

**Ms K.E. Giddens:** The wetlands.

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** Yes, the member for Bateman is right; the Beeliar wetlands are an integral part of our southern corridor, and she is very aware of that. Over the years, the members for Bateman, Bicton, Willagee and Fremantle and I, as the member for Cockburn—I admit I am a newcomer compared with some of the more seasoned members—have been committed to the preservation of our Beeliar wetlands. The Beeliar wetlands form an important part of the overall hydrology of the Swan and Canning river catchment. They are an asset that has been under threat. In many cases, we have built over the top of our wetlands. Of course, many years ago, we did not refer to them as wetlands; we just referred to them as swamps. Our planning system was basically designed entirely around putting roads and other infrastructure over the top of swamps, and it has been only in recent decades that we have started to appreciate the significance of our wetlands. We are very fortunate in the southern suburbs to have the best-preserved network of wetlands remaining in the Perth region in the Beeliar wetlands. I am really pleased to be part of a government that took up the challenge when the Liberal–National government was proposing its road to nowhere, Roe 8 and 9, which, of course, members will know was to go through the Beeliar wetlands but never actually get to Fremantle port.

**Ms K.E. Giddens:** It was unfunded as well.

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** It was unfunded as well. We had a few suggestions for Roe 10. At one stage, we had a tunnel under the river, we had a bridge and we had a realignment of the road. The Barnett government could never decide how it would get the road to the port, but it had decided that it would get it through the wetlands. I am very proud

to be part of a government that stood up and said, “No, this is the wrong thing to do to our best remaining example of Perth’s important wetlands.” I thank the government and the many members of this government who fought for that outcome. It is really pleasing to see that we are currently in the consultation process on what was previously known as the Roe 9 corridor, which is being very ably led by the member for Willagee. He is going through consultation in suburbs like Hamilton Hill and talking to people about how we can preserve the natural environment in the Roe 9 corridor, but also deliver dividends for the community. That really is the balance that we as a Labor government have to find in environmental management. I really respect any Labor member of Parliament who gets the role of Minister for Environment, because it is a balancing act between ensuring that we protect our natural assets, like our south west forests and the Beeliar wetlands, and encouraging secure industries and sensible development and infill in the city so that secure housing, jobs and services are provided for people well into the future. It is a real balancing act.

I know that the Minister for Environment takes his responsibilities very seriously as, essentially, the custodian of the conservation estate of Western Australia. I want to acknowledge that and pay tribute to that. We know that, in the past, governments have not taken seriously their role as custodians of the Swan and Canning river system. I remember the days when we were in opposition, particularly the early days in opposition. Members might recall that in around 2009 or 2010, there was a series of dolphin deaths in the Swan River. It took a number of years to establish the cause. I believe Hon Dr Sally Talbot was the shadow environment minister at the time and Hon Donna Faragher was the environment minister. It took a lot of badgering from Hon Dr Sally Talbot to persuade the government to do the investigations that were needed to find out the cause of the dolphin deaths in the river. If memory serves me right, ultimately, after a couple of years, it was established that the cause of those dolphin deaths was a pesticide or other chemical that had made its way into the Swan and Canning river system. It was really tragic at the time to see that happening in an asset as significant as the Swan River, but also to see a government dragging its feet on the issue. It had to be dragged by the Labor opposition towards taking some action. Luckily, we are now at a stage of the management of the Swan River whereby the government is taking its responsibility seriously, and this bill is an example of getting the balance right between good regulation and simple regulation.

When I was reflecting on the issue of the dolphin deaths in the late 2000s and early 2010s, it made me reflect on the significance of the Swan and Canning river system to people across the whole of Western Australia, but particularly in the metropolitan area. I do not think any other natural asset is so essential to the way of life in Perth. It structures the way that our city has been planned and developed. It is a place of great significance to traditional owners. I want to acknowledge, as the member for Mount Lawley said, that the Swan River should be known by its traditional name, Derbarl Yerrigan, and had been taken care of by traditional owners for many thousands of years. It is a place of great cultural significance for our traditional owners. It is also a place of great significance to everyday families for recreation, whether that be boating or fishing or simply walking or cycling. I get puffed just thinking about the concept of running the bridges, from the Causeway to the Narrows Bridge. I can see that the member for Armadale’s pulse has barely quickened at the thought of it. To him, doing a lap around the Narrows and the Causeway is just a warm up. I understand that he does that when he runs from Armadale to Parliament; he just does an extra lap for sport along the way! It is something that I know people do; I am not one of them. There are a few of us in this chamber who have not done that but probably should.

The Swan River is iconic. It is significant to everybody, no matter how they use it and no matter where they live in Perth. It is iconic, so we need to take good care of it. I am really pleased to say that not only do we have a government that is taking care of the Swan River, but also I know that future generations will be taking care of our natural assets like the Swan River. I know that because I very recently held the inaugural Cockburn environmental leadership program at the Wetlands Centre on Hope Road in Bibra Lake. The Cockburn environmental leadership program is a new initiative that I run as the member for Cockburn. It is a program that is designed to train our young people in areas like conservation issues and leadership in conservation so that they can become leaders in their community for advocating for things like our wetlands and the Swan River.

I want to recognise the students who came along to the Cockburn environmental leadership day. I will run the program every year. This year, about 23 students from 11 primary schools in my electorate attended. I want to acknowledge the following students: Franchesca Galicia and Hunter McIntyre from Atwell Primary School; Greta Ward and Ruby Ledwidge from Beeliar Primary School; Sara Ranieri, Ben Boomer and Olivia Ianni from Coogee Primary School; Isabella de San Miguel and Mary-Jane De’Laney from Jandakot Primary School; Isaac Forzatti and Annika Upadhyay from Mater Christi Catholic Primary School; Callum Perna and Chloe Constant from Newton Primary School; Alexis Vos and Cara Cremin from South Coogee Primary School; Alexander Kirkby and Shineay Truscott from South Lake Primary School; Leo Lapitskiy and Lexie Ryder-Butling from St Jerome’s Catholic Primary School; Amelia Dlugi and Georgia Scott from Success Primary School; and Ebony Soerja Djanegara and Adin Tremain from Yangebup Primary School. All these students represented their primary schools at the Cockburn environmental leadership day and they did a really outstanding job. They learnt about the importance of reducing their waste and the things that we use. We often hear about reduce, re-use, recycle; there is a lot of focus on

the recycling part, but the most important part is the reduce part. We had a great presentation from Peg Davies, who taught the students about reducing waste.

We also had a presentation from the Water Corporation. The Water Corporation is particularly pertinent to this debate because its presentation was about how rainfall is declining in Western Australia and we therefore cannot be reliant on our dams in the way that we used to be. In fact, these days, Perth gets the bulk of its water from desalination plants. That is all about adapting to a drying climate and the challenges of climate change. Of course, it has always been Labor governments that have risen to that challenge. One way that we rose to that challenge was the decision of Geoff Gallop, as Premier, to commission the first desalination plant in Western Australia when we were last in government. This current government has followed that by announcing that a third desalination plant will be built in Alkimos. It was a great presentation from the Water Corporation about the drying climate and how we can better manage our water in the metropolitan area. I really appreciate that contribution from the Water Corporation.

We also had a presentation from Marie Taylor, who is a local Noongar elder. Marie actually won the 2022 WA NAIDOC Female Elder of the Year Award. I want to give my congratulations to Marie. Marie spoke extensively and passionately about the relationship that traditional owners have with Beeliar wetlands and the broader Swan and Canning Rivers system.

[Member's time extended.]

**Mr D.A.E. SCAIFE:** I want to give my particular thanks to the Minister for Environment; Climate Action because he came to the Cockburn environmental leadership day. He spoke to the students and was asked an incredible array of questions. As the minister was leaving, I said, "There's no need for you to prep for question time in future because you've answered all the tough questions asked here today by students from the schools in my electorate." They had great questions about what we are doing to protect our endangered wildlife. They had incredible questions about bushfire management as well, which I did not see coming. I have to say it was good to have a minister with a background in the emergency services portfolio to speak about that because I think it would have been outside my expertise. He talked to the kids about the science around bushfire management and answered questions about what we are doing to rise to the challenges of climate change. That is an issue that is on the minds of our future generations, even more so than it was on the minds of my generation or the generation before. It is fair to say that there is a bit of anxiety amongst our young people about what the future is going to be like for them, but I know that those students were reassured by the answers that the minister gave and by the work this government is doing that we are heading in the right direction to reduce our carbon emissions and limit the impacts of global warming. I thank the minister very much for attending the program.

I look forward to repeating the program again next year. Hopefully, the minister was not too bamboozled by the questions and will accept the invitation to come back. That is always a risk when we run repeat events. It was a really excellent day. I thank the minister and all the presenters, and all the schools for allowing their students time off to attend.

The next thing that I want to speak about is the subject of climate change. I know that the member for Mount Lawley spoke to this but the reason I raise it is that a drying climate is really the number one challenge that governments right around the world face at the moment. I want to reflect on how far we have come and how far others have not come on the issue of climate change. I will give a little bit of credit; this state opposition is a little bit more progressive on the issue of climate change than the federal Liberal and National Parties, but I have to say that is a pretty low bar to step over. Those guys in the federal Liberal–National coalition would have to be global climate laggards. We saw some promise of change immediately after the federal election, as if they had learnt their lesson, but, in recent days, the federal Leader of the Opposition, Hon Peter Dutton, and Alex Hawke, the former Minister for International Development and the Pacific, tried to weaponise the loss and damage fund that was agreed at COP27, which is just rubbish politics. It is an incredibly difficult and vexed international issue but one that has to be addressed, so to see the federal Liberal–National opposition trying to weaponise it was really disappointing, but not surprising in many ways.

I want to reflect on how far we have come because the idea of pricing carbon is mainstream in industry and has been for a long time. It was quite fascinating to go to the Global Iron Ore and Steel Forecast Conference held in Perth earlier this year to find out that big resource industry players were incredibly progressive. It is chalk and cheese with the federal Liberal–National coalition; it is unbelievable that the party that styles itself as the party of big business could not be further apart from what big business was talking about with regard to decarbonisation and acting on climate change. I want to refer to when I was convener of the environment policy committee for the WA Labor Party in the late 2000s. We wrote into our platform that we would work with the federal government to deliver a price on carbon. I remember that the state Liberal Party went and pulled out from our platform the paragraph that referred to putting a price on carbon and put it on negative flyers that it put out to the constituents of the member for Albany. At the time, I was campaigning for Peter Watson, the then member for Albany. The Liberal Party pulled out a paragraph from our policy platform, which, I have to say, most members of the Labor Party have not read, so it

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY — Wednesday, 23 November 2022]

p5772a-5782a

Dr Jags Krishnan; Mr Mark Folkard; Mr Simon Millman; Mr David Scaife

---

was pretty impressive that opposition researchers went ahead and pulled it out! It tried to weaponise a paragraph in our platform in an attempt to unseat the member for Albany. Of course, that was unsuccessful—we know how that went!—and it is great to have a new member for Albany in the chamber who is doing a sterling job representing Albany. It completely fell flat, and that would have been perhaps the 2008 or 2013 election. It is a shame that we find out that the federal Liberal–National Parties really have not gone anywhere since those days. We are now 15 years on, and they are still trotting out the same lines demonising the price of carbon, when big players in the resources industry have fully embraced the fact that we have to price carbon and there has to be a price signal through some kind of mechanism. If government does not do it, industry will get on with it and do it anyway.

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.

[Continued on page 5790.]