

FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN 2024–2033

Statement by Minister for Environment

MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment) [9.10 am]: Today I would like to update the house on this government’s historic decision to cease commercial timber harvesting in our state’s iconic south west forests with the *Forest management plan 2024–2033*, effective as of 1 January this year. I have regularly informed the house about the FMP’s progress since our government announced it in September 2021. It is a plan in which our government can take great pride. It prioritises biodiversity, forest health and conservation, while also supporting our state’s unique environment and the tourism opportunities that come with it. The FMP is significant because it ends commercial timber harvesting in our state’s native forests. The Cook government has delivered on this commitment more than two decades after the Gallop government, another Labor government, made the landmark decision to end old-growth logging.

Under the plan, native timber will be made available only either from clearing for approved mining operations and infrastructure or from management activities that improve forest health, such as ecological thinning. The FMP also delivers on our government’s commitment to protect more than 400 000 hectares of karri, jarrah and wandoo forests through newly created national parks, conservation parks and nature reserves. This builds on our pledge under the Plan for our Parks to designate five million hectares of new national and marine park conservation estate, more than any government in this state’s history.

Pleasingly, existing reserve proposals identified in the plan are already being progressed as a priority, with more than 3 000 hectares of the highly valued Lane Poole Reserve being upgraded to national park. Members might have gone camping in that area, as I have with my kids for many years. It is a beautiful part of the world.

Prepared by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions on behalf of the Conservation and Parks Commission, the FMP’s release followed multiple stages of wideranging stakeholder and community consultation. This includes 3 500 submissions received during the draft plan’s public comment period. The plan is based on sound scientific research and extensive management experience, as well as input from technical experts. With the FMP now in effect, our government has demonstrated its commitment to protecting national parks, conservation parks, nature reserves, state forests and timber reserves throughout our state’s south west. This is a significant achievement, not only for this government, but for the people of Western Australia and our natural environment.