

JOHN FORREST NATIONAL PARK

**643. MR S.J. PRICE to the Minister for Environment:**

Just before I ask my question, as a Harvey boy, I, too, would like to welcome to Parliament Sharon Cooke and the other representatives of Harvey Aboriginal Corporation who are here today. It is great to see you all.

I refer to the Cook Labor government's commitment to transform the iconic John Forrest National Park. Can the minister outline to the house how the delivery of this redevelopment and improved facilities will enhance the recreational opportunities available at this popular tourism destination?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:**

I thank the member for Forrestfield for his interest in and ongoing advocacy for the environment. I have visited his electorate many times and engaged in environmental activities on sustainability. As do many members and others in Western Australia, the member has a great regard for our oldest national park. John Forrest National Park was the first national park in Western Australia. This government has a great record in creating new national parks and investing in infrastructure for them. We are also getting on with the job of looking after our established legacy national parks. There is no finer old national park in Western Australia than John Forrest, which is a very convenient day trip up into the hills.

**The SPEAKER:** Hear, hear.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** It has sensational views across Perth. We are investing heavily in re-creating infrastructure or providing new opportunities so that the national park is a key destination for not just local people but also people from around Australia and internationally to visit. Our investment includes new and improved trails, a new access road and parking facilities, and a new visitor hub with picnic facilities. Approximately 10 kilometres of hiking trails have been completed, adding to the existing trail network. Also—this is important, members—the construction of 16 kilometres of new off-road cycle trails will be completed by the end of 2023. We know that the growth in cycling in Western Australia is all about mountain bikes, the bikes we take off-road. There is amazing interest and popularity in this area, and we are providing the venues and trails for people to enjoy this sport. Construction has begun on a new day-use area, with universal access picnic and barbecue facilities, landscaped gardens and pathways. The day-use area will connect to a new cafe and visitor space at the park hub. Legacy infrastructure has been there for many years, dating back to the 1970s, but it is run-down and not fit for purpose. This investment will transform John Forrest National Park into a place that is world class, with facilities that are equal to the environmental values that surround them.

We are also getting on with the job of building a new pedestrian bridge. It is not just the Minister for Transport who is building bridges. This is a bridge that I will build. It is set to rival the Matagarup Bridge.

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** At least it will in environmental terms! The bridge over Hovea Falls will provide an excellent visitor experience and improve visitor safety, and it will open later this year. This will be one of the finest bridges built in Western Australia in recent years.

I am also very interested to tell the chamber that the west ridge car park will be the next component of improvements at John Forrest National Park.

Several members interjected.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** She is not the only concreter in the room!

This car park will improve visitor safety and address a real issue. Because John Forrest National Park is so popular, people park along the road's edge, causing a safety issue at busy times on weekends and during the summer. That extra car park will not only provide extra access to the park, but also improve community safety. The project is being delivered by the great folks at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions. When that construction work is completed, John Forrest National Park will be even more of a destination for Perth.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition with the last question.