

**RESERVES (NATIONAL PARKS, CONSERVATION PARKS AND NATURE RESERVES) BILL 2004**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from 23 June.

**MR B.J. GRYLLS** (Merredin) [11.01 am]: I am sure the whole Parliament will be happy to hear that the coalition will be supporting this legislation, which aims to create nine new national parks in the south west of Western Australia, six conservation parks and six nature reserves. It will also increase the area of the Wellington National Park by excising areas of land from state forest and timber reserves. The national parks and reserves enacted under this legislation will be vested in the Conservation Commission of Western Australia and managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. I will use my contribution to this debate today to raise some issues about the management of national parks and reserves in Western Australia, because that is the key issue faced by Western Australians in caring for the environment.

I will begin by putting some perspective on what we are doing here today. I thank the Department of Conservation and Land Management for the extra information it has provided to me. The total area of the nine new national parks, six conservation parks and six nature reserves is around 97 000 hectares. This amounts to an increase of about two per cent in the total area so reserved in Western Australia. This must be recognised, because this Bill will be promoted as a big step forward in locking up areas for conservation purposes in Western Australia, and it needs to be put in perspective. Currently, in Western Australia, there are 67 named national parks and two unnamed national parks with a total area of just under 5.1 million hectares. All this area is vested in the Conservation Commission and managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. In creating nine new national parks with this Bill today, we are adding two per cent to the total national park area in Western Australia. I will briefly run through what is being created by this Bill, so that other members may understand. I will then move into some of the management issues that I regard as the key areas in this Bill. I look forward to the response by the minister to the issues I raise as well as consideration in detail, so that the House can flesh out some of those issues a bit more and find out how the minister plans to act on the management issues.

Part 2 of the Bill creates the new national parks. Clause 7 creates a new 1 379 hectare national park to be named Forest Grove, 20 kilometres south of Margaret River. To create this park, 1 305 hectares of land will be excised from a timber reserve; an unmanaged crown reserve for government requirements classified other than A-class will be cancelled; and portions of unnamed and unsurveyed roads will be closed with rights of way over these portions ceasing and the land becoming unallocated crown land. A second new national park, named Yelverton, will consist of 729 hectares, located 20 kilometres north of Margaret River. An area of land will be excised from an existing timber reserve and an unmanaged A-class reserve will be cancelled. The Greater Beedelup National Park near Pemberton will consist of 19 270 hectares. An area of land totalling 17 840 hectares will be excised from two state forests, a crown reserve will be cancelled and an area will be excised from another crown reserve. The Jane National Park is eight kilometres east of Northcliffe and consists of 6 863 hectares. The Greater Dordagup National Park is near Pemberton and consists of 6 408 hectares. The Wellington National Park will be enlarged by 14 500 hectares adjacent to its current western boundary. The enlarged national park will total 17 474 hectares.

I will mention now one of the concerns the Opposition will be raising during this debate - the Wellington Discovery Forest. It is an educational facility provided to school students and other interested parties as a microcosm demonstrating the re-establishment of forest areas after logging. It is my understanding that funding for the Wellington Discovery Forest has been discontinued and that when the Wellington National Park is extended by the Bill before the House today, the area of the Wellington Discovery Forest will be included in the national park. That means that the activities of the discovery forest cannot continue. I look forward to the minister explaining whether there are any proposals to move this educational facility to some other part of Western Australia, so that we can allow school students to see the process of logging, which still continues. It is the key issue for all Western Australians, and one that has gained much public attention especially during the past five or six years. It is very important that we maintain those educational facilities. The aim of the Wellington Discovery Forest was to show students and interested parties the regrowth of forest after logging. That is a very important educational facility, but under this legislation it will not be allowed to continue. I will look forward to what the minister has to say about other opportunities for that sort of educational facility.

The Boyndaminup National Park is 50 kilometres south east of Manjimup. I am glad to see that the member for Warren-Blackwood has joined us.

Mr P.D. Omodei: It is Boyndaminup.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: There are no "ups" in the wheatbelt, so we are not so used to them, but I am sure that the member for Warren Blackwood will contribute to this debate. The new national park will be 5 439 hectares.

The Mount Frankland National Park will be enlarged by 261 hectares, bringing its total area to 31 000 hectares. The Serpentine National Park will be increased in size by 260 hectares. The Greater Preston National Park near Donnybrook will consist of 11 373 hectares. The Greater Kingston National Park near Bridgetown will cover 21 000 hectares. The Boorara Gardner National Park near Northcliffe will become an 11 000 hectare national park. The maps for these national parks are widely available, and any member of the general public who wants to see them can either contact the Department of Conservation and Land Management, or I would be happy to go through it with them.

I turn now to the six new conservation parks. The first is the Blackbutt Conservation Park near Manjimup with an area of 37.3 hectares; the others are the Muja Conservation Park near Collie with an area of 6 300 hectares; the Bernalaking Conservation Park, near Collie, with an area of 5 520 hectares; the Wandering Conservation Park, near Boddington, with an area of 4 300 hectares; the Dardanup Conservation Park with an area of 643 hectares; and the Russell Conservation Park, near Beverley, with an area of approximately 3 358 hectares.

The fourth part of the Bill creates six new nature reserves. The first is the Chester Nature Reserve with an area of 372 hectares; the others are the Pagett Nature Reserve, near Augusta, with an area of 1 400 hectares; the Kordabup Nature Reserve, near Denmark, with an area of 302 hectares; the Nollajup Nature Reserve, near Boyup Brook, with an area of 662 hectares; adding to the existing Falls Brook Nature Reserve in Harvey an area of 578 hectares; the Greenbushes Nature Reserve with an area of 400 hectares; and the North Dandalup Nature Reserve with an area of 44 hectares. The establishment of these new parks and reserves over a wide area of the south west is welcomed by the coalition Opposition. During my contribution I will put on the record some of the management issues of these new areas and how those parks can be better managed for the future benefit of all Western Australians.

I will start by outlining my concerns about the existing national parks. There are already 67 national parks in Western Australia, and this legislation will add another nine. The national park that is most relevant to me, as the member for Merredin, is the Avon National Park which is located within the electorate of the member for Avon. I have raised this issue before with the Minister for the Environment. In the Avon National Park there is uncontrolled access by four-wheel-drive vehicles, no policing of fire bans and regular unauthorised shooting of wild pigs. I am sure all Western Australians would be shocked to know of the large issues that arise in national parks right across the State. The point the coalition wishes to make today is that if we cannot get it right in the existing Avon National Park, what will happen in the nine new national parks and reserves that will be created under this legislation? It is one thing to create new national parks and to put out a press release, but it is a completely different issue to manage those national parks and to make sure they represent pristine examples of our natural environment for all Western Australians. As I have said, these issues in the Avon National Park have already been raised with the minister to try to get some action. The member for Avon has outlined that the complete lack of management in that national park has led to this issue. If there is unrestricted four-wheel-drive access into the park, if people are going into the national park and shooting wild pigs and if people are not obeying the fire laws, CALM needs to have a presence in the Avon National Park so that its staff can police the movement of vehicles and control the lighting of fires in authorised areas. If there is no management and people know that the CALM ranger will not come through the national park, they feel that they can get away with anything. That is currently happening in the Avon National Park and it sets a very bad example for me, as the new coalition spokesman for the environment, especially when it is the closest national park to my seat of Merredin. This is not a criticism of the CALM employees, who are obviously crying out for more resources. They are obviously saying that if they had more staff in the Avon National Park that would resolve the problem. I contend that the CALM workers are under a lot of pressure to manage a number of different issues in various areas, and that does not extend to being in the Avon National Park 24 hours a day, seven days a week to ensure that these activities are not occurring. I look forward to the minister putting on the record what can be done in the Avon National Park to ensure that these issues do not keep arising. I am sure the member for Warren-Blackwood will indicate during his contribution that the wild pig problem is rife in all national parks in Western Australia, more so in the south west corner encapsulating his electorate, and that unrestricted access by vehicles is also a huge problem. All Western Australians know of the destruction that fire can cause; and if the fire bans are not policed in our national parks, it could be a disaster waiting to happen.

I am sure everybody is concerned that the example of the Avon National Park should not be the standard that is rolled out across the 67 existing national parks. I am sure the community is concerned that, if we are about to introduce nine new national parks onto the register in Western Australia, those practices should not continue in those areas. These issues have arisen even though CALM has received substantial budget increases to manage these areas. At a briefing earlier this week I was advised that in the 2001 budget an amount of \$25 million was put towards the management of the CALM lands, so an argument cannot be made that extra resources have not been put into the system to help manage these issues. Those resources are welcome, but they do not seem to be hitting the ground in the Avon National Park. If we create new national parks it is important that they be

managed effectively and maintained in a pristine state, and that issues such as wild pigs and uncontrolled access do not become the standard for those areas. CALM has a huge area to manage in Western Australia. The department does this to the best of its ability, and I am sure it wishes this were not the case but, as I have outlined, even with increased funding it does not seem to be able to get it right in the Avon National Park. I am sure other members will also outline those issues during their contributions.

This legislation will preserve these new areas in Western Australia for future generations. A key plank for the management of those nine new national parks and 12 new reserves is a management plan. Management plans are critical for ensuring that the proper processes are put in place so that issues, such as those I have raised concerning the Avon National Park, can be addressed and rectified. The Conservation and Land Management Act specifies that a management plan must be drawn up for each park and reserve. At the briefing I had earlier in the week I indicated that the Conservation and Land Management Act specifies that a management plan be drawn up. I asked whether those management plans had been drawn up for the nine new national parks and the 12 new reserves that will be created by this Bill. I was informed that at the moment CALM does not have the resources to put all these management plans in place; it is done on a priority basis only. The conservative side of politics supports this Bill, but it seems highly unlikely that it will ever find its way through the upper House, given the backlog of legislation.

When this Bill is proclaimed, the management plans will not be fully completed for the areas it covers. That will create a major challenge for the minister and the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Suddenly CALM will have a new national park under its control deemed to be pristine Western Australian natural environment but with no management plan. How will CALM ensure feral pigs are controlled and proper fire management without a management plan? What sort of consultation process has taken place with local landowners? There are no national parks in my electorate but there is CALM-managed land. The number of wild dogs coming out of that CALM-managed land is creating huge issues in the northern and eastern wheatbelts. Landowners who are responsible for the management of their land are very concerned that an under-resourced department must manage those unallocated crown lands and the many attendant issues within them. I am sure everyone in the area is concerned about those wild dogs that are causing havoc among sheep flocks in not only pastoral but also the northern wheatbelt areas. There is a very good CALM office in Merredin, which is doing many good things to get on top of these issues. However, once again, it is a matter of resources.

In the debate yesterday we referred to the difficulties the Agriculture Protection Board is having trying to manage the wild dog problem in the wheatbelt. Much of the management responsibility has been handed back to landowners. That has created a new raft of problems, including the ability for dog control contractors to obtain insurance liability cover and about who is responsible for it. Pardon the pun, but the wild dog management in the wheatbelt is a dog's breakfast.

Mr M.P. Murray: If people tied up their dogs, they would not have problems in those areas.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: Is the member for Collie referring to wild dingos?

Mr M.P. Murray: They are house dogs that end up in the bush. That is the problem; you need only look at the colour of them to see that.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I think the member for Collie should stick to the issues in his electorate. I do not want to make light of this; it is a very substantial issue.

Mr M.P. Murray: I understand that, but you should look at the mix and match of their colours.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: They are dingos.

Mr M.P. Murray: They are not dingos; they are wild domestic dogs.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr D.A. Templeman): Members, the member for Merredin has the call.

Mr B.J. GRYLLS: I thank the member for Collie for his in-depth knowledge of the dog issue in the wheatbelt. I am sure he will attend the next wild dog management meeting in Southern Cross in the near future. Those issues are very important. I am trying to inform the House that management of these areas is critical. Without that management many negative impacts will arise. It will leave Western Australians with little faith in the system and that is not the attitude we want to create with this legislation. We want all Western Australians to be confident that these new national parks and reserves will be efficiently managed.

As I have outlined, management plans are prepared by CALM only on a priority basis. They will not be done for all these new reserves when this Bill is proclaimed. If a management plan for the new national parks and reserves does not exist, it will be clear that this Bill is more about a rushed bid to satisfy a pre-election commitment to establish new national parks and reserves than a well-planned and resourced initiative.

Today I will refer to the many different issues surrounding that. The Labour Government made an election promise to create 30 new national parks in this term of Government. This Bill covers the first nine new national parks. Given the present stage of the electoral cycle, our side of politics is predicting an early December election, which means there is no chance of this legislation being passed by the upper House before then. I contend that the Labor Party will go into the next election with no new national parks created. That is a clear breach of one of its main election commitments when it went to the 2001 state election. This new attempt to legislate for these nine new national parks and 12 new reserves at this late stage of the electoral cycle puts on the public record the extent of the Labor Government's commitment to creating those new parks and honouring that election commitment. We will obviously discuss management plans more during consideration in detail.

The next very important issue I want to raise in connection with the new areas being set aside is jarrah dieback. Jarrah dieback is one of the greatest threats of all to biodiversity in Western Australia. Almost 50 per cent of the State's 350 threatened plant species and 2 000 of the 9 000 known plant species in the south west are susceptible to jarrah dieback. Dieback has infested 15 to 20 per cent of the jarrah forest and 70 per cent of the Banksia woodlands in the Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks. If 15 to 20 per cent of the jarrah forest in Western Australia is affected by dieback, huge alarm bells should be ringing for all Western Australians. We had a very heated and public debate during the 2001 election campaign about the protection of our jarrah forests. To the consternation of communities in the south west, the Government has reduced the jarrah cut, which I am sure the member for Warren-Blackwood will touch on. Fifteen to 20 per cent of the State's jarrah forest is under threat. I have heard very little about jarrah dieback in this Parliament since I have been a member. It is obviously a silent disaster for not only our jarrah forests but also many of the State's native plant species and, as I said, a large percentage of all species in the south west. Jarrah dieback is a very important issue. Since I have taken on this role as shadow Minister for the Environment, I have been contacted by many people about dieback. Jarrah dieback is a critical issue, even in Banksia woodlands in the southern corridor of Perth. It has made its way very close to the metropolitan area. It is a disaster for 70 per cent of the Shannon National Park to be affected by jarrah dieback, and the Government must make it a number one priority in the management of our forests. I will read some information on jarrah dieback and put on record the coalition's concerns about the management of dieback in Western Australia. This information contains some very interesting words that I am sure I will need some assistance to pronounce!

Mr B.K. Masters interjected.

Mr B.J. GRYLLES: I thank the member for Vasse very much. I think I will use the letters "PC" and he can pronounce the technical term during his contribution to the debate.

The *Phytophthora* fungus is a major cause of the destruction of forests in Western Australia. The most widespread of the several species is *Phytophthora cinnamomi*. As I said, 2 000 of the 9 000 native plant species in the south west are susceptible to it. CALM's "NatureBase" publication provides the following information -

By a conservative estimate 15-20% of the jarrah forest has been infested by *P. cinnamomi*, with the proportion considerably higher in the wetter, north western part of forest. Around 60% of the montane shrublands and *Banksia* and mallee woodlands of the 116,000 ha Stirling Range National Park have been infested . . .

As I said 70 per cent of Banksia woodlands in the Shannon and D'Entrecasteaux National Parks have been infested. People need to understand how *Phytophthora cinnamomi* is being spread; it is by access to the forest. A family member of mine works for the Department of Conservation and Land Management and he told me about the great lengths to which CALM workers go to avoid the spread of PC. Very stringent management plans are put in place for anyone who enters those forests. The concern with the creation of nine new national parks is that now there will be nine new hot spots in which, I am sure, PC already exists to some degree. However, we do not want PC to spread further. My concern is how CALM will control the spread of PC in those areas that do not yet have management plans.

Jarrah dieback should be a key issue in the Western Australian Parliament. The community of Western Australia has clearly put on the record its concern for the protection of our native forests. However, I see very few public protests and very few car bumper stickers about jarrah dieback. No matter what the Parliament does to set aside areas of national parks and reserves, if we do not get on top of jarrah dieback, all our good work will be wasted. I am sure that the Minister for the Environment will have some comment to make on the jarrah dieback issue, and I look forward to hearing her contribution to the debate. Perhaps both the Labor Party and the conservatives can work together to address the very important issue of jarrah dieback.

I turn now to public access and facilities. It is envisaged that the new national parks will become iconic areas in our State that can be visited by all Western Australians who want to see the very extensive natural environment in our national parks. However, that will create more management problems. CALM is one of the largest

managers of the road network in Western Australia. Many roads are unsealed and need constant maintenance and supervision. Once an area has been declared a national park, it can be expected that more people will be interested in visiting that area. There will be more demands on maintaining the road network and on ensuring that visitors to the area stay on the road network, rather than make their own way through the forest. Again, funding will be an issue. Lack of funds means that CALM can maintain the roads only to the extent allowed by the available funding. The road network in the Avon National Park is completely degraded. Many of the roads are inaccessible. This creates a problem not so much in the day-to-day activities, but, should fire equipment be required to control a fire in the area and the road be inaccessible, many new problems will be created. If there are to be more visitors to national parks, we need to make sure that car parks and toilet and rubbish facilities are available.

I turn now to fire management, which is an issue of great importance to all Western Australians. CALM's firefighting resources and controlled burns must be increased to ensure that both national parks and adjoining properties are not put at risk. We have had quite extensive arguments in this Parliament about the benefits of controlled burning. The coalition is certainly a proponent of controlled burning and believes that it is a very important tool in the management of all forests in Western Australia. I will read from the CALM webpage on fire and forests. Many people in the community say that controlled burning destroys the ecosystem and should not be permitted. Under the heading "Fire and Forests" the webpage states -

Fire is as much a part of the South West forest environment as sunshine, water and soil nutrients.

That is how importantly CALM regards the use of fire as a tool in managing the forests in our south west corner. It goes on to state -

Forest plants and animals have evolved alongside fire. They are adapted to it and many of them depend on fire for regeneration and survival. But the natural situation has changed as we have imposed a fire-vulnerable society into a fire-prone environment.

This is probably the key factor. One of the most important issues for CALM is the management of fire. I will be very interested to hear the minister's contribution on the fire management plan for the new national parks and reserves and to what extent resources will be increased and new fire tenders will be made available. I am sure that CALM already has that sort of equipment in those areas, but as soon as the nine new national parks are created, many more people will visit those areas, and that will increase the fire hazard. Earlier I had a conversation with the member for Warren-Blackwood about the fact that many of those areas are quite a long distance from what could be called visitation areas. However, as soon as they become national parks, there will be more visitors to those areas. We must ensure that fire management strategies are put in place to manage fire in those national parks. We were told this week by CALM that the precise nature of burn planning will change when the Bill is enacted, but that the area of land that is burnt will remain the same. I presume that that means that once the legislation is enacted, CALM will have a slightly changed policy on fire. I look forward to the minister providing more information on that issue in her contribution.

The tragedies in Tenterden and Bridgetown in 2003 and 2004 brought home to the community of Western Australia how devastating fire can be to not only the natural environment but also communities. I am sure that the Tenterden community and other communities in the surrounding area, as the victims of those wildfires, still have that on their mind. I am sure that they, along with the rest of the Western Australian community, are very concerned about the management of fire practices in these new national parks and reserves.

I turn now to one of the issues that will cause some delay to these areas being placed on the reserves list. State agreement Acts cover some of these areas. Some clauses in the Bill are subject to negotiation with the Commonwealth Government. As I have outlined, some of the proposed reserves fall within the Alcoa World Alumina Australia and Worsley Alumina Pty Ltd state agreement Act mining leases. These areas cannot be declared national parks or reserves until the Commonwealth removes them from the Australian Heritage Council register. The areas affected by this legislation are the proposed 260-hectare addition to the Serpentine National Park, the Bennelaking Conservation Park, the new 4 300-hectare Wandering Conservation Park, the Russell Conservation Park, the Falls Brook Nature Reserve, the North Dandalup Nature Reserve and the addition to the Lane-Poole Nature Reserve. The coalition contends that this legislation has been brought forward at the last minute in the electoral cycle to move some way towards meeting the election commitment of the Labor Government. The backlog of legislation in the upper House has already been discussed. We discussed in our party meeting this week that eight pieces of legislation a week must be passed if the Parliament is to get through that backlog. The speed at which legislation is being passed in the upper House indicates that it will not reach the rate of eight pieces a week. Even if the upper House gives this Bill priority I do not think it will pass it in time. In addition, we need sign off by the Commonwealth to remove these areas from the Australian Heritage Commission register. Given that the Commonwealth is in an election cycle it will be very difficult for this Labor Government to get those decisions from the Commonwealth in time for our state election. Given the late stage

of the electoral cycle, it would be very cynical to criticise the Commonwealth about these areas because it has not signed off in time. The minister could have taken the opportunity far earlier in the election cycle to put this Bill forward.

I turn now to water issues. As everyone in Western Australia knows, a desalination plant is proposed because of the great concern about future water supplies in Western Australia. I will quote from the minister's second reading speech -

The boundaries of the proposed Greater Beedelup, Greater Dordagup and Boorara Gardner National Parks overlap with areas of possible future dam sites. The Department of Conservation and Land Management will ensure that the management plans for these parks acknowledge the potential future reservoir sites and that excisions from the national parks may occur in the future for public water supply and associated infrastructure, if and when the dams are required.

Although the Department of Conservation and Land Management has identified future public water supply sites within the boundaries of some of the new parks and reserves, I would like the minister to address the prospect of catchment thinning in the future. The state water strategy states that catchment thinning is one of the key ways in which we can increase water run-off into our dams. That is of great concern in national parks because I am informed by CALM that thinning would not be a policy that is consistent with national parks. Right away we are faced with the problem of future dam sites in the national parks. Even if we can get enough support to have dams in those areas, the catchments for the dams are the most critical part. We have already debated many times in this Parliament that there can be as many dams as we want in Western Australia, but if the catchments are not working to channel water into the dams they become relatively ineffective in supplying the State's water needs. There has already been much debate about catchment thinning, particularly the pines on the Gnangara mound, which would allow a large increase in the number of gigalitres of water flowing back into the system. However, there have been problems with that because of an agreement Act. I believe there was a trial of catchment thinning at one of the dam sites. A person does not need to be a Rhodes scholar to see that a catchment that is clear, rather than overgrown, will divert much more water into a dam. It is of concern to the coalition that CALM does not believe that catchment thinning would be acceptable in a national park. That could tie up areas that we should be using for future water resources. If it became an option, CALM mentioned that the issue would have to come back to Parliament and part of the national park would have to be excised for thinning purposes. I put on record that I believe it would be a very difficult process. Once a national park is set aside it is very difficult to excise part of it for catchment thinning. It would not be possible in the political climate of today. I cannot see that political climate changing much in the future. The minister has not removed those future dam sites from the agenda. She said it is still a possibility. Once a national park has been gazetted it is highly unlikely it could be developed as a future dam site. That is obviously of concern to all Western Australians because of the water shortage we face in the State. It is important that the minister addresses that when she makes her contribution to the debate.

In summary, there are very serious management issues concerning the nine new national parks and the 12 new reserves. I have outlined those issues in my contribution to the debate today. I am sure that everyone in this Chamber is very interested in how the minister and her department plan to manage those areas. This Labor Government is very good at talking about new national parks and reserves but it is not very good at getting them into the legislation cycle so that they can be approved before the next election. Dieback, fire management, access and wild animals are all problems in the national parks, and the Government is not very good at managing them. The key element of today's debate is the management of the areas. It is one thing to create a new national park but, if it is not managed effectively, it is clearly a fairly cynical attempt to gain the support of an electorate that wants to see national parks set aside.

The Gallop Labor Government came to power in 2001 on the back of very strong green credentials. The logging debate was certainly a key issue leading up to that election. I put on record that my National Party colleagues were the first people to raise concerns in the debate about forest management in Western Australia. We will continue to advocate for the protection of Western Australia's forests. Being a younger member of Parliament, members of my generation contact me regularly about the management of forests in Western Australia. I am sure that as we pass through this election and into the next, the management of the forests will be critical. Once again, it is very clear that no new national parks will be created in the first four-year term of the Gallop Labor Government. There are far too many impediments, including the upper House and obtaining sign off by the Commonwealth. As the member for Warren-Blackwood will outline, I believe it is a very cynical attempt by the Labor Party, in the late stage of this Government's cycle, to introduce this legislation. As I mentioned about the Minister for the Environment yesterday, I am sure I will see a press release today on the minister's web site about the creation of nine new national parks and 12 new reserves. I will ensure that my press release is available today. It will refer to management issues, jarrah dieback and fire management to ensure that all

Western Australians understand exactly where we are with forest management in Western Australia. It will ensure that the debate has the facts in place.

Before I finish my contribution I refer to some of the achievements of the previous coalition Government in conserving Western Australia's natural resources. The coalition increased the conservation estate by 2.6 million hectares between 1993 and 2001. That is 2.6 million hectares in its eight years of government. The legislation before us today creates 96 000 hectares of new national park and 23 000 hectares of new conservation park. If this legislation is the Gallop Labor Government's attempt to demonstrate its green credentials, then it still has a long way to go to catch up with what the coalition Government did during its time in government. I look forward to playing my role in ensuring that forest management continues to be an issue that is put on the public agenda. There is no point in having 67 national parks, and in creating nine new national parks under this legislation, if the Minister for the Environment does not provide the resources and the attention that are necessary for the effective management of those parks.

The coalition will be supporting this legislation. We look forward to discussing further the important issue of management when we go into consideration in detail. I am sure that all Western Australians welcome the fact that nine new national parks will be created and new reserves will be set aside. However, I am sure they are equally keen to ensure that those new areas are managed in the best and most effective way for the future enjoyment of all Western Australians.

**MR M.P. MURRAY** (Collie) [11.51 am]: I will contribute to the debate on the Reserves (National Parks, Conservation Parks and Nature Reserves) Bill by relaying my experience with a proposed new national park in my area. My experience is completely different from that of the member for Merredin. I am very pleased to tell members that the Wellington Forest Advisory Committee has been in place for quite some time in anticipation of the creation of that new national park. The committee comprises an array of people from all walks of life, ranging from business people through to the most staunch of the greens within my electorate. That is a very good starting point. The members of the committee have worked very hard and have put in a lot of effort to ensure that when the national park is proclaimed, a management plan is in place for that park. That has been done in conjunction with the Department of Conservation and Land Management. They have come up with management plans for the future walk trails and roads, and to deal with the expected influx of people to the Bunbury region to enjoy that new national park. My experience is therefore quite different, because it is certainly not true to say that nothing has been happening in my area.

One issue that has arisen in my area is the number of camping areas. There is now a reasonable number of camping areas in the places that cause the least environmental damage, particularly around the Wellington Weir. CALM has engaged the community on numerous occasions and has been well funded to enable it to do that. In recent times CALM has put in new roads and sealed existing roads that have become a bit dangerous. CALM has a management plan in place for dieback, with strict conditions on the movement of vehicles, particularly in wet weather. Some areas are now totally off limits to vehicular traffic, and the people who walk along the tracks in those areas are asked to be very careful about removing the mud and dirt from their shoes when they come off the tracks. These sorts of plans have been put in place, and I assume that is also the case in the other areas that are proposed to become national parks. That is quite different from what we have been told by the member for Merredin in the past hour.

I am proud to support the Labor Party's green platform. There needs to be a balance in every area. We are not into the cut it down and mow it down mentality that the people in the Manjimup area are renowned for. If the people in that area could knock down all the trees and turn that area into the Nullarbor, they would be quite willing to do that. We are not about that. We are about looking after what we have. In some of these areas people's thinking seems to be a bit futuristic. I am sure that was also the case when Kings Park was first proclaimed a national park.

**Mr B.K. Masters:** Are you concerned about the loss of tourism if the Wellington Discovery Forest were to close?

**Mr M.P. MURRAY:** I certainly am not. I have certainly made my position very clear on the Wellington Discovery Forest. People have put a position about the Wellington Discovery Forest. Mr Spriggins is one person who comes to mind very clearly. Some of the people in that area started a program there, but they then forgot about it. Ten years later they tried to get back onto the bandwagon, but by then it was much too late to use the original proposal that they had put forward. Right next to the national park - in fact, within two kilometres of the Wellington Discovery Forest - there are areas that have been logged in recent times and that can be utilised. That has been thought through and looked at. I am sure that, in the long term, people will agree that that is the way to go. I do not see any need or justification for further clearing in the Wellington Discovery Forest area. I do not think that would be a wise decision. Certainly from my knowledge, having walked right through that area, that is one of the best stands of jarrah within the region. People say that is because of the

management plan. However, that plan was dropped some years ago, and the people in that area have caused their own problems by not utilising and following through on what they called their experiment on how to burn and clear forests. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. There are other areas that have been logged in recent times and that can be utilised for that purpose.

Mr B.J. Grylls: Do you think we should still have projects like the Wellington Discovery Forest Centre?

Mr M.P. MURRAY: The Wellington Discovery Forest Centre is excellent, and I am sure similar projects will be developed in other areas to show how the jarrah forest - it is jarrah forest in my area, but whether it be jarrah, karri or marri does not matter - is formed and how it grows, and what fire and clearing does to these areas, in such a format that we do not need to cut down the trees in order to prove the point. We have lost the point of the argument if we think that is what we need to do in order to show people how the forests work. These look, see and touch discovery forests are a great idea. I have forgotten the number of people who go through that discovery centre, but many thousands of schoolchildren go through the Wellington Discovery Forest, and the weekend camps that it holds for adults are also well utilised.

CALM is very much on the ball in the Wellington area in dealing with feral animals and also with weed infestation. Cotton weed and blackberries are a huge problem, and CALM is working on that on virtually a daily basis. I am happy to say that those management systems are in place and are working well. The people in the Collie district are very happy with the amount of funding that has been made available to progress their national park so that it will become an icon for that region. More rangers are being put on. Fire controls are in place. Plans have been put in place for evacuation, road maintenance and dieback control. I cannot see where the problems lie in other areas, other than that there may be some management problems.

I applaud the Government's decision to set aside these parks for future generations. Those parks will become very special and will play an important part in the growth of the Bunbury and Collie regions. Even now people are welcome to go there on weekends, and they really look forward to utilising those areas. Of course there must be some constraints, because unfortunately in all walks of life there are people who will light a bonfire on the banks of the river and leave behind a pile of empty cans and those sorts of things. It must be controlled to some degree, because the worst enemy of national parks is those sorts of people. Recently I pulled my car into a service station in Collie, and some people from Perth pulled up with a trailer full of rubbish and told me that they had been camping out the back of Wellington Weir and that was all the rubbish that they had picked up, and they wanted to know where they could drop it off. That is the sort of process we need to have in the future. We need to value what we have and put it at the top end of the scale.

Firewood cutting is another problem. People are going into the national park to cut down a nice white straight jarrah tree that even my wife would be able to split with the back end of an axe. These are the kinds of things we need to stop. We need to say that there are some nice trees there, but we should not cut them into big blocks as they do in Manjimup. I am not saying that everything is okay in every area. The funding does need to be looked at. However, I can certainly say that in my area the funding has been adequate at this stage. The CALM officers are working very much towards -

Mr P.D. Omodei interjected.

Mr M.P. MURRAY: We know what happens down in Manjimup; it rains all the time and people become a bit feral!

I have had my two bob's worth. I wrap up by saying that good things are happening in my electorate. As I said, there are variations to the regional forest agreement, such as the Wellington Discovery Forest, but the scope to attract tourists is endless. The forest currently attracts about 200 000 people and I would say in the next 10 years it will attract about 400 000 to 500 000 people. People always see something special in our State.

**DR J.M. WOOLLARD** (Alfred Cove) [12 noon]: I support the Bill. I congratulate the Government for putting the Bill on the Table. Although I agree with the member for Merredin that only seven sitting weeks are left in the parliamentary session this year, I very much doubt the sincerity of the Government in bringing this Bill to the Table.

I was very pleased to hear the member for Merredin speak on behalf of the Liberal-National coalition in support of the Bill, particularly his concerns for the future management of national parks. I hope that this support means that, should a Liberal-National coalition win the next election, it will deliver the promise it has made today by supporting the Bill and ensure that at least nine new national parks are created.

This Bill is disappointing. I remind members of the Labor Party's environmental pre-election policy. The Labor Party said that it would create 30 new national parks, which included 12 new national parks promised under the Regional Forest Agreement and two new conservation parks. In fact, there are only seven, not nine, new



national parks being created in the Bill, as two of the parks - class A reserves in the Shires of Augusta-Margaret River and Busselton - were promised under the old RFA.

Labor's promise that it would create 30 new national parks, including 12 promised under the RFA, means that two of the 12 parks in this Bill were promised under the RFA. Therefore, if the Government keeps the promise it made to the community under the RFA, one would hope to see a Bill tabled by the Government next week to create 10 other national parks. Labor also said that, included in the 30 new national parks that it would create, were 18 new national parks promised under the old-growth forest policy. Only seven out of those 18 parks are included in this Bill, which means we are waiting for 11 national parks from the promise made under the old-growth forest policy and 10 national parks under the old RFA. This is a really important matter.

I have counted the number of members in this House. There are 32 Labor Party members, 15 Liberal Party members, five Independents and five National Party members. When I think about the last election, I recall the people who served at several booths supporting members who promised to do their very best, if elected, to ensure that the Government protected and secured old-growth forests. I was one of those people. I had support at my booths from the Wilderness Society and from other environmental groups and I had preferences from the Greens (WA) because I gave a commitment to pursue the community's wishes to save old-growth forests. That is why I have continued to question this Government and why I am standing in this place today. I draw the attention of the House to other people who, like me, got across the line and became members because of that support. I expect to hear today from the member for Joondalup as the Wilderness Society supported him at his booths. I also expect to hear from the members for Riverton, Bunbury, Roleystone and Yokine. Those are five Labor Party government members who got across the line because they told people who were connected with the Wilderness Society and people who were fighting hard for the environment that if they got into office they would stop old-growth forest logging and fight to get these national parks created. Had those five Labor members not had that support, the numbers could well have been 29 on the government side, rather than 32, and 28, rather than 25, on the opposite side. Therefore, the campaign on old-growth forests made a big difference to the party that won the last election.

I again remind the House of the members who got that support and gave that commitment. I hope that each one of them will stand today and give an assurance to this Parliament and to the community that in the next seven weeks they will lobby the minister in the Caucus room to ensure that another reserves Bill is put on the Table next week containing the extra 10 national parks that were to be created under the RFA and the 11 national parks that were to be created under the old-growth forest policy. Again, I am referring to the members for Joondalup, Riverton, Bunbury, Roleystone and Yokine. Each member got across the line on election day because he told the community he was there for old-growth forests, not that he was there to put the party first and forget about old-growth forests. Each member said he was there to make sure that the millions of people who wanted old-growth forests protected would see them protected.

I will not delay this Bill in any way. I am very pleased to see it on the Table. As I said, it is wonderful that the coalition has given its wholehearted support to this Bill. Yes, they have reservations that the management practices have not been put in place for these national parks, but considering that the Government has had three and a half years to put this Bill on the Table, I hope that those reservations are unfounded, and that management plans will ensure that these and other national parks are cared for appropriately.

I support this Bill. I am pleased to see that the Government has thus far met part of its election promise but, unless this Bill passes through this House and the upper House within the next seven weeks, it will not have kept any of that promise. I listened to some of the earlier interjections that people thought that this Bill was just put on the Table at the last minute to pretend that the Government was serious about its promise. I hope that is untrue, but time will tell. We have only seven sitting weeks for this Bill to pass through this House and the upper House and for the other reserves Bill to be put on the Table and to pass through both Houses. During the past three and a half years, only one Bill has passed through both Houses within four sitting weeks. That was the legislation to close the Swan Valley Nyungah Community. That Bill was declared urgent in this House and in the other House. This Bill has not been declared urgent, and that is why I believe it is imperative that the members for Joondalup, Riverton, Bunbury, Yokine and Roleystone make their voices heard both during this debate and in the Caucus to make sure this Bill goes through both Houses.

As I mentioned yesterday, this Bill is not on the priority list of Bills for the upper House. The Leader of the House in the Legislative Council has said that the Government wants 60 Bills to pass.

Dr J.M. Edwards: The only reason this Bill is not on the priority list is that it is not in the upper House yet. It is a priority on the Government's list.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I am very pleased to hear that it will be included on a priority list. Can I ask at this time when the second reserves Bill will come before the House, and whether that also will be a priority listing?

Dr J.M. Edwards: It will definitely be a priority listing. We are finding that the drafting, particularly in the Department of Land Information, is more complicated than it appears. There have been delays of a technical nature. It has nothing to do with our commitment. We have people working late at night and on weekends at all sorts of hours to get the drafting done, but the second Bill will be here shortly.

Mr R.F. Johnson: You should realise that if we have a December election, there will not be seven weeks sitting weeks; there will be only five.

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I thank the minister for her comments and her assurance that people are working very hard. It is now 19 August 2004. I became a member of this place in February 2001 - three and a half years ago. It has been that long, and people are still working late trying to get the Bill to the Table. They are working very hard to put it on the Table but from what the member for Yokine has just said -

Mr R.F. Johnson: Do not confuse me with the member for Yokine, whatever you do!

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: From what the member for Hillarys has just said, we might not even have seven weeks. I hope that if the reserves Bill is tabled next week, it is declared urgent. I am so pleased that the Leader of the House is here at the moment. His was not one of the seats that had others' support to help him get across the line, but I remind him that five government members got across the line because of promises they made to the Wilderness Society and other environmental groups. Had that support not been given, those people - the members for Roleystone, Yokine, Bunbury, Riverton and Joondalup - might not be members of this House and the Labor Party might not be in government. I hope that if the Minister for the Environment, whose staff are up at all hours trying to get the Bill ready, manages to table it by next week, the Leader of the House will declare that Bill urgent.

**MR B.K. MASTERS** (Vasse) [12.15 pm]: In April 2001, after the Liberal Party had lost the February 2001 election, the party held a gathering at Pemberton. I was asked by the leader to make a few comments about the environmental direction the party should take in the subsequent four years. The very first comment I made - I will not go into the others because they are not relevant to this debate - was that we as a political party needed to accept that the people of Western Australia had spoken and wanted all old-growth and high conservation value forest to be preserved in perpetuity. My comments to the Liberal Party were that we as a party had to publicly state our acceptance of that and get on with other things that would result in us - remember, at that time I was a member of the Liberal Party - winning the next election. I have not been privy to the formulation of any Liberal Party policy on forestry, but I hope that we can get a clear commitment from the Liberal Party in the lead-up to the next election - the earlier a commitment is made the better - to recognise what the people of Western Australia have said; namely, that there is to be no more logging of old-growth forests or high conservation value forests. I hope that we can put this issue of forest protection aside so that, in the lead-up to the next election, we can debate really important environmental issues, such as salinity, biodiversity, conservation, the management of national parks and state forests and, as the member for Merredin has said, issues such as dieback. The list goes on and on and on. The first comment I make is that I hope every politician in this State will endorse the policy that the Labor Party took to the public of Western Australia in the lead-up to the last election. The Government was duly elected and now it is attempting to put that policy into effect.

The Reserves (National Parks, Conservation Parks and Nature Reserves) Bill 2004 clearly results from the policy formulated by the Labor Opposition before the last election. However, it is significant that all the areas to be included in national parks, nature reserves or conservation parks, as contained in this Bill, are, or were, production forests. In other words, even though some of these forests have been logged two, three or four times over the past 150 years, they still retain such high conservation, aesthetic, recreational and other values as to justify the inclusion of part or all of them in national parks or some other form of conservation estate. Areas that are old growth, by definition, almost certainly have never been logged, but the plans accompanying this Bill show that only the minority of the tens of thousands of hectares earmarked for the conservation estate, as opposed to production forestry, is old-growth forest. The great majority of the land to be conserved and protected is former production forest which, because it surrounds old-growth forest, has been included in a national park, conservation park or nature reserve that has reasonably sensible boundaries; in other words, rectangular boundaries or boundaries that make as much sense as possible from a management point of view. The statement I made a moment ago that it is significant that almost all of the areas to be added to the conservation estate by virtue of this Bill were once production forests needs to be clearly understood, not just by the protesters in the Ludlow State Forest at the moment, not just by the member for Alfred Cove who calls herself a Liberal for forests and not just by the Government that I am sure knows better, but also by the broader community, because production forestry as a general rule, if it is done right, is entirely consistent with nature conservation and protection of the vast bulk of the forest values.

If we accept that, it has many other implications and consequences from the point of view of future preservation, forest management plans and a whole range of other issues that Governments have to involve themselves in

when formulating policy about forests and forest lands. It is an important principle that unfortunately got lost in the lead-up to the last election, and, I am sorry to say, it got lost during the debate on the Regional Forest Agreement.

As a final comment on this issue, I remind members that, prior to the last election, I asked members on this side of the House - because I was sitting on this side of the House, even though I was a member of the Government - whether they could tell me what were the two most important areas of forest for woodland in the south west of Western Australia. Of course, that was a rhetorical question. The answer I gave was, firstly, the Perup forest east or north east of Manjimup, which has been logged on a number of occasions in the past, but because of the presence of poison pea still carries almost all of its original marsupial fauna; and, secondly, Dryandra forest, which has been very heavily logged and planted in a significant way to brown mallet plantations, but, in spite of that, it is one of the two most important wooded or timbered areas in the south west of WA. Again, it is important to recognise that in spite of 150 years of logging, we still have forests that are worth conserving. That means that the foresters and other people charged with the responsibility of managing our forests have generally done a very good job over the history of European settlement in Western Australia.

One of the downsides to this piece of legislation is that the Government has announced that the Wellington Discovery Forest will no longer exist. The discovery forest was and still is a very good idea. It was designed to show people - not just to talk about - how a jarrah forest could be logged and then regrown over a 200-year period. My understanding of the concept is that every 10 years, 20 hectares of jarrah forest would be logged using the best silvicultural management guidelines available to foresters of the day. It commenced in 1992 when the first logging occurred, and was to continue for 200 years from that time, so the people of Western Australia could see just how good or how bad those silvicultural and logging practices were.

This is one of the biggest disappointments in the Government's decision that has flowed from its protection of old-growth forest policy. In my view, the Wellington Discovery Forest is an activity that is entirely consistent with the aims and objectives of a national park because its purpose is public education. As I understand it, the forest is regrowth forest, not old-growth forest. On that basis there is really no objection, other than a philosophical one, to the logging for public education and administrative purposes of jarrah forest in a national park. I believe that use is entirely consistent with the management aims of a national park. Therefore, for the Government to concede in a very weak-kneed way to the rantings and ravings of a group of people who believe the discovery forest should not be there is very disappointing. If the discovery forest concept had been continued over the whole 200 years for which it was designed, at some point during that period it would have become clear that the foresters were either not doing a good job of regrowing jarrah forest or were doing a good job. The foresters are confident that they can manage their forests well and they are prepared to take the risk that if the Wellington Discovery Forest does not work it will be held against them as a black mark, but if the silvicultural practices do work, the green movement is not prepared to allow the people of Western Australia to see how good that job is. That shows cowardice on the part of those in the green movement. They should have the courage of their convictions. If they truly believe that the foresters of Western Australia are doing as bad a job as the green movement says they are, they should be encouraging the continuation of the Wellington Discovery Forest so that, in years to come, they can stand up and say, "Look, it is a failure; we told you so; we must now stop logging all jarrah forests." However, the greens, being cowards, are not prepared to take that risk, which is very unfortunate.

I will now move to a related issue. A number of the different plans are contained within the explanatory memorandum that was handed out by the minister when she introduced the Bill in June. I will go to the first plan that is contained in the explanatory memorandum for the creation of class A reserve 47673, national park, relating to the national park in the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River, which I understand is to be called the Forest Grove National Park. I can understand why the Government has put reserve 47673 into a national park, and I support it, but the plan shows that the reserve is a very strange shape, especially on the southern side. If we accept that from an environmental point of view there needs to be an environmental linkage between large areas of land to facilitate easy movement of wildlife from east to west, it will be noted that a barrier runs north-south through this desired linkage, which is private land on the western side of Bussell Highway. Yesterday in this place I criticised the Government because, in my view, one of the failings of the Government and the minister was the lack of respect shown for private property rights. I now refer to a committee report from the Tasmanian Parliament. This article was presented at the Melbourne conference of parliamentary committees in July of this year. I am not sure which committee it was, but a committee of the Tasmanian Parliament reported on issues surrounding its inquiry into conservation on private land. It refers to conservation on private land and conflicts in certain areas, the names of which are not particularly relevant. It states -

The adverse economic impact caused by legislation protecting natural and cultural values appears to have prompted almost all submissions to address financial issues of one sort or another.

A major concern was the need for fair and reasonable or adequate compensation for landowners disadvantaged by the need to preserve natural and cultural values on their land.

It states further -

Evidence presented to the Committee indicated that the compensation processes were lengthy and there were disputes over the calculation of the amount of money offered to the landowner. Complicating the issue of compensation was the limited funding available to meet the expectations of landowners.

The three last paragraphs state -

The most important fundamental is that landowners be seen as equal partners in the process of conservation and that government officials should make even greater and more targeted efforts to engage landowners in a positive and open manner.

It is apparent that there is enormous goodwill among landowners to protect and preserve those valuable natural and cultural assets of which they are custodians. The Committee strongly emphasised the need for all relevant Government agencies and individual officers to take whatever steps necessary to harness that goodwill.

It is that partnership between landowners, governments and the broader community that underpin the Committee's options and recommendations.

The paper makes recommendations but there is no need for me to talk about them now. I quoted from the article, firstly, to remind the minister of the comments I made yesterday about the need to respect private property rights. However, secondly, and more relevant is the significant number of national parks, nature reserves and conservation areas prescribed for protection in this Bill. The involvement of private landowners whose property adjoins or is nearby those areas will be crucial in the medium to long term if the full range of environmental values are to be protected in perpetuity.

This reflects one of the failings of both government policy and this legislation. The Bill does not address how cooperative arrangements can be developed and funded so that environmental values on private land can be protected in perpetuity under a mutually beneficial agreement between private and public landowners in areas of high conservation or aesthetic value, such as the areas covered by this Bill.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It is essential to factor in private landowners, especially where linkages are required, so that wildlife can more readily move east and west or north and south between other pre-existing areas of native vegetation. Unfortunately that has not been properly considered by this Government.

That takes me to the issue of management and the amount of money that, I am sorry to say, the Government has not provided for it. Yesterday, the minister said that \$25 million had been provided as a result of its policy to protect our old-growth forest. I do not doubt that the \$25 million is in the budget. However, that money is not being spent to a huge extent on forest management. It is being used for bitumen roads to be built in forest areas, the sky tower, upgrading facilities at the Tree Top Walk and tourist radios. It is for a wide range of tourism, recreation and aesthetic enhancements within the forested conservation estate. However, as I said yesterday, given the dollars per hectare that the Government has spent in this area, the funding is effectively static, and has been over the past four years. I find that to be very disappointing. As I have said repeatedly - there is a motion in my name on the Notice Paper - protection of forests and any natural lands is not achieved just because a line is drawn on the map to show that an area has become a national park or nature reserve. That is an essential first step; nonetheless, the wide range of activities that must happen after that first step are just as crucial. Some would argue they are even more crucial. The ongoing management input is essential for long-term preservation of these lands if we really want to do a good job of looking after them for not just this generation but also future generations.

The member for Merredin summarised very well many of the management problems facing our state forests. Without any doubt, the most serious problems relate to introduced species. He concentrated on *Phytophthora cinnamomi*, the jarrah dieback fungus. It is still a controversial issue. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that, since it has spread out of the jarrah forest into highly susceptible ecosystems such as banksia woodlands and heathlands, the dieback fungus is causing huge damage to all sorts of areas in the conservation estate and not enough is being done to look after it.

That is one exotic species. The member for Merredin also referred to feral pigs. In the high rainfall south west area, feral pigs create damage in a number of ways. They physically damage wetlands where they root for bulbs and all sorts of other edible items from below the surface. In doing so, they destroy the vegetation and soil structure. They are also major mechanisms for moving the dieback fungus from those highly susceptible

wetland areas into new wetland areas where dieback fungus is absent or into less susceptible areas where, once-established, the fungus can still do some damage.

Management dollars are an essential part of this equation. As an aside, I note that the minister's colleague in the upper House, the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Hon Kim Chance, has released a proposal in the south west that examines the possibility of imposing a levy on private landowners for pest and weed management -

Mr P.D. Omodei: It's a rate or a new tax.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Yes, a rate or a tax. To be fair, the Government has said it will match it dollar for dollar. However, in the document that has been released, it states that a plan has been put together that shows that much more money needs to be spent on private land in the south west for managing pest and weed species. Unfortunately, no-one to whom I have spoken knows where the plan has come from or who has written it. The farmers I have spoken to have gone further and said that, for the most part, feral pest and weed problems are not on private land; they are on public land. Ninety per cent of the money to manage public land should come from the public purse. However, roughly 50 per cent of it will be accessed from the pockets of landowners, who, generally, do not have that significant a problem with pests and weeds. I do not know the fate of Hon Kim Chance's proposal; however, I am concerned that, as I said before, not enough money is being spent on managing the conservation estate. Even though another \$25 million apparently has been made available, it is not all being allocated to management actions to address the important issues.

In the few minutes left available to me I will make a couple of comments. In some respects it is unfortunate that this debate is not taking place next week, because this Sunday I will lead about 30 people on a 15-kilometre walk through the proposed Yelverton state forest. Wearing my hat as the President of the Busselton Naturalists Club, this year in the cooler winter and spring months we will do 10 walks of between 15 and 20 kilometres through the proposed Yelverton, Bramley and Forest Grove National Parks.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The members are being rude; I can tell.

Mr B.J. Grylls: We didn't know what you were president of.

Dr J.M. Edwards: Or what you would be wearing!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I know what the members are suggesting. It is far too cold to do what they are suggesting that maybe I do!

Mr B.J. Grylls: It is called getting back to nature.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The word is "naturalist" not "naturist".

Mr B.J. Grylls: We will check *Hansard*!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Yes, I think it is important that the member do that.

The interesting point about Yelverton state forest is that clearly it is not old-growth forest, and I will talk about that in a moment. It is very much regrowth forest that has been logged for at least 134 years. The reason I am that specific with the date is that when I was discussing this Sunday's walk with members of the naturalists club, I was asked whether the walk would go past the old timber mill in which the steam boiler blew up in 1870, killing one forest worker and blinding a horse in one eye. I did not even know there was an old timber mill in that area -

Mr P.D. Omodei: Or a horse!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Yes, or a horse! However, the fact remains that 134 years ago, after what had obviously been some years of jarrah logging in the area, a steam boiler blew up. Since then there has been ongoing logging. I dare say that this particular reserve will be very attractive, and I will tell the minister more about it next week.

I have spoken about the Wellington Discovery Forest, but I point out that on 2 December last year I gave notice of a motion about the Wellington Discovery Forest. That motion has not yet been debated, and I regret that because I think it would be productive if all of us tried to better understand some of the issues relating to the Wellington Discovery Forest.

I turn briefly to clause 16 of the Bill. It relates to class A reserve 47661, which is a proposed national park south and south east of Mumballup. The map in the explanatory memorandum shows very irregular boundaries. Clearly, if some of the small isolated areas of proposed national parks are to remain viable in the long term, significant assistance will need to be gathered from adjoining landowners. Without landowner support, there will be significant reductions in environmental values in parts of this proposed new national park. I hope,

therefore, that the minister will take the trouble to ensure that something is done to get landowners onside. Similarly, clause 21 deals with class A reserve 31088 in the shire of West Arthur, which will become the Bannelaking Conservation Park.

I will conclude by telling the minister a story. Last year or the year before, my wife and I and my in-laws were driving along the Bowelling Duranillin Road and we stopped in the middle of what is now a proposed conservation park. We drove off the bitumen road up a narrow gravel track and about 10 metres in front of us a wedge-tailed eagle lifted off from the ground. We thought it was wonderful that a spectacular adult wedge-tailed eagle was performing just a few metres in front of us. When we stopped and opened the windows of the car, we found out why the eagle was there. A local farmer had dumped a dead steer at that very spot and the eagle was trying to get some food from it.

Mr P.D. Omodei: How do you know the cow didn't get out of the bush and die there?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It was very coincidental that it happened to be right next to a gravel track leading off the bitumen road. Circumstantial evidence overwhelmingly indicated that it was a local farmer who dropped it there. The reason I have told the minister that story is that if a dead animal such as a cow is dropped into bushland, it not only introduces a huge volume of weed and pastoral plant seeds through its stomach contents, but also provides very high levels of nutrients in an admittedly small area. However, because the Australian bush has adapted to low nutrient values, that little pocket of weeds will be there probably for decades if not generations. Again I emphasise that if the minister does not have landowners onside when she is trying to manage the natural environment in Western Australia, she will not succeed to the same degree that she had hoped for. I am happy to support this legislation. Very little of it covers old-growth forest, and I ran out of time in which to describe that issue. I am disappointed that the Wellington Discovery Forest basically will be removed, but I will support the legislation.

**MR P.D. OMODEI** (Warren-Blackwood) [12.45 pm]: I support the Reserves (National Parks, Conservation Parks and Nature Reserves) Bill 2004, but I express some reservation about how the Government has reached this point. Under the current Labor Government's old-growth forest policy, it is proposed to create 30 new national parks, including the 12 national parks set aside under the Regional Forest Agreement and two new conservation parks, and to protect another 150 000 hectares of forest set aside under the RFA. As has been said, we must question why, at the eleventh hour in the first term of the Labor Government, this legislation has come before the House. I put it to members that I think there is a very simple reason that that has happened; that is, the Government wants to confirm its environmental credentials and deliver to its green supporters and those who supported it at the last election the promises it made prior to the election as part of its policy. The truth of the matter is that this Bill falls far short of what the Government proposed and promised. The Bill deals with nine new national parks. I forewarn the minister that I will question her during the consideration in detail stage about whether there are any pre-existing national parks within those nine so-called new national parks. I want to know whether they are new national parks. If she says that they are new partial parks, they should be new national parks.

I do not think there is a problem with the proposal that has been put forward, but I am concerned that we are proposing national parks in the absence of appropriate funding to manage those national parks. Significant extra funds were allocated to the Department of Conservation and Land Management in this year's budget. At the same time, CALM not only will be involved in proposing and managing new national parks, but also will be allocated all that unallocated crown land that previously existed as just crown land. That will be a lot more land than CALM has had before, and it needs to be managed properly. I put it to members that, in reality, there is nowhere near enough money in the budget to manage national parks appropriately, and I will give some reasons for that as I go along. If these national parks are not going to be managed appropriately, it begs the question whether we should put them into statute in the first place. We must bear in mind that most of these parks, particularly in those areas north of the Blackwood River, were cut over forest and have been cut over three and four times in the past.

Proposals for national parks are not new. The previous Minister for the Environment under the coalition Government proposed to create 12 new national parks and make additions to 24 others. They included the Hawke National Park, the link between the Warren National Park and the D'Entrecasteaux National Park, part of the Dombakup, Giblett, Northcliffe, Ryall, Warner and Mullalyup blocks as well as parts of Hester and Dalgarp blocks. A new Blackwood River valley park was proposed as well as a Blackwood River plateau around Milyeannup.

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.

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