

PERTH ZOO — REDEVELOPMENT

892. Mr G. BAKER to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the Cook Labor government's \$51 million redevelopment of Western Australia's iconic Perth Zoo.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how the upgrades to the Perth Zoo will deliver improved outcomes and experiences and deliver stronger conservation outcomes?
- (2) Can the minister advise the house how this project will support local jobs and businesses in WA?

Mr R.R. WHITBY replied:

- (1)–(2) Thank you, member for South Perth. Indeed, I can. I think it is good to round-up question time on some positive news. It points to the good work that the Cook Labor government is doing. There are good outcomes from our work and policies in so many facets across the economy and community, and this is one of them. As the member rightly mentioned, the unique Perth Zoo is iconic and is the pride of the electorate of the member for South Perth. It recently celebrated its 125th birthday. It was appropriate that stage 1 of our master plan was completed in time for those birthday celebrations. We opened a brand new function centre, a series of cafe facilities and the all-abilities playground featuring a giant numbat. It was a great result.

What has the response of the community been? I know the member for South Perth's residents are keen visitors. In the month that that happened, there was a staggering number of visitors to Perth Zoo. There were 100 000 in a single month—a record for Perth Zoo. It comes after a financial year all-time record of in excess of 800 000 visitors to Perth Zoo. It just goes to show that if you invest in public assets, promote them and do it correctly, people will come. Where are they coming from? People who visit the Zoo are required or asked to submit their postcodes. It comes back with some very intriguing and interesting information about visitation to the Zoo. There will be members here who are very interested in where Zoo patronage comes from. Of the top 10 local governments represented in having visitors to the Zoo, number one was Cockburn! Congratulations, member for Cockburn; Cockburn residents are the greatest zoo-goers in Western Australia. There are others. Member for Mandurah, the great folk down in Mandurah love their Zoo! Member for Gosnells, the great folk of Gosnells love the Zoo. There is lots of visitation from Joondalup, member for Joondalup. Are members getting the picture here? Visitation is from the extremities of Perth—it is not from the predicted suburban families, but it is from people with families in the peri-urban zones. I also include Armadale and Wanneroo as having residents who are constant visitors to Perth Zoo. This is about investing in deserving assets to create a return and enjoyment for the community. This Zoo is not just a great place to go and enjoy, see animals and spend the day —

Mr D.A. Templeman: You can go there and see possum throwing, can't you?

Mr R.R. WHITBY: Indeed! No possum was harmed; I have been reliably informed that they are pretty good on their feet and can take a tough landing.

There is an important message at the Zoo and its role in conservation; that is part of the attraction, too. Our Perth Zoo is responsible for breeding endangered species that are returned to the wild. More and more, the community is very keen on seeing that conservation role in our Zoo. Part of our master plan involves the creation of a conservation and science precinct that will give a deep look into the back-of-house functions—the veterinary role at the Zoo and the breeding of endangered species. When someone goes to the Zoo, they will learn more about conservation efforts and the great biodiversity that we have in Western Australia. As well as it being a wonderful place for locals, the Minister for Tourism will know that it is another great place to come to and thing to do in Perth.