

**COP27 AND MIDDLE EAST VISIT**

*Statement by Minister for Environment*

**MR R.R. WHITBY (Baldivis — Minister for Environment)** [9.28 am]: I would like to inform the house that, in early November, I attended the 2022 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP27, held in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. While overseas, I visited five cities across three countries—namely, Riyadh in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Cairo and Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt and Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates.

In Riyadh, I held meetings with the Saudi Minister for Environment, Water and Agriculture, as well as the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is the Saudi climate envoy. Kings Park has a longstanding relationship with the Saudi department of environment, advising it on greening initiatives in the kingdom. This not only showcases the world-class expertise held by staff at Kings Park, but also returns a commercial benefit to the state. With the Saudi Green Initiative, which aims to plant 10 billion trees across the kingdom by 2030, there is much opportunity for WA to harness our science and research capability in advising on world's best practice. In Saudi Arabia, I also took the opportunity to promote WA as an international study destination. I met with high school students looking to study abroad and education agents and advisers.

Being the first Western Australian minister to attend a COP conference, I took the opportunity to not only tell our state's own decarbonisation story, but showcase to the world how WA can partner with other jurisdictions to achieve their decarbonisation goals. In five bilateral meetings with ministers from Egypt and Canada, we discussed WA's capability in mining critical minerals and water and food security. In Dubai, I met with Masdar Clean Energy, a green energy company that is investing in Western Australia through the \$500 million East Rockingham waste-to-energy project. We also held an invest and trade event focused on exploring collaboration between WA and the Persian Gulf in building a net zero economy.

We were well supported by our WA Trade and Investment team. I thank Nashid Chowdhury, the Trade and Investment Commissioner; Aziz Saba, director of the WA trade office in Dubai; Ania Tukalska; and Wilson Binil from the Dubai office. Thank you to those keen assistants. My consistent message throughout the mission was that Western Australia is determined to continue and even exceed its role as a major energy exporter by becoming a green energy superpower. In Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, I explained that WA's vastness enormous natural resources of sun, wind, green hydrogen, potential abundance of critical minerals and unparalleled mining expertise made us obvious partners in their push to diversify and decarbonise their own economies.

I now table my travel itinerary for the mission.

**Mr P.J. Rundle:** You should have stayed on for the soccer!

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I should have!

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