

OPEN-RANGE ZOO

869. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the government's announcement of an open-range zoo.

- (1) Which agency prepared the submission advocating for the open-range zoo?

Mr F.A. Alban interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Swan Hills, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to the government's announcement of an open-range zoo.

- (1) Which agency prepared the submission advocating for the open-range zoo?
- (2) What other locations were suggested?
- (3) What cost estimates were provided by the minister's department for the zoo itself and other associated infrastructure costs?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

I thank the member for Warnbro for the question.

- (1)–(3) The government announced last week that it has identified a preferred site for an open-range zoo for Western Australia. It is something that has been talked about in this state long before I became Minister for Environment and something that we have been looking at in the environment portfolio, particularly with Perth Zoo and the Perth zoological board, but also in conjunction with other agencies and across government. I visited Werribee Open Range Zoo some two years ago and saw the potential there. We have been doing a lot of work over the last couple of years to look at what would potentially be the best site to bring one to Western Australia. What is very important about understanding how an open-range zoo fits in is that animal welfare standards are continuing to improve. These animals require a larger area. Indeed, other states have gone down this path. New South Wales has an open-range zoo at Dubbo, Victoria has the Werribee Open Range Zoo and even South Australia has an open-range zoo. Perth Zoo is a world leader in zoos.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: That is enough!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Indeed, members opposite might not be aware, but the current CEO of Perth Zoo is also the president of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums. Perth Zoo strides on the world stage. Not only do we do incredible work in this state in breeding our own unique fauna for release, which is very important and is our first order of responsibility, but also, as a wealthy state and as a population that has a focus on conservation, there is a very important role that we can play in breeding animals that are on the brink of extinction in other places around the world. Perth Zoo is very well known for its work on orangutans, for example, and we want to do more work particularly with species such as rhinoceros. So that we can accommodate that, we have identified a site. I think it is an excellent site. I would be interested to hear what members opposite think. It is a 700-hectare site located within the Avon Valley National Park.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr A.P. JACOB: What a silly interjection!

The SPEAKER: Thank you for that titbit of information. I know that everybody is excited about the zoo, but relax.

Mr A.P. JACOB: The good news for the house is that this is not a site that the government has to purchase; it is a site that has already been purchased. It is a site that is currently vested with the Department of Parks and Wildlife, which I think answers some of the member's question. It will ultimately be vested with Perth Zoo. This is just a part of sensible government. Quite simply, if we want to have a zoo experience for the people of Perth and for the next generation and for the one after that —

Mr M.P. Murray interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Collie–Preston, I call you to order for the first time. You have got 30 seconds, minister.

Mr A.P. JACOB: If we want the people of Western Australia to continue to have zoo experiences, an open-range zoo is simply part of sensible planning. This site will complement the existing Perth Zoo. It is less than 70 kilometres away from the existing Perth Zoo and it is a site that the government owns freehold.