

SWAN AND CANNING RIVERS — AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT

569. Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE to the Minister for Environment:

I have a supplementary question. Will the minister withdraw his silly amendments to downgrade the Swan River Trust in view of this scathing report from the Auditor General?

Mr A.P. JACOB replied:

If I could summarise the opposition's position this way: "What we have been doing up until now has not been working so we should do the same thing more and more!" It absolutely defies belief —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Premier and the Leader of the Opposition, I call you both to order for the first time. The minister is speaking. I want a succinct answer to the member for Gosnells' question. Thank you.

Mr A.P. JACOB: The position of the opposition absolutely defies belief: the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Gosnells came out straightaway and somehow tied in the future merger of the Department of Parks and Wildlife —

Mr M. McGowan: Abolition!

Mr A.P. JACOB: The opposition has been deliberately dishonest the whole way through this debate. I can get straight to that if they want to keep interjecting.

This report found that we need to manage that entire catchment, which is twice the size of Tasmania. The Swan River Trust has a tiny little pin prick of that site—72 square kilometres. We either expand the Swan River Trust to manage one-third of the state and let the Department of Parks and Wildlife do the other two-thirds or we merge the two agencies and have a dedicated conservation agency, which is exactly in line with this government's election commitment. That is what we are doing. The Labor opposition is opposing us every step of the way. It is saying there are big problems and that we should keep those problems going.