

ROE HIGHWAY STAGE 8

Motion

Resumed from 21 March on the following motion moved by Hon Lynn MacLaren —

That, for the purposes of —

- (a) saving the Beeliar wetlands by preserving ecological linkages and a range of other key values including —
 - (i) regionally significant vegetation, which is becoming rare as a result of encroaching urbanisation,
 - (ii) habitat for a great many fauna species, especially internationally and nationally significant migratory birds, as well as seriously threatened species like the Carnaby's cockatoo and the graceful sun moth, and
 - (iii) residential amenity, recreation and education;
- (b) protecting our unique Aboriginal heritage; and
- (c) redirecting funds into more sustainable transport solutions, such as an expanded rail freight system and a passenger light rail network,

this house calls upon the Barnett government to abandon proposed stage 8 of the Roe Highway development, and to request the Western Australian Planning Commission to initiate an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme in order to delete the current zoning for a road reserve over the area of proposed stage 8 of the Roe Highway development.

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [2.07 pm]: I have been bringing members up to date about the public environmental review process, the slight changes that were made to the alignment of Roe Highway stage 8 during that review process and the many revered scientific and cultural bodies that have acknowledged the significance of the Beeliar wetlands. I will continue today by describing some of the flora and fauna that make this area their home. My argument will convince members that this is a wetland worth saving, that Roe 8 is a road to nowhere and is no solution to traffic congestion, and that building the road would be a waste of money and environmental values. The area contains regionally significant vegetation, according to the Environmental Protection Authority's own document, which is entitled "Environmental values associated with the alignment of Roe Highway (Stage 8)" and states —

The vegetation within this area is ... considered to be regionally significant in relation to its structural complexity, floristic assemblages, gradations from wetland to upland as well as the ecological pattern it represents.

The document entitled "The Australian Heritage Commission and the National Trust of Australia (W.A) Assessment: North Lake and Bibra Lake—A Class CALM Reserve", dated September 2001, summarised the flora in the area as follows —

This area has one of the richest, floristically diverse, plant assemblages within the Perth metropolitan area. The plant communities around each of its water bodies differ and as such have a significant synergistic effect on the entire environment. Nine wetland vegetation assemblages ranging from swamplands, fringing reed systems, to both eucalypt and/or banksia dominated woodlands occur here.

Banksia woodland is currently listed as an endangered community under the commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999. That is a brief summary of the flora in the area and I want now to talk about the fauna.

The Beeliar wetlands is a habitat for a great many fauna species, especially internationally and nationally significant migratory birds, as well as seriously threatened species such as the Carnaby's black cockatoo and the graceful sun moth. I heard some chuckling earlier when the graceful sun moth was mentioned, and I will be making comment about the Premier's recent comments about the graceful sun moth.

According to the Australian Heritage Council and the National Trust of Australia (WA), this area supports a rich diversity of vertebrates totally dependent on the ongoing integrity of the wetlands and the dry uplands. The physical size of the area, combined with great geographic and floristic variability, guarantee that this situation will continue into the foreseeable future. We heard during question time yesterday that this area is home to the southern brown bandicoot and the brush-tailed possum, with the occasional itinerant grey kangaroo passing through the area. No fewer than 123 bird species have been sighted at North Lake—112 at Bibra Lake and 105 at

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Thomsons Lake; 24 of these birds are uncommon. A greater diversity of bird species visit North Lake than visit the Ramsar Convention-listed Thomsons Lake. Three endangered bird species have been observed in this area—the Carnaby's black cockatoo, the red-tailed cockatoo and the peregrine falcon. The Carnaby's black cockatoo is listed "endangered" under the EPBC act, and its numbers have reduced dramatically in recent years. Its range is restricted to south west Western Australia, and the main threat facing the species is habitat clearance, which has led to the halving of population numbers since the late 1970s. I believe Hon Giz Watson will speak more about Carnaby's cockatoo.

We know that the Carnaby's black cockatoo habitat in the area is shrinking due to land clearing for major projects, including Fiona Stanley Hospital and the Jandakot airport commercial development, both of which cleared Carnaby habitat and both of which have been debated in the chamber. In an extremely worrying development, initial estimates from last year's Great Cocky Count suggest that the average number of birds per roost last year is about half that of the year before. We know that Carnaby's black cockatoos inhabit the proposed area and that they feed on the banksia, marri and jarrah trees growing in the North and Bibra Lakes Reserves. The North Lake Reserve is now a feeding area for the locally resident flocks of these birds. The project will result in the clearing of 78.3 hectares of Carnaby's black cockatoo habitat. This is completely unacceptable, as is the clearing of 73.2 hectares of red-tailed cockatoo habitat.

Hon Simon O'Brien: When you say the area will be cleared are you also talking about the area that is already cleared there? There are vast expanses there that have been cleared long ago.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: That is correct; I am talking about the clearing proposed in this alignment.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Are you talking about mowing some wild grass? Because the area was cleared many years ago.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: No; I am going by the public environmental review documents, and that is the amount of habitat that will be cleared under this project.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Rubbish!

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: And these species have been listed "vulnerable" under the EPBC act, which is why, as mentioned last week, the commonwealth will also cast a critical eye over this proposal. These birds and this habitat are protected under commonwealth legislation.

The lakes are an important habitat for international migratory wading birds, including the greenshank and the red-necked stint, and several international migratory birds, such as the great white egret and the rainbow bee-eater. Members who have not spent time at sunset at Bibra Lake do not know the valuable habitat that we are about to forever change. The bee-eater is a frequent summer visitor to North Lake and it breeds in the area threatened by this alignment of Roe 8. The highway could also disrupt the habitat of trans-equatorial migratory wading birds that use North Lake on their annual migration between south west WA and north east Asia. Since these birds and their habitat are protected under international treaties that Australia has signed with Japan, China and South Korea, Australia may well be breaching its international treaty obligations by going ahead with Roe 8.

A diverse group of reptiles is present at the site, including five species of snake, 22 species of lizard and one species of tortoise. Amphibians are seasonally abundant and represented by eight species of frog, including the uncommon turtle frog. The wetlands are home to the western tiger snake, which is considered uncommon in the metropolitan area, but which is important for the integrity of the ecosystem. The Beeliar wetlands, as I am sure Hon Phil Edman will be pleased to hear, are another home for the graceful sun moth, a small, day-flying moth endemic to south western Western Australia, and also located in the area of Point Peron. This species is currently found only on the Swan coastal plain between Quinns Rocks and Mandurah.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Order, members! Hon Lynn MacLaren is the first speaker in this debate and there will be opportunities for others to follow.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you, Mr President.

This motion seeks once and for all to delete from the metropolitan region scheme a project that will decimate the local graceful sun moth population, because it will remove 64 per cent, or 5.6 hectares, of confirmed habitat for the graceful sun moth in the area, and 48 per cent, which is 60.5 hectares, of its potential habitat. Roe 8 will have a catastrophic impact on the biodiversity of the Beeliar wetlands. The summary of the project's environmental impacts outlined in the public environmental review is fairly damning, with residual impacts that include the loss of a total of 37.5 hectares of intact flora and vegetation; the loss of seven hectares of Bush Forever land, including four hectares of intact native vegetation; the loss of 15 subpopulations of priority flora, consisting of approximately 7 000 individual plants—most of which are one small herb species that is locally abundant; the

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loss of 78.3 hectares of foraging habitat for Carnaby's; as I mentioned before, the loss of 73.2 hectares of the foraging habitat of the red-tailed cockatoo; the removal of 249 significant trees with potential for black cockatoo nesting; the loss of 72 hectares of habitat for the southern brown bandicoot; the loss of 91.4 hectares of habitat for the Perth lined lerista, which is a lizard; the loss of confirmed graceful sun moth population; and reduction in potential habitat for the graceful sun moth.

The Environmental Protection Authority has argued that in addition to directly impacting on the wetland vegetation and faunal values, the construction and operation of a highway through the area will lead to further severance of these ecological linkages, thereby reducing the area's viability and long-term management. It will be of no surprise to hear that quendas, lizards, frogs and turtles will not be able to safely cross this highway; nor will the swans that walk their cygnets from North Lake to Bibra Lake, to stay until they can fly. Quendas, like many native animals, are too timid to pass under bridges or through fauna underpasses, which leaves them vulnerable to predators. Each wetlands ecological community relies on water flow between the neighbouring wetlands. A bridge design would still affect the connectivity and inhibit plant growth. Connectivity is critical and cannot be maintained with any Roe 8 option. The Environmental Protection Authority has argued that any road alignment through this area should be rejected, as it would sever linkages between the wetlands, resulting in serious biodiversity impacts. The Roe 8 extension is based on plans drawn up in the 1950s, when it was acceptable to bulldoze wetlands and bushlands to build roads. I would argue that times have changed, and many members in this chamber would agree with me that times have changed.

The environmental costs of Roe 8 are too large and this project should not proceed. If we look at the growing body of research about what we want in the cities that we live in, our mental, physical and spiritual health is directly associated with our connection with nature. This is especially true for children. Communities throughout the region, especially the local communities of Samson, Coolbellup, North Lake and South Lake, value and deserve the ecological amenity of North and Bibra Lakes. The area is a key cultural site in the south metropolitan region. Bibra Lake is a popular area for picnicking, jogging, walking, birdwatching and cycling, while North Lake is a very popular bushwalking and birdwatching area. The whole area functions as a single resource with visitors often cycling or walking around both lakes. The wetlands are also used for educational purposes by the Cockburn Wetlands Education Centre as well as schools and universities. As an area with more biodiversity than Kings Park reserve, the educational and experiential opportunities currently present need to be preserved and enhanced. The construction of Roe 8 between the lakes will seriously devalue the educational and recreational value of the area. The peaceful experience for bushwalkers will be destroyed by the noise of heavy traffic on Roe Highway. Picnickers will not be able to enjoy their outing to Bibra Lake because of the traffic noise and pollution. The many schoolchildren who visit the wetlands each year will also have a greatly diminished experience. The proposed offsets cannot possibly compensate for the biodiversity loss as they will either be too distant or take too long to reach maturity.

The Beeliar Wetlands is the most significant site of Aboriginal heritage in Perth south of the Swan River. Wagyl, firestick and spirit children dreaming stories are integral to this site. Roe 8 will desecrate this heritage. The Nyoongah people regard this as one of their major cultural and spiritual sites. The proposed road will go right through their registered mythological site. The Metropolitan Commission of Elders is a peak Aboriginal organisation that views itself as independent of government. The commission is endorsed by the Western Australian government and resourced through the Department of Indigenous Affairs. In 2002 the elders highlighted their concerns and wishes for this area in a letter to the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, Alannah MacTiernan, the Environmental Protection Authority, and Main Roads WA. I will quote from that letter. It reads in part —

... the Elder's wish to inform you that the area in the vicinity is extremely fragile and any encroachment on it may result in permanent damage to the wetlands, that has traditional importance to them. Of further concern is the need to protect the cultural significance of the area, and to highlight that any disturbance would result in irreparable damage.

After considering the Council's concerns it is hoped that any extension of the Roe Highway be removed from future consideration and that Farrington Road remain as it is, without widening or extension.

I seek leave to table that letter from the Metropolitan Nyoongah Council of elders.

Leave granted. [See paper 4377.]

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you, Mr President, and thank you very much for drawing members' attention back into the chamber.

The PRESIDENT: I could not quite hear at first.

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Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I want to spend a bit of time talking about sustainable transport solutions. These road plans are out of date. They no longer fit neatly into the roads network, which has evolved over time. The rationale for building this road just does not stack up. The Roe 8 extension from Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road is just a tiny little piece of highway, but it was based on plans drawn up in 1955. They have been superseded. The rationale was built on engineering models and social values, as I have stated, that are outdated by 55 years. Other parts of this outdated plan for a western suburbs highway have been, rightly, abandoned over time. I remind members of those. The plans included building a bridge across the Swan River near Point Walter from Stock Road to Dalkeith. The bridge plans were scuttled by the then Charles Court government. These plans also included extending Roe Highway to Marine Terrace in Fremantle, or a proposed Fremantle eastern bypass. The Fremantle eastern bypass was deleted from the metropolitan region scheme in 2004, and the land that was reserved for the road was sold, mostly for housing. Because it is no longer necessary for the freight network, the Roe 8 road reserve should be similarly deleted from this planning scheme and rezoned for conservation and recreation. Over time there have been incremental changes to our freight network and planned poor expansions to the south of Cockburn Sound.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You have opposed every bit of it no doubt.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: They have reduced the need for the planned Roe Highway stage 8.

Hon Simon O'Brien interjected.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I beg your pardon, does the former Minister for Transport have something to say about the freight network?

Hon Simon O'Brien interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! He will get his opportunity in due course, as will other members.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Sorry, Mr President.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Don't provoke me to interject!

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: While our working port will remain in Fremantle, much of the expansion of the freight network will be to the south. An alternative port study identified a southern port in Cockburn Sound to be serviced by Rowley Road. Planning decisions have transformed the industrial buffer zone in Hope Valley, Wattleup, into a new industrial park called Latitude 32 where an intermodal terminal has been mooted.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Did you support that? No, you opposed that at the time too.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: The estimated cost of building an extension to Roe Highway through the Beeliar wetlands is \$620 million. However, the full cost of the project is likely to be substantially higher. Even if the government manages to build a road within this budget, the Roe Highway stage 8 extension will be the most expensive section of road ever built in Perth. The road section would cost state taxpayers over \$100 million per kilometre, compared to the cost of light rail, which can be much better value, in many cases, at just \$15 million per kilometre. In comparison with a budget of \$657 million, the state government could build 43 kilometres of a light rail network with three routes linking Fremantle to the Cockburn coast and Cockburn Central, to Murdoch, along south street, and along Canning Highway, all the way to the Canning bridge, for the same money it would cost to build this tiny little section of road. This would reduce transport costs and emissions for many more people than would ever use Roe 8; it would improve public transport and ease congestion on our roads.

The government's justification for the Roe 8 extension is flawed because it fails to consider other options to reduce traffic congestion. It is now widely acknowledged that building more roads does not relieve congestion. Studies show that increasing traffic capacity invariably increases traffic volumes. While congestion may be temporarily alleviated, vehicle numbers will increase until the new road becomes too congested.

That brings us to a report released this month by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute. The most cost effective solution to traffic congestion reduction includes a combination of public transport improvements, road pricing and smart-growth land use policies. However, the government has considered none of these alternative options; the government's tunnel vision on this issue is illustrated by an answer I received from the minister in response to my question without notice of 1 September 2011 when I asked: what other strategies were investigated to reduce traffic congestion at peak times in this area? That question was eventually answered by the minister on 20 September when it was tabled and incorporated into *Hansard*. It reads in part —

Major road upgrades are being planned or considered in the south western metropolitan area.

That is the answer to that question. Basically, the government has not investigated any other means of relieving congestion in this area besides building more roads. That is 1950s —

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Hon Simon O'Brien: They had two years of putting together a public transport blueprint. If you had read and understood it, perhaps you might make some more balanced and intelligent comment.

Hon Ken Travers interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! As I said, members from all sides of the chamber will have an opportunity to put their point of view and explain whatever they want to explain on this issue. At the moment Hon Lynn MacLaren has the floor.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I am pleased that there is some interest in debating this issue because it is one we need to debate. This Roe 8 extension is 1950s transport planning, in my view, and the government needs to urgently come up with modern-day solutions to our transport woes to protect our remaining urban bushland and our quality of living. It is clear that Roe 8 will provide very little relief from traffic congestion, even according to South Metro Connect's own figures. Traffic modelling detailed on pages 27 to 29 of the public environmental review show there is likely to be no significant reduction in traffic congestion as a result of this road. Is Roe 8 necessary when it will not solve our transport problems?

Clearly, there will not be much congestion alleviation. I am running out of time so I will skip some of my speech, but I will point out that one of the reasons given for building this extension is to provide access to Fiona Stanley Hospital. This has been debunked because people from Fiona Stanley Hospital have had several information sessions and at a breakfast function held on 13 July 2009 they spoke to people about the impacts of that major development in that area, which all local governments attended, including Cockburn councillors and officers, because it was an information session for that purpose. The question was asked by the mayor how important and urgent Roe 8 was to this very important project of Fiona Stanley Hospital. The response of the executive director of the Fiona Stanley Hospital project, Mr Brad Sebbes, was that Roe 8 is not, and never has been, needed to service this project. So, if the government has been told that this is necessary to access Fiona Stanley Hospital, it is blatantly incorrect. It is not necessary to ease congestion and it is not necessary to access Fiona Stanley Hospital. The minister's answers to the questions that I have asked over time indicate that it is not even going to result in less traffic at those really tight points of congestion in the area. So why is the government doing it? I am going to suggest that this government is running a cynical communications strategy in the marginal electorate of Riverton in an attempt to convince voters that Roe 8 will reduce the amount of traffic on Leach Highway, despite the minister's admission in Parliament that this is not going to occur. I think that replicating Leach Highway from the Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road will only force trucks back onto Leach Highway or South Street to get to Fremantle port. Taking Roe 8 would involve additional distance and even more traffic lights, making it inconvenient for truck drivers. Therefore, building this road will merely shift traffic problems rather than solving them.

There is no question that there are massive inefficiencies with Perth's freight network. We know that more trucks than necessary are on our roads, and the distribution problems would be better solved by increasing rail and improving the coordination of freight transport. Building Roe 8 is not the answer. Regardless of how many roads lie between Fremantle and Kewdale, access to the port is limited to Port Beach and Tydeman Roads. Roe 8 would do nothing to ease that bottleneck for trucks accessing the port. Funds allocated to Roe 8 could be better redirected to build a better intersection at High Street and Stirling Highway or to increase rail freight or even to repair and maintain the tier 3 lines for grain transport—dare I suggest that some money be spent on that.

Road and rail freight will increase for the new port south of Fremantle. To cope with expected shipping growth, a new outer harbour is planned for the south of Cockburn Sound. Rowley Road is going to be upgraded to become the main east–west truck route accessing the terminal, and that makes Roe 8, which is much further north, redundant for these port facilities.

We know about the Western Australian government's metropolitan freight review network six-point plan. I will not restate it here. However, that strategy should be implemented with additional measures. This argument has been going on a long time. I will bring members' minds back to 2006 when the Beeliar Conservation and Heritage Council released a report calling for the deletion of the proposed Roe Highway stage 8 reservation through the Beeliar Regional Park. In the foreword the council stated that —

The current ALP Government has articulated the need to protect the Beeliar Wetlands from the threats posed by the proposed Roe Highway Stage 8. However, despite having the ability to immediately amend the Metropolitan Region Scheme to delete the Roe Highway reservation and remove the threat to these important Wetlands the State government has not done so.

I hope that Hon Sally Talbot will address this shortly. Unfortunately, the Australian Labor Party government did not get around to deleting Roe 8 from the metropolitan region scheme. Hence, we find ourselves in the position we are in today, and all the activists who have worked for years to stop this road find themselves night after

night, weekend after weekend, trying to stop the injustice of this road. Why is that? It is because governments have failed to protect these wetlands from this ridiculous proposal.

At a time of unprecedented population growth, increasing oil prices and growing pressure on our remaining urban bushland, the government needs to come up with an integrated transport strategy. People live in Perth not to be surrounded by roads; we live here because of our beautiful natural environment, our river, the beaches and the urban bushland. We do not want to live in a barren, congested, polluted city, yet this is exactly what the government is condemning us to through its business-as-usual, piecemeal approach to transport planning. The government has demonstrated a complete lack of leadership when it comes to transport planning. Its recent public transport and bicycle plans are unambitious and lack both vision and, most importantly, proper funding.

I want to finish by thanking the literally hundreds of people who have campaigned tirelessly on this issue. I note that Kate Kelly is now with us here in the public gallery. However, these people include Felicity McGeorge, Denise Crosbie, Joe Branco, Phil Jennings, Mary Gray, Eddy Wajon, Heather Atwell, Kate Kelly, Nandi Chinna, Suzanne Smith, Mark Hingston—he used to work with me in Jim Scott's office and he has worked on this—Carol DeBarre, Rex Sallur, Neil Goldsborough, Tony Weeks, Tony Eustace, Kim Hine, Jacinta Mayhew, Dee Park, and Nicholas Gribble. I could name only a few in the time remaining, but hundreds of people have spent many hours on this. I personally have a debt of gratitude to them because they have kept this issue alive over the years and tried very valiantly to save that bushland.

I will finish by saying that one of the principles outlined in "Directions 2031" is to make Perth a green city. It states —

We should grow within the constraints placed on us by the environment we live in.

North and Bibra Lakes should be revived to their former glory as thriving ecological systems bursting with wildlife. Perth should retain much of its remnant bushland. It should support wildlife through the provision of green corridors, and Bibra Lake and the Beelihar wetlands should be protected within those green corridors. That has been identified in "Directions 2031". All that we need to do at this point, members, is to call upon the Barnett government to abandon the proposed stage 8 of Roe Highway and to request that the Western Australian Planning Commission initiate an amendment to the metropolitan region scheme to delete the current zoning for a road reserve over the area of the proposed stage 8 of the Roe Highway development.

HON ALISON XAMON (East Metropolitan) [2.37 pm]: I want to echo the concerns that have been raised by my colleague Hon Lynn MacLaren, who has spoken so comprehensively and so eloquently about the heritage and environmental values of this specific Bush Forever site that we are talking about today. I would like to use this opportunity to reiterate many of the broader concerns that I have previously raised about the lack of protection and the lack of appropriate management of urban bushland and Bush Forever sites across the metropolitan area because I figure that if this can happen to the Beelihar wetlands, it can pretty much happen anywhere.

In brief, the concerns, as I have previously raised, are the lack of statutory purpose for Bush Forever areas in the metropolitan region scheme text. The protection level for Bush Forever sites is dependent on however that site happens to be zoned and/or reserved, and that is the situation we are looking at today for the Beelihar wetlands. Of course, "State Planning Policy 2.8: Bushland Policy for the Perth Metropolitan Region" is hopelessly weak when it comes to protecting Bush Forever sites from development. As we speak, Bush Forever remains without a stated purpose in the metropolitan region scheme text. As of September last year, the Bush Forever text amendment—whatever that may look like now—was before the State Solicitor's Office for a determination of whether it was a major or minor amendment. We are still waiting. I wrote to the minister at the end of last month, requesting yet another update on the progress of the Bush Forever text amendment. I asked what the determination of the State Solicitor's Office had been—whether it was a major or minor amendment—when we would be likely to see this out in the public again, and when we could expect the changes to the MRS text to finally be made. I am yet to hear back from the minister on those things. I know that state planning policy 2.8 will provide absolutely no protection to the Beelihar wetlands, as we are talking about land that has been, unfortunately, zoned for a road reserve since the middle of the last century. State planning policy 2.8 specifically allows for Bush Forever sites to be damaged in these circumstances, so I do not think there could be any pretence that we are actually talking about Bush Forever when we are talking about these sites. The Roe Highway stage 8 extension will cut across a Bush Forever area. The Environmental Protection Authority has said that it would be extremely difficult to make a highway bisecting North and Bibra Lakes environmentally acceptable, but the government has again overridden the advice of its own independent environmental agency.

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I have to ask why the government is so dead keen on this road. All the studies done on the value of these wetlands consistently come back to some fundamentals, which are that these wetlands are a vitally important part of the community, many families have wonderful memories of good times while their children were growing up around this area, and people are utilising that space as an important recreational space today. It serves as a home, as my colleague Hon Lynn MacLaren so comprehensively outlined, to bird species that we are required to protect under Australia's international agreements with Japan and China. It is one of the more biodiverse areas covered by the metropolitan region scheme and one of the most significant areas for Aboriginal heritage in the south metropolitan region. These things are important. I am not particularly keen to see these issues ignored. Members would expect that the government's own studies on freight movement would provide a compelling picture of urgency and need for this highway extension, considering that it is looking to override those important principles, but that is just not the case. A 1990 review recommended that the Roe 8 reserve be deleted from the MRS, and the 2001 freight network review and congress recommended deleting the Roe 8 reserve from the MRS; what a disappointment it is that that did not occur.

Leaving aside the environmental considerations for just a second, let us look at the planning issues around Roe 8. One of the reasons we have an MRS is so that the lands needed to build our infrastructure are clearly identified in advance. Roe 8 was originally—we are talking decades ago—intended to link up with Roe 9 and the Fremantle eastern bypass. But, through our planning processes since that time, it has become apparent that we neither need nor want the road network that Roe 8 is supposed to link up with. Those road reserves have now been deleted from the MRS and the land has been sold, so getting it back now to build roads is both unrealistic and unaffordable. Allowing Roe 8 to go ahead at this point is simply sacrificing the integrity of these beautiful and important wetlands for no purpose. Roe Highway is then going to stop at Stock Road instead of Kwinana Freeway.

I have spoken many times in this place about my concerns that the commitment to Bush Forever is just not there. We know that, despite its title, construction and development of all sorts can be permitted to take place on these sites, and we also know that the funding for the management and care is not being provided for the vast majority of Bush Forever sites. Members would think that in this respect Beeliar Regional Park is lucky because it is not entirely typical in that it does receive some funding for management, but despite it receiving funding for management as an acknowledgment that this park is significant, even that, apparently, is not enough to save it from having a huge road shoved right through the middle of it. Pushing a road through a Bush Forever site is as far from good management of that site as we can possibly get.

I have said before that this is not the only site facing the threat of a road being built through it. As always when we get on to these matters, I want to refer to the other very important dampland in the eastern metropolitan region—that is, the dampland being threatened by Anstey and Keane Roads in that very unique area. There is very rigorous science around the identification of Bush Forever sites and the regional bushland areas that need to be protected on the Swan coastal plain. We know that Bush Forever does not even achieve the 30 per cent of total bushland area required to insulate species from the threat of extinction. It only asked for 10 per cent of each identified vegetation type, and we did not even manage to get that with Bush Forever. We already know that we cannot achieve that for many of the identified vegetation types; we have already lost far too many of them. We know that we need to keep our sites as complete as we can to help them be resilient against fire, traffic, weeds and other threats that bushland sites face in the metropolitan area, and we know that again and again government agencies and various transport planning review panels have found Roe 8 to be unacceptable. This government really has to improve on urban bushland issues, and what a great place this would be to start. It is going to have to improve at listening; listening to the environmental experts who are unequivocal on this, listening to its freight planning experts, and, very importantly, listening to the community, which does not want this road to go ahead. No-one wants this road apparently, except for the government. We will be sacrificing something unique and special, and we will fail to solve any of the traffic problems at all. The Roe 8 extension will be an enormous waste, and I honestly cannot understand why this government is so hell-bent on pushing it through.

It is obvious that Roe 8 should not be built. The government needs to come up with a vision for transport that better reflects the priorities and needs of the Western Australian people. A stranded piece of road, left over from the planning of decades ago that has since become outdated, is just pathetic.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan — Minister for Finance) [2.48 pm]: I am not the lead speaker for the government on this, but I will just say a few words. I am going to leave the bulk of it to Hon Helen Morton, who is representing the Minister for Environment. Environment is the thrust of the wording of this motion, even though it deals with planning and transport matters as well.

I have a sense of groundhog day about this. I cannot remember how many times this and related matters have been debated in this house—it is certainly many times. I have introduced it into the house on a number of

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occasions over the years, as have other members. It is interesting to now be lectured by Greens (WA) members about how the government needs to get its planning right to make sure that we are right for the future and to make sure that we are not building nasty roads because we do not need them anymore because there is some other way that our freight and our people and all the rest of the transport task is just going to suddenly gravitate its way around the metropolitan area in the future. Heaven forbid that a road should ever be built anywhere at any time. But, anyway, they have brought it up for debate and we will see what we can do. I like Hon Lynn MacLaren, so we are going to see if we can knock her motion into shape so that we can support it. Hon Helen Morton, I think, will try to look after the member with something—I will leave that to her in a minute.

I want to make some comments about transport, because, with the greatest of respect, I really think the member has a bit to learn. It is one thing for the member to say, “We have some concerns about some change to the landscape here”. It is another thing to find every little creature that moves, or does not move, and try to create some narrative around that to say that we should never build any road anywhere at any time—even if it went past the former rubbish tip at North Lake, because that is what it was when I was a kid, when the planning was done and when Hon Lynn MacLaren was still living in Oregon.

The reasons why, from a transport perspective, we need the completion of this piece of road include the following. First, we need the strategic links connecting Reid Highway and Great Northern Highway. We need the strategic links that link those roads, and Great Eastern Highway in the Midland area, to Tonkin Highway, to Kwinana Freeway and to Stock Road. We need to allow for improved access to the future Fiona Stanley Hospital and other developments in the Murdoch area. The member might have some selective quote from someone connected somehow with Fiona Stanley Hospital—I do not care if the member has found that—saying that Roe 8 is not necessary, as the member claims they say, to service Fiona Stanley Hospital. Well, let me tell the member that adjacent to Roe 7, where it currently terminates at Kwinana Freeway, we do need access to the Murdoch activity centre. There is a lot more, and there is going to be even more, to the Murdoch activity centre than just Fiona Stanley Hospital; and, yes, access is needed. It is at that point, immediately west of Kwinana Freeway, that the access is most critical, and that is where the genuine environmental concerns are contained; they are contained in that immediate part there. That is what makes the project so blinking expensive. If we were to extend any part of Roe Highway west of Kwinana Freeway, we would have to get rid of and replace all of the very expensive infrastructure at the intersection of Roe and Kwinana Freeway, which was deliberately put in place by the previous Labor government to make it as difficult and as expensive as possible to undo. That was the rationale for the way that was constructed at the time. I am speaking here as a former Minister for Transport. I know what has gone on here. That was how it was constructed. That is the first thing we have to do in addressing the very expensive prospect of building this necessary road infrastructure, and that is why. The second thing that makes it expensive in this essential location is that this is where the government recognises that we do need to expend the most money on measures to mitigate environmental damage—it is in this area immediately west of Kwinana Freeway, not in the area between North Lake and Bibra Lake. This is another myth that has been put forward by those who are opposed to building roads anywhere or at any time.

It is beyond doubt that this road is needed, or more to the point will be needed in the future. It is about providing improved access to Fiona Stanley; sure. It is for other developments in the Murdoch area as well. But it goes far beyond that. It is about providing better access to the freeway for residents in the City of Cockburn who are travelling east, particularly if they are coming from the rapidly expanding Cockburn coast area. It is about providing improved access to the Fremantle inner harbour—the same access that the honourable member insisted in her remarks is not needed because the Fremantle inner harbour is perfectly well catered for. Does the member know how many containers, or how many 20-foot or equivalent units—TEU—go in and out of Fremantle harbour each year?

Hon Lynn MacLaren: I know that 28 per cent of trucks leave the port empty.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: The annual figure is 600 000 TEU, give or take. That will go up to 1.4 million TEU. So tell me, member, how we already have the road systems to cater for that into the future. Tell me again about how governments ought to plan for what is coming in the future. Tell me again, member, if you will, about the cloud-cuckoo-land idea of deleting one of the key bits of road infrastructure that has been on the books for over 30 years—because that is what the member is proposing now. That is a similar act of vandalism and short-sightedness to the disgraceful deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass from the metropolitan region scheme by the former Labor government. That is a decision, or more to the point an action, that will have dire consequences into the future. I do not know what the roadscape will ultimately look like 20 or 30 years from now. But a key element was wantonly and randomly removed from that, and no amount of grandstanding by people concerned about Carnaby's cockatoo and other matters is going to make that right.

It has already been demonstrated with Roe Highway, in its previous sections, built by successive governments, including the last government, that a major road can traverse wetlands and can promote, through design and

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construction, an appreciation consistent with twenty-first century expectations of how a road should live in harmony with the environment that it must traverse. That is why \$20 million has been spent by this government to get all this planning right. We want to make sure that when we are able to progress the extension of Roe Highway west of Kwinana Freeway—for all the reasons it is needed—we will do so in a manner that is fully cognisant of all the environmental concerns that have been raised. We will deal with those concerns—unless we are coming from a mindset that says, “Oh, no; we cannot build a road”, which is the problem that we have to deal with here.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Other members who did not adequately address the motion now want to say a bit more. But there are other members who want to participate in this debate, so I will wrap up fairly quickly. I want to talk in this debate from the perspective of someone who is a member for South Metropolitan Region and who has been involved in this debate, not as a former Minister for Transport, but as someone who does understand the transport requirements south of the river and as someone who does not want to see some of the mistakes of the past visited on my community in the future. To do that, I would like to take as part of my reference material an email that we have all been sent. The copy that I have was sent to me on Saturday, 10 March, at 11.34 pm, by a lady. The subject line reads —

URGENT — contact politicians to act on Roe 8

So let us use this as our notes. It goes on to read —

ROE 8 — TIME TO ACT

It has been 6 months since we all made our submissions against Roe 8.

This is obviously going out to all the faithful. Mr President, I can remember when 10 000 people from the South Metropolitan Region made written submissions to the Western Australian Planning Commission in connection with the deletion of the Fremantle eastern bypass—an extension, of course, of Roe Highway. That was comprehensively ignored by the previous government. I remember when Hon Ken Travers, the parliamentary secretary to the then Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and the current opposition spokesperson for transport, came into this place. The occasion was on the eve of the government providing the then opposition with the minutes of the WA Planning Commission in connection with that matter. He came in here with a copy of what was about to be provided by FOI. He said, “In a spirit of openness, we are going to table this here to help the debate.” We went through those minutes by the WA Planning Commission under a Labor government. As we went through all the minutes, we could see over months, even years, the development of the advice to the government to say, “You need the Fremantle eastern bypass, and you need Roe Highway completed” until we got to the last lot of minutes from the most recent meeting, where we could see that someone had come in and put in several paragraphs which turned night into day. In effect it said, “For our political reasons, we are not worried about all of this; we are not worried about the consultation processes provided for by law; we are just going to get rid of this piece of road infrastructure, because we do not like it” or “The bosses, our political masters, have directed us to do it.”

I think it was a disgrace that the WA Planning Commission allowed that material to go into its report. I think the members should have resigned, and I said so publicly at the time. No matter; that is yesterday. But that is the previous form on this matter. Now, interestingly, we are talking about Roe 8, which runs from the Kwinana Freeway to Stock Road. This particular group over on the other side of the chamber has decided that they just want to get rid of this road because they do not like it, whether it is inconvenient for somebody's view or whether they seriously hold some misgivings of a different type, but they just want to get rid of it. So they dress up the narrative and all the negativity they possibly can while ignoring all the very good reasons why successive governments, including the last Labor government, kept Roe 8 in the metropolitan region scheme. They could have taken the opportunity—they have the numbers and they exercised them to get rid of the Fremantle eastern bypass. Why did they not get rid of Roe 8? That is one question that still puzzles me. I think the answer is that the federal government had provided a very large sum of money to complete the rest of Roe Highway, which was then in process. That money might have been withheld if the then Labor government had tried to get rid of the Roe 8 reserve. That seems to me to be the only explanation.

Anyway, this current crew is saying that they have now made their submissions against Roe 8. The supporters of this action ought to spare a thought for the many, many thousands of people—tens of thousands of people right across the south metro region—who have a very different view than the smaller group that is actually proposing to get rid of this important road reserve.

The email goes on —

But there is so much more we can do to ensure Roe8 is consigned to history.

This week we have been given the information that a bill from Lynn MacLaren, MLC, is to go before parliament, probably on 21st March or 28th March, the bill will state that:

There is then an abbreviated version of this motion of sorts. It goes on to say —

But we need to alert everyone who has ever supported our campaign to bring public pressure to bear on the parliamentary process.

Please write to, or email our parliamentarians. Now is the time to act.

This is why I have received probably dozens of emails. It has probably cracked 20. A concerted campaign run from somebody's office somewhere has resulted in about 20 emails. Maybe I am too hard a nut to crack, maybe I am irredeemable in this matter, but 20 hardy souls sent it to me, including this lady whose name is on the email. She did not actually rewrite the thing; she actually sent me all of this, saying —

Forwarding this email to you all with hope.

Best regards

And her first name is Grace. Thank you, Grace, for this.

The interesting thing is that, when we are talking about “now is the time to act”, this email says —

You can either click on the email links below to send individual emails, or cut and paste a list of them to send a group email.

It is a high-tech campaign, this! It continues —

Please tell them to support the motion to abandon Roe8.

A number of people have done that. To every one of those people, if they are reading this debate or listening to it, thank you for getting in touch with me to let me know your views. I note them and I respect them. I may have formed a different view, but I respect them getting in touch with me. Nonetheless, it is not hard to note the quite amateurish tone of this particular email and how it was delivered to me. Not to be unkind to the author, but I point out the juvenile and incomplete nature of the debates that are being advanced to insist very stridently that we have to do away with this piece of planned infrastructure and deny it to Western Australians of the future.

Why does the mover of the motion think that the government persists with this? Is it just to be difficult? Why does she think we do it; is it just for the hell of it or does she think there is a hard body of information that demonstrates that it is necessary? If she opened her eyes, she would find out about it. If she did her proper research, instead of getting people to write that sort of diatribe that she read out today, then perhaps she might come to some understanding. The really interesting thing about this email—not that any of it was that interesting, apart from the way it was constructed and then just simply copied, word perfect, to me by Grace, whoever Grace is—is that it asks people to send a group email or tells them to support the motion to abandon Roe 8. Fine. Then it goes on to say —

The priority is: —

Big letters; name out on its own —

Sally Talbot
Shop 21 Meadow Springs Shopping Centre
25 Meadow Springs Drive
MANDURAH ...

I have a feeling that this refers to none other than Hon Sally Talbot who sits opposite here. Why on earth are they targeting her? I thought she would be onside with this motion?

Hon Sally Talbot: The minister would be really disappointed that he was not top of the list, wouldn't he?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I do not need it. Why on earth would they want to target Hon Sally Talbot? Can the mover explain it? I would have thought they would have the Labor Party's support.

Hon Lynn MacLaren: I do not think Grace is in this house at this time.

A member interjected.

Hon Lynn MacLaren: Who is your constituent? Ask her.

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Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Grace did not write it; Grace just sent it on. The priority is Sally Talbot. The letter says that after they have lobbied Sally Talbot, because she is obviously the weak link in the Labor chain, and dragged her kicking and screaming to the point of view that we have to get rid of the Roe 8 reserve—I will be interested to hear what she has to say—then they need to get on to Joe Francis, Troy Buswell, and the other south metro members. Then, after they have got on to all the south metro members, they need to get on to the National Party. It has got all their details here.

Hon Sally Talbot: Where were you on the list?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I am down at the tail somewhere; I am a bit of a lost cause. I hope we can fix up this motion a bit. Maybe that will come a little bit later in the debate.

I want to conclude with these points. The first is that the extension of Roe Highway west of Kwinana Freeway is going to be absolutely necessary. In due course, if we do not have that benefit, we are really going to find out what road congestion looks like in the Murdoch area. Those who want to adopt the view that for some reason or another, even if it is just a political short-term political imperative, we should support this motion to get rid of any future extension of Roe 8, should not then come back to me and start grizzling about road congestion. Because if they want to adopt a short-term political stance, to go along with whatever flavour they can detect at the time, they should not come back and complain about road congestion. I assert that this is necessary.

Secondly, if we want to talk about representing the overwhelming views of the community—it has been tested on a number of occasions in a number of ways—the overwhelming view of our community is that, yes, we do need Roe stage 8. The big problem is that so far we have not been able to get the wretched thing built.

Thirdly, I want to reassure everybody following this debate, whether they are members in this house, whom I do not think have a mature understanding of the long-term issues, that the reason the government is embarking on the course it is at the moment is in full cognisance of the environmental needs of our community, not only for the sake of the Bibra Lake hinterland into the future but also for the wider environment—the environment that we all have to inhabit in the south metropolitan region.

In conclusion, I thank Grace and others for sending me their wishes, and I mean that sincerely, although I have been a bit cynical about where the campaign came from in the first place. I regret to advise that I cannot support this motion as it is and I hope that someone can knock it into shape.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [3.11 pm]: Hon Simon O'Brien has fully outlined the issues, with the exception of some of the issues that I want to add relating to the environmental processes that are in place. The reason that it has been left to me to outline these issues as the lead speaker is because the issues that Hon Lynn MacLaren raised in the motion are primarily issues relating to the environmental impact. Consequently, it was determined that I would have the responsibility of being the lead speaker, representing the Minister for Environment in this chamber. I want to go through some of the processes that are in place at the moment and then move an amendment to the motion.

The extension of Roe Highway is currently under formal environmental impact assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority. Members will be aware that the assessment process set down in the Environmental Protection Act 1986 is an independent and transparent process, with requirements on proponents to demonstrate how their project can be undertaken in an environmentally acceptable way. There is also considerable opportunity for the community to have input into this process.

Hon Sue Ellery: Are you going to be in a position to tell us whether the EPA has formally provided its recommendation to cabinet, because we were expecting it in February?

Hon HELEN MORTON: The member will hear that.

This has and continues to be the case for the Roe Highway extension proposal and I propose to outline for members the status of that assessment now. The Roe Highway extension proposal was referred to the EPA in April 2009. The EPA advertised its decision to assess the proposal as a public environmental review—PER—with a six-week review period. Twelve appeals were received, then the Minister for Environment determined that the public review period should be extended for 12 weeks. The EPA agreed on the final environmental scoping document received from the proponent as the basis for the PER. The EPA considered the PER suitable for public release, which was advertised for public review from 20 June 2011 until 12 September 2011. I understand that the EPA received a considerable number of submissions from government agencies, organisations and members of the public. The Office of the EPA has provided the proponent with all of the submissions received and a summary of the issues raised in the submissions. I understand that the proponent is now required to prepare a written response to the issues raised in the summary of submissions to the satisfaction of the EPA. It is expected to be received in June 2012. All environmental issues raised in submissions will be

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taken into consideration by the EPA as part of its assessment of the proposal. The EPA's assessment of the proposed extension will take into consideration the environmental values within the subject area, which include native vegetation and flora, fauna and amenity issues. Indeed, the types of issues raised by the member will be considered and reported on as part of the EPA's report and recommendations to the Minister for Environment. The EPA's report and recommendations will, of course, be subject to appeal.

The government will decide whether to proceed with the Roe Highway extension when the potential environmental, social and economic implications have been assessed and the appropriate statutory processes have been completed. The values and potential impacts on the Beeliar wetlands will be taken into account by the government. The environment minister is cognisant of the environmental and heritage values of the Beeliar wetlands, which have been recognised through the creation of Beeliar Regional Park, inclusion into Bush Forever and protection of the lakes under a longstanding environmental protection policy. However, it is important that the minister has the opportunity to consider the EPA's independent advice on the environmental issues as a key part of informing assessment of the Roe Highway stage 8 proposal.

The Environmental Protection Act 1986 provides an independent assessment process for proposals that are referred to the Environmental Protection Authority. It is a transparent process that allows for community input and ensures that proponents, including the state government, demonstrate the environmental acceptability of proposals that are put forward. In the assessment of the Roe Highway extension there was opportunity for members of the community to comment on the proposal for 12 weeks. Likewise, when the report and recommendations of the EPA are released, there will also be the opportunity for appeal. As I have indicated, the minister is aware of the environmental and heritage values of the wetlands. There can be no doubting whatsoever the genuine commitment and concern expressed by Hon Lynn MacLaren in her motion.

Amendment to Motion

Hon HELEN MORTON: Consequently, I wish to amend the motion. I move, without notice —

To delete all words after “heritage;” and insert —

this Council calls upon the Barnett government to continue the processes to assess the environmental impacts of stage 8 of the Roe Highway development.

If the amendment is successful, the motion would state —

That, for the purposes of —

- (a) saving the Beeliar wetlands by preserving ecological linkages and a range of other key values including —
 - (i) regionally significant vegetation, which is becoming rare as a result of encroaching urbanisation,
 - (ii) habitat for a great many fauna species, especially internationally and nationally significant migratory birds, as well as seriously threatened species like the Carnaby's cockatoo and the graceful sun moth, and
 - (iii) residential amenity, recreation and education; and
- (b) protecting our unique Aboriginal heritage;

this Council calls upon the Barnett government to continue the processes to assess the environmental impacts of stage 8 of the Roe Highway development.

HON SALLY TALBOT (South West) [3.20 pm]: Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Hon Sally Talbot can speak to the substantive motion and to the amendment.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Is the amendment coming around?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The amendment will be available shortly.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Thanks, Mr Deputy President. WA Labor does not support the development of an unnecessary road at the cost of what is without any doubt a unique and pristine ecosystem.

Hon Nick Goiran: Does Hannah Beazley agree?

Hon Sue Ellery: Why don't you ask her?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Is there a problem?

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Hon Nick Goiran: Is she your mate?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Was that unclear?

Hon Sue Ellery: Hon Nick Goiran would like to ask a question of Hannah Beazley, so I am suggesting that he contact Hannah Beazley and ask her himself.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Mr Deputy President, I am making it very clear that Labor's position is now, and always has been, that Roe Highway stage 8 should not be built through the Beeliar wetlands. It is an unnecessary road, it is a road to nowhere, and it will do absolutely irrecoverable damage to a unique and pristine environment.

In preparing to contribute to the debate on this motion, I started making a list of the reasons why Roe stage 8 should not be built, and I got to 10, fortunately, which is a nice, round number. The list goes like this. I will go through it very quickly so that honourable members on the other side can focus on the reasons, as they clearly have a real difficulty in focusing on the substance of these arguments. That was demonstrated absolutely graphically by Hon Simon O'Brien this afternoon when he got up and did his classic all froth no beer, all bark no bite act, which was presumably supposed to conceal the fact that Hon Helen Morton's amendment was not ready to go or something. I do not know whether the government has any sort of strategy about this issue, but I thought I would spell out this issue right at the start so that people have an idea of where I am going with it.

The first reason that Labor is now, and always has been, opposed to the building of Roe stage 8 is that the Environmental Protection Authority says no. Nothing could be clearer than that report from the EPA that the government has been sitting on now for over three and a half years that says absolutely categorically and unequivocally that Roe stage 8 should not be built through the Beeliar wetlands.

The second reason is that it is a road to nowhere. The Fremantle eastern bypass has been deleted from the metropolitan region scheme. If Roe stage 8 is built, it will go nowhere. Therefore, to dress it up as a solution to traffic congestion in surrounding suburbs is absolute arrant nonsense. The third reason that Labor supports the deletion of Roe stage 8 is that it is a costing mess.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members!

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Government members know this. The government will probably just about have got to the \$20 million promised over four years by the time we go to the election next year. However, the number of different figures that are flying around this community about how much this road will cost is kind of like "think of a number, any number"—\$640 million, \$650 million, \$760 million, \$550 million.

Hon Sue Ellery: It is \$100 million per kilometre.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Exactly. As Hon Sue Ellery says, when those numbers are broken down to a per kilometre rate, it is absolutely outrageous. We have listened to people such as Hon Simon O'Brien, who, as he quite rightly says, has contributed to debates on this issue several times. However, unfortunately, he has this unique capacity to speak without listening so that every time he gets up and speaks, his speech bears no connection to anything that anybody else has said on this matter. On what is \$20 million to be spent in four years? It is a deeply flawed process. If it is going to have the adjective "consultation", the word "consultation" has to be in scare quotes. If we go to that community and ask whether the community living around the Beeliar wetlands considers that it has been consulted over this road proposal by this government, it will tell the government no loudly and clearly.

Hon Simon O'Brien: They have and most of them living there actually agree with it as well. That's the truth. Tell the truth yourself.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: It was astonishing to hear that aspect of the speech by Hon Simon O'Brien when he was just dripping sarcasm about the community campaign that has been active in the past few weeks in an attempt to let members of Parliament know the strength of community feeling. Hon Simon O'Brien might consider that he has had only 20 emails. I do not know; that may well be the case. I would have thought that a community activist would not waste their energy on saying anything to Hon Simon O'Brien, frankly. But that is just my view, and I might be a bit biased in that view.

Hon Simon O'Brien: How many did you get? How many thought that you needed to be turned?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: There have been hundreds and hundreds of emails flying around.

Hon Nick Goiran: Ha, ha, ha! Are you seriously telling me you've had hundreds and hundreds of emails?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes; absolutely!

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Hon Nick Goiran: Why don't you get your electorate officer on to that?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I have responded to them all, and I am not the only person on this side —

Hon Nick Goiran: Don't tell us hundreds and hundreds. Tell us the exact amount that you've had, because I can tell you I've received the same as you and I haven't had hundreds.

Hon Sue Ellery: How do you know you've received the same as her?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: How could Hon Nick Goiran possibly know?

Hon Simon O'Brien: They're all probably from the same people.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I have had hundreds of emails.

Hon Nick Goiran: Hundreds?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Yes, and I have responded —

Hon Nick Goiran: So tell us the precise amount. Since you've responded, it won't be a problem.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I have responded to every one of those emails, and I know other people on this side —
Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Members, I think we are getting a little counterproductive now. If the member on her feet would like to continue to put her comments through the Chair, I promise I will not interject on her.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Thank you, Mr Deputy President.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I can handle a modicum of discussion.

Hon Phil Edman interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Member! I can handle a modicum of discussion, but when Hansard is finding it increasingly more and more difficult to listen in, as am I, and I am certainly keen to hear what the honourable member is saying, I would appreciate it very much if members just toned things down for a while.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. I can only think that many members opposite have not yet worked out how to open their inboxes if they are not aware of the campaign; or of course it may well be that a number of the people who have written to me, and who I know have written to Hon Sue Ellery and other people on this side of the chamber, have simply decided that they were wasting their time speaking to members of the government.

The fourth reason—four out of 10—why this road, Roe 8, should not go ahead is that it is old-fashioned and out-dated planning. This plan has been in the metropolitan region scheme since 1955. In 1955, Bob Menzies was Prime Minister. I actually found out quite coincidentally the other day that it was also the year that Barry Humphries first performed as Edna Everage. That is going back an awfully long time. The world was a very different place in those days. In 1955 this road was conceived; it should have been deleted from the scheme years ago. It will be deleted when Labor is back in government.

The fifth reason that the building of this road should be opposed is the absolute dramatic threat that it presents to a number of threatened species, not the least of which is black cockatoos. I do congratulate various elements of the conservation movement in Western Australia for the excellent job they have done in bringing the whole topic of the treatment of native forests and the treatment of remnant urban bushland together under the umbrella of a discussion about protecting the habitat of threatened species.

Hon Helen Morton: Member, would you take an interjection? I just want to know whether you believe the EPA is able to undertake an independent investigation of this.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I will certainly come to that. I think that there is some fundamental difference between the government and the opposition in terms of what the EPA does. I noted a very curious interjection at the beginning of Hon Helen Morton's contribution to the debate from one of her colleagues sitting behind her, who seemed to think that all the information Hon Helen Morton gave us was already on the public record. Certainly, when Hon Helen Morton took the interjection from Hon Sue Ellery, she understood what Hon Sue Ellery was asking her. Hon Helen Morton's colleagues, obviously, did not understand or they are subject to quite a different understanding.

Hon Helen Morton: But I take it you do trust the EPA's independence and accountability in that.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I will come to the EPA a little bit later.

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The sixth reason this road should be opposed—perhaps I should have listed this in the more dramatic place of either first or last in my list of 10—is that it is proposed by a hopeless government that has not given one iota of indication that it understands what is at stake with this proposal. I have already referred to that dreadful contribution to the debate this afternoon from Hon Simon O'Brien. I do not think he will ever again receive an email from anyone after the razzing he gave the constituent who wrote to him. I certainly would not send him an email because the next thing would be him standing in Parliament to take the mickey out of someone who obviously feels pretty strongly about the issue.

I will return to these points later in the debate, but the seventh reason is that the community hates it. All this nonsense that the government is trying to trot out to convince us that the community is in fact in favour of Roe 8 and that the only people opposed to it are these somehow, sort of, green eccentric extremists has a complete disregard for the truth. The community hates this proposal and it has made its views clear over and over again, not only at rallies at Beeliar and at Parliament House, but also in the thousands of signatures on petitions presented to this place. The community loathes the plan to build Roe 8 and has made its views very well known to the house. It must be very, very upsetting to the community that the government is deaf to those voices.

The eighth reason is —

Hon Nick Goiran interjected.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): Order! The member is not responding to interjection and I would suggest that you listen for a little longer. Members can certainly seek the call in something like 33 minutes. I would welcome that.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Mr Deputy President, I know the conventions of this place and I am very, very happy to take any interjections that add to the substance of the debate —

Several members interjected.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: — but I am not interested in the kind of nonsensical muttering that is coming out of, particularly, the backbench, and now Hon Donna Faragher.

The eighth reason this road should not go ahead is the devastating effect that it will have on Aboriginal heritage, which I know has been referred to briefly in this debate. It is an aspect of the problem that deserves very serious consideration, and I will address that at more length in a moment.

The ninth reason is the conservation values of the wetland, and I am looking forward to developing that argument in a little more detail. I know other speakers have referred to it. From the amendment that Hon Helen Morton has presented and the view of the minister that she has conveyed to this place, I know that members on the other side of the house are not unaware of these conservation values—nor should they be unaware! This is not something that has been cooked up for the purposes of a short-term debate on the issue; these values have been well documented over decades. This is not the odd spider orchid that has cropped up in a Main Roads proposition to build an on-ramp to a freeway; these values have all been well documented and well discussed for decades. It is gratifying that one or two people in the government are obviously aware of those values and what they are. My question for those government members who are able to articulate those values and talk about why they are worthy of consideration in the government and EPA processes is: how can they possibly be led to the conclusion that we should be ploughing ahead with this assessment process? It has been there in black and white for decades for everybody to see.

The final reason Labor is opposed to the building of Roe 8 is the future use of the area, which is something that tends to be dropped from most of these discussions because we quite rightly focus on the environmental, heritage and lifestyle damage that will take place as the road is built and tend to neglect the fact that in the Beeliar wetlands we have a unique piece of bushland in the middle of an urban area; and the potential for that to be of ever-increasing value to the community in the south metropolitan area deserves, I think, a special mention in its own right. That is the framework on which I will hang the rest of my comments, Mr Deputy President.

To go back to the beginning, Hon Helen Morton asked me whether I was happy that the EPA would be able to carry out a sufficiently rigorous process to reassure the community should it come out with the recommendation that Roe 8 should go ahead. The whole point is that an assessment has already been completed under section 16 of the EP act. An assessment has already been done and it has been on the public record now for, it must be, I think, close to—I cannot remember the date of the EPA report—10 years now. That EPA report is absolutely unequivocal about the damage that will be done. In fact, the EPA report goes so far as to say that the reserve should be excised from the MRS plan and that the area that is currently in the road reserve should be turned into part of the regional park. The EPA report is very thorough. I have been through it again in recent weeks in preparing for this debate. I read it at the time, and I have gone back to it every time that we have had this debate

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to see whether there is anything in it, given the provisions of section 16, which obviously is not supposed to replace the process that we are going through now. However, if section 16 has any merit to it at all, surely it should be functioning as what we might term a strategic assessment. I think both sides of the house, and the Greens, think that the basic concept of a strategic assessment is a sound one: an assessment of the values pertaining to an area is done to give proponents an idea of how they may proceed. The problem that we have in the case of Roe 8 is that that strategic assessment, or what is effectively a strategic assessment under section 16, has been done but, as the proponent, the government is not prepared to take that advice at face value. The government wants to play short-term politically opportunistic games with that EPA report and somehow set it aside, saying, "It was only a section 16 assessment; it doesn't carry any real weight; let's press on." That is the crucial mistake that this government has made. It has acted like the worst sort of proponent of these kinds of developments—that is, the type of proponent not prepared to take evidence at face value and work with what it has. That makes this government a very dangerous proposition when it comes to any proposal with such serious ramifications for environment and heritage.

The second point I make, just to recap and elaborate as much as I have time to do on some of these points, is that if Roe 8 were to be built, it would effectively be a "road to nowhere". A road to nowhere is not what we need in that area. I have been critical of some aspects of the way in which the community chat around the motion we are debating today has unfolded, in that I have been down to, I think, every Roe 8 protest that has been held in the past three and a half years. To at least two of those protests I took the leader of the Labor Party who, on both occasions, addressed the crowd, and we made it absolutely and categorically clear that Labor would stand shoulder to shoulder with the opponents of Roe 8 until we get that scheme deleted from the MRS. We made Labor's position absolutely and categorically clear; therefore, any talk around the place that Labor has somehow walked away from that is nonsense. I have been reading, as I am sure others have, some of the material put out by local Liberal members in their newsletters and seen the insinuations that Labor has walked away from its opposition to Roe 8 and I can tell you, Mr Deputy President, that that is absolutely not true. The Labor Party remains as committed to stopping Roe 8 as we ever have been, and that is a total, heartfelt commitment not to build Roe 8. The reason is, of course, that we know there are alternatives. There are better ways of solving those problems. We do not need a road to nowhere; we need proper access to Fiona Stanley Hospital and what I heard Hon Simon O'Brien refer to earlier as the Murdoch hub, I think he called it.

Hon Sue Ellery: Precinct.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: The Murdoch precinct.

I know because of conversations that I have had with people whom I meet during the course of my duties as shadow environment minister, and also as shadow lands minister, that the government has a colossal problem when it comes to its planning for that Murdoch precinct. Again, it is because of this terrible disease that it has of short-termism. It wants to be able to produce the glossy flyers for the election campaign that suggest that it has got it right with its transport-oriented developments and its precinct plans for that area. In fact, it has got it dramatically and drastically wrong, and the lack of proper road access is one of the elements of those mistakes. I am sure that this is a subject that will come up many times in debate in this place in the next few months.

However, Labor has never walked away from trying to solve the problem about access to Fiona Stanley Hospital. Indeed, my colleagues Hon Ken Travers and Hon Kate Doust have been quite specific about the way in which that problem can be solved. If the government thinks, and I say to the Greens also that if they have been led to believe, that this in any way indicates that Labor is walking away from its opposition to Roe 8, they are wrong, because it does not. There is no way that what Labor is proposing for access to Fiona Stanley Hospital is a reconfiguration of Roe 8. That is absolute arrant nonsense, and I am happy to take anybody who believes otherwise through those plans carefully and systematically. I am sure that Hon Ken Travers, who I know intends to contribute later in this debate, will make that very clear.

Of course, Labor's planning for that area goes right back to the early years of the previous decade when, under the Labor government, we set up the freight network review. The result of the freight network review and all the subsequent processes showed absolutely clearly that we do not need Roe 8—that Roe 8 is an aberration and it needs to be finished once and for all and taken off the scheme.

I will not go over item 3, which I called the costing mess, because I know that other speakers on this side of the house will talk more about that. We could do so much with that money. Whether it is \$550 million, \$590 million, \$650 million or \$750 million, nobody quite knows, but there is so much more that we could do with that money. As for that rather silly line that Hon Simon O'Brien trotted out a couple of times that people on this side of the house just do not want to build roads, he must have had a dream, probably when he was trying to work out how to open his inbox, that cooked that up for him. Hon Ken Travers is on the record as having named a number of other road developments and upgrades which are desperately needed around this state and which have been

defunded by this government because it wants to quarantine the money for Roe 8—the road to nowhere. So I will leave that point to others to spell out in more detail.

I also mentioned as point 4 that this is an old-fashioned, outdated scheme. The Stephenson plan was the one that saw Perth's development during the middle years of the last century. To say that Roe 8 is a last-century concept is really being much too kind to it. The fact is that the congestion problems in the southern suburbs will not be solved by this plan. They will not be solved by building yet another road, particularly a road that goes to nowhere. The main point here is that there are other, more modern contemporary solutions to this kind of issue.

I noticed earlier in this debate that Hon Philip Gardiner was seeking the call. I look forward to hearing his contribution, because, of course, at the core of this problem, at the heart of this problem, is the whole issue about what the Liberal transport minister and his predecessor, the previous Liberal transport minister, are doing with the freight rail network. We have plenty of data to show that the Liberal government believes that we should push freight off rail and put it onto road, and it is that kind of rhetoric that has kept the Roe 8 ball in the air for all these years. It is absolutely outdated, outmoded, old-fashioned thinking. It is just not good enough for a smart, modern city such as Perth in 2012.

Let me come now to the fifth point that I was making about the threat to species, particularly the black cockatoos. This point really coalesces with the next point, point 6, which was about why would we trust a government with this appalling record with an assessment of the viability of Roe 8. A few weeks ago we saw a very sad scenario unfold in which the environment minister had sat on the results of the 2011 Great Cocky Count, which, as many members on this side of the house at least know, has turned into quite a community festivity every year. There are hundreds and hundreds of sites. I got the list the other day, and it runs to about 20 pages of small-print type, with a list of all the sites where the Great Cocky Count is done. The Great Cocky Count takes place in April of every year. There was one in April 2010, and the government released the results in August 2010. In fact, the results came out a little earlier than August, but it was August when we actually got the documents that said, "This is the result of the Great Cocky Count." That was August 2010, about four months after the count had taken place. We come to 2011, and we had the Great Cocky Count in April 2011. We got to July–August and there was nothing, so we started asking questions. We got to October and we still had not seen anything, so we asked more questions. The answer that we got right through to two weeks ago was, "We are still trying to get the figures in order. We are just checking up. There is something that has to be correlated." It was really hiding behind a lot of words that did not have much substance to them when we pulled them apart. There was obviously some problem.

I spoke to many people who had at first been involved in the count, and they were pretty angry about not having the results after all those months. They had actually sat up all night counting cockatoos. Of course, sadly, what we know now is that many of them sat up all night counting cockatoos that were not there, because it is absolutely heartbreaking to see the number of sites that had zero registered next to them. We have been asking questions for about six months. Eleven months after the Great Cocky Count, the minister, Hon Bill Marmion, finally released the results. What did they show? Exactly what we had feared they would show, because the government did not release the figures back in August when they would have been ready for release; they had been sitting on the minister's desk for those six months. The figures showed that there had been a 37 per cent reduction in the black cockatoo population in Perth and the surrounding areas.

We know that there is no magic bullet when it comes to protecting species such as the black cockatoo. We know that there is no one thing that we can do whereby, once we have done it, we can wash our hands of it and say, "Right; we've fixed that. Black cockatoos will be all right for perpetuity." However, we do know that the one thing we can do—I ask the government to reflect on the difference between those two categories—that will have the single biggest effect is to stop destroying black cockatoo habitat; that is, the vegetation that provides them with food and the trees that provide them with places to nest. The Beelihar wetlands are one of the last remaining areas of real significance in the metropolitan area that provide black cockatoo habitat.

Hon Helen Morton was asking me about my faith in the Environmental Protection Authority process. The EPA has already told government that the effect on species such as the black cockatoos will be so devastating that the road should not go ahead. If that was true some years ago when the EPA did its section 16 report, surely it is now even truer, having seen this huge decrease in the population. There cannot be any other way of dressing up that figure, unless we take the view that the Premier of the state has taken, which is that somehow the whole story about black cockatoos being threatened is something we have made up—not "we" meaning the Labor Party necessarily, but people like me who stand and talk at great length about the need to protect black cockatoos. His view is that somehow we have dreamt it or we are using bodgie numbers or our scientific methods of counting are flawed. But I can tell members that a lot of the research we are presenting comes from the Auditor General's

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2009 report, and scientists in our community have been studying the black cockatoo population for decades; they are the figures we use when we make these kinds of statements.

On the other hand, the Premier is happy to go on talkback radio and refer to “so-called endangered” black cockatoos. Where does that come from? What is the Premier actually saying? Perhaps he has become captive to the kind of thinking that many of us have seen amongst some of the drier economists who have their hands on the Treasury coffers who say things such as, “Why do we need black cockatoos? Why do we need these species of fish that are endangered?” Just the other day the Premier made another statement—he really has it in for these creatures that have made it to the threatened list! The other day he had a go at the graceful sun moth—he could not get the name of the sun moth right, but I think he meant the graceful sun moth! It was rather like hearing Hon Simon O'Brien talk about “Grace”, who had written to him about Roe 8! When we heard the Premier talk about the graceful sun moth, he said, “Well, do we really need these things? They sleep for most of their life; they do not eat—what is the point of them?” That demonstrates a profound gap in any sort of beginning of an understanding about how ecology works and what biodiversity means. The political leader of this state does not accept that black cockatoos are threatened and thinks that graceful sun moths do not really deserve an existence because they are not awake for very much of their short lives. That is just a most astonishing way of looking at things. I would hate to have seen somebody like Premier Colin Barnett in charge of Noah's ark, because clearly he would have picked the cute animals with the long eyelashes and left out a number of others that he was not partial to.

Let us just go back to that EPA report, because it is worth putting on the record something from it. I am quoting from page 13 of the section 16 EPA report, under the heading “2.3 Fauna”, which states —

The area is known to support the Quenda (Southern Brown Bandicoot), which is a Priority 4 species and is considered to be a significant mammal species. The area is also known to support the brushtail possum, a diverse group of reptiles, 1 species of tortoise, 8 species of frog and the Swan River Goby fish. In addition, North Lake is the only urban wetland known to support fresh water sponges.

We are not talking about a scrubby bit of bush, we are not talking about an area that has been repeatedly cleared and has somehow been degraded, and we are not talking about somewhere people dump their rubbish or ride their trail bikes; we are talking about an area that is home to a number of threatened and rare species, and this government wants to drive a highway through it.

Let me just go briefly to what I called point 6, which is about why we would trust the government to do this assessment and why we suspect its motives in even pushing it as far as it has. Yesterday I asked a question of the minister representing Hon Bill Marmion, and it will not have escaped the attention of many honourable members that this question was asked in preparation for today's debate on the Beelihar wetlands. My question was —

What does the minister regard as the greatest current threat to the environmental, cultural and social values of the Beelihar wetlands?

I would have thought that building a major highway through a wetland was a pretty major threat. Did Hon Bill Marmion identify that as the major threat? No; he did not even mention it. He obviously does not get it. He does not think that the proposal to build Roe Highway stage 8 through the wetlands is the major hazard facing that area. He is on his own. If only the government were open to the representations that it receives from the community in this area, it would understand why yesterday's answer was so absurd.

I must make one more point while I am on the topic of that answer. What Hon Bill Marmion identified as a major threat was what we would call climate change, but what he calls “the extended trend of a drying climate”. I tell Hon Bill Marmion to practise saying “climate change”; if he does it while he is shaving, he will find it does not hurt one bit. Once he can talk about climate change, he can come and join the rest of the world and have a serious discussion about what areas such as the Beelihar wetlands mean if we are going to appropriately adapt and mitigate the effects of climate change.

I have one further point on why we would trust the government. We are dealing with an environment minister who attracted a headline a matter of a few months ago when he admitted that he does not read the technical documents presented to him as part of his job as environment minister.

Hon Sue Ellery: It is a big ask.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: As Hon Sue Ellery said, it appears that as far as Hon Bill Marmion is concerned, it is a big ask to have technical documents put in front of him.

I will quote from an article of the time. The headline is “Marmion didn't read fire plan”, and the article states —

He is the state's Environment Minister, but Bill Marmion says he has just a "tiny bit" of fire expertise and he has not read his department's prescribed burning plan.

He says things such as —

He said details of the plan were best left to DEC officers and he lacked the expertise to get too involved. If we substitute "Roe 8" for "fire plan", we can hear the alarm bells ringing, and they should be ringing on that side of the chamber. I think other government ministers would be ashamed and embarrassed if they thought they were ever going to be accused of not reading the technical aspect of their brief. It is appalling to have a state government minister admit that he cannot get his head around the details. I noticed that the Premier recently put out some kind of defence of Mr Marmion's perceived inadequacies in being across the details of his portfolio, which was that this man is by profession an engineer, and engineers tend to get bogged down in technical detail. I am sorry, but that is not the problem—this man is not bogged down in technical detail! This man has a too-hard basket that must be going through the roof of Dumas House, or wherever his office is, by now. He is on the record as saying that he leaves all this technical stuff to his department. In the case of Roe 8, and in the case of many, many things that come across the desk of the Minister for Environment, that is simply not good enough.

I come to point 7, which was about the community hating the prospect of Roe 8, and I draw members' attention not necessarily to the hundreds of emails that have come into my inbox, but to the thousands and thousands of signatures that have gone through this chamber on petitions—thousands of them. I also draw members' attention to the fact that local government is not supportive of Roe 8. I have here a document from the City of Cockburn—which is absolutely vehemently opposed to the plan—that sets out the following reasons for rejecting it. The first point is —

- That the social and economic justification does not validate the environmental degradation which will be caused as a consequence of the proposal.

Secondly —

- That the Roe Highway Extension proposal will direct significantly more traffic into the City (67,000 vehicles per day) and without any commitment to associated local or regional network upgrades will result in increased traffic congestion, reduced amenity and loss of significant environmental open space,

I am very sorry that Hon Simon O'Brien has had to leave the chamber on urgent parliamentary business, because this goes to the heart of the untruths that he is peddling about the effect of Roe 8—he is claiming the exact opposite. The third point made by the City of Cockburn is —

- A lack of road network assessment to support the proposal and outline the local network implications of the extension.

The final point is —

- A broader network review needs to be conducted which models a shift in the focal point of the freight task from the inner harbour precinct to the outer harbour precinct.

So it is not just lay members of the local community, and it is not just environmentalists and people who are concerned about conservation all over the state, who are concerned about Roe 8; it is also one of the local government authorities in the area that will be significantly affected.

In the few minutes that remain to me, I have three more points to cover. The first is Aboriginal heritage. This is something that I know the government has a great problem with. We had that very unedifying incident a few years ago when Hon Norman Moore made the joke at an industry conference of offering a free Aboriginal heritage assessment to the winner of the raffle. That is the seriousness with which this mob treats Aboriginal heritage assessments. In the case of Beeliar, the traditional owners are the Beeliar people. This has all been well documented. As I say, none of this should be any surprise to anybody sitting opposite. This is a well-documented trade route from the days when the Aboriginal nations had a very complex and sophisticated economy going in this state. The fear is that not only will known heritage sites be lost with the building of Roe 8, but also other areas that have yet to be discovered and yet to be documented will never, ever be known. That is a shocking prospect to contemplate. The government should be bending over backwards to avoid causing those kinds of terrible problems, instead of just blundering on with this blind, short-term political agenda to build this road.

My ninth point is about the conservation values of the wetland. I refer again to the EPA section 16 report, which states at page 6 —

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The conservation values associated with North Lake, Bibra Lake and the surrounding wetland areas has long been recognised through its inclusion in System Six area M93 and subsequently, *Bush Forever* Site 244.

At page 4 it states —

The EPA places a great importance on the wetlands remaining on the Swan Coastal Plain, considering that 80% are estimated to have been lost. As a result, the EPA expects the remaining wetlands to be managed according to the principles of ecologically sustainable development regardless of land use or activity.

What that means is: do not build a road through the wetland. The EPA spelt it out. The reason that we cannot build this road is that we have lost most of the wetlands, and building this road will destroy the last part of that wetland chain. This road simply cannot go ahead.

I talked earlier about the future use of this area. I urge anybody who has not done this to go to this wetland on a sunny afternoon, summer or winter, and look at what is in this area. It is one of the most beautiful places one can ever visit. There is the big lake. There is a plethora of wildlife.

Hon Sue Ellery: The bird life is amazing.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: The bird life is absolutely spectacular. Who would ever need to go to a bird park or an aviary to see that kind of thing? It is all there. It is a beautiful area. I have tramped through the area with the guides. It is absolutely indescribably special and beautiful. But it will be like that only for a short time if this government gets its way. It is an absolute ecological paradise. It is a haven for people who live in the metropolitan area, as well as people who value that kind of biodiversity and ecological richness.

I conclude by saying that Labor, like many, many people in our community, says no to Roe 8, for the following reasons, which I have tried to capture in my 10 points. This is an area of outstanding biodiversity. This is an area that provides unique habitat for wildlife, with much of that wildlife being endangered or rare. This is an area that includes very, very culturally significant Aboriginal spiritual sites. If this road goes ahead, those sites will be lost, and we will never know about the others that have yet to be identified. Finally, this area includes recreational facilities that are beyond compare; there is nothing to compare with them in the metropolitan area.

Where the risks outweigh the advantages, and where the environmental damage is far greater than any marginal benefits, we have to say no. I repeat: WA Labor will not support the development of an unnecessary road at the cost of a pristine and unique ecosystem.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm): I give the call to Hon Philip Gardiner, noting that there is only a minute and a half left on the clock, but there is still an hour and 45 minutes at the next sitting.

HON PHILIP GARDINER (Agricultural) [4.05 pm]: Thank you, Mr Deputy President. I rise to speak to the amendment and regret that I was away from the chamber for a period during the discussion on this motion. Whenever it comes to making an assessment of environment versus economic-commercial outcomes, it is highly unbalanced, always, because one is mostly measurable, and measurable by that very useful facility that we have, which is the medium of all our commerce—a dollar—and the other is hardly measurable in the same sense. So when we have roads, which we are talking about today, and we have measures of traffic and costs of delays and congestion, it is very easy to make an economic assessment of that. But how easy is it to make an economic assessment of the environmental consequences?

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.