

Chairman; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr John McGrath; Mr Murray Cowper; Mrs Carol Martin; Mr Fran Logan

Division 72: Zoological Parks Authority, \$11 120 000 —

Mr A.P. O’Gorman, Chairman.

Mr W.R. Marmion, Minister for Environment.

Ms C. Shannon, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Ms M. Price, Chief Financial Officer.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Gosnells has the first question.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I refer to the asset investment program referred to on page 858. I wonder why there is no allocation of funds for an investment into an open-range zoo, such as Taronga Western Plains Zoo, which is associated with Taronga Zoo in New South Wales, or Werribee Open Range Zoo in Victoria.

Mr W.R. MARMION: The open-range zoo project has been on the drawing board for many years, and certainly going back to my time in the early 1990s with Minister Foss. Indeed, there is ongoing planning. It is not an expensive exercise. Preliminary planning on what might constitute an open-range zoo, where it might be located and its layout are part of an ongoing in-house project.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: There is no funding allocation for the investigation of suitable sites.

Mr W.R. MARMION: There is no specific funding, but sites have been investigated. It is business as usual. People who run a zoo would look at where they might go next. Part of the forward planning involves looking at those sorts of opportunities.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: Because Perth Zoo is located in my electorate, I would like a reassurance from the minister that Perth Zoo is secure in that location and that any move to have an open-range zoo would be only complementary to Perth Zoo.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Having stayed at my grandmother’s place in Labouchere Road opposite the Zoo as a young lad, I can absolutely guarantee the member for South Perth that there is no way that Perth Zoo will move from South Perth under my watch.

Mr M.J. COWPER: It is close to relatives!

Mr W.R. MARMION: It is close to relatives of mine. The member is right; an open-range zoo would be complementary to Perth Zoo. I give the member the assurance that, under my watch, however long that might be—it may not be a long assurance—Perth Zoo will not move. Perth Zoo has about 600 000 visitors each year. It is a wonderful asset to Australia and to the member’s electorate.

Mrs C.A. MARTIN: Just keep all that monkey business there in South Perth!

The CHAIRMAN: Did the minister just say that his watch might not be a particularly long one?

Mr W.R. MARMION: I am just saying that it might be there for 12, 14 or 15 years!

Mr J.E. McGRATH: I refer to the water infrastructure management project outlined on page 858, which project I believe the minister announced during budget week. Can he please explain what this project is about? I believe he has allocated funding over four years to implement this project.

Mr W.R. MARMION: Perth Zoo is a big user of water. It has lots of exhibits. In fact, it has been so efficient with its water use and reuse that it draws only 10 per cent of its water from scheme water; the other 90 per cent is bore water. Any ability to recirculate, reuse and filter water in the existing system saves the Zoo a lot of money in water costs. Thirty-seven per cent of the Zoo’s power costs are for pumping water. That gives members an idea of how important water is to the Zoo, not only for the exhibits, but also for reticulating the lawns. It needs water 365 days a year. It is a 19-hectare property and has 1 200 animals. As I have said, it has 630 000 visitors a year. At the moment, we have committed more than \$11 million over about six years for the project to replace the aged water infrastructure, much of which is 60 years old. This money will be used for that. It will also go towards installing solar pumps to reduce the energy used on pumping water and looking at more efficient ways of catching water from some of the structures, recirculating some of the water that is caught and better storage systems so that the water can be used more efficiently. The Zoo is efficient not only with water, but also with solar energy. It has 303 solar panels on the roof. That is another area in which Perth Zoo is improving its efficiency. I am very pleased that Perth Zoo is being efficient with its use of water, because it is one of the bigger users of water in Western Australia.

Mr F.M. LOGAN: Can we get on with it now, minister?

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The CHAIRMAN: There is one further question.

Mr J.E. McGRATH: This is a very important question. If 600 000 people a year visit the Zoo, how do they travel to the Zoo; and, given the minister's great support for the Zoo, will he push in cabinet for a train station at Richardson Park?

[8.30 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Where is your reference for the budget, member for South Perth?

Mr W.R. MARMION: I have to say that in my previous life in the private sector, I was instrumental in assisting the City of South Perth in making sure there was a corridor within the freeway that would allow a station to go in for the train. In terms of my knowledge of the future train station there, I have to defer that to some other time.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we can defer it to the Minister for Transport. Members, I have no further indication of questions to be asked.

The appropriation was recommended.