

**STATE FOREST 56**

*Partial Revocation of Dedication — Motion*

**MR A.P. JACOB (Ocean Reef — Minister for Environment)** [10.51 am]: I move —

That the proposal for the partial revocation of state forest 56, laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, 15 October 2014, by command of His Excellency the Administrator, be carried out.

The state forest revocation proposal that has just been tabled relates to the proposed Margaret River Perimeter Road, or town bypass, and requires the excision of a portion of state forest 56. The area proposed for excision totals 24.49 hectares and is located north of Margaret River.

Main Roads Western Australia proposes to construct a new road east around the Margaret River town site. This road, currently known as the Margaret River Perimeter Road, is anticipated to remove heavy vehicle traffic from the main street of Margaret River and provide an alternative route for those travelling through Margaret River. In November 2013, 10.6 per cent of traffic through Margaret River was considered heavy vehicle traffic, which equates to approximately 400 heavy vehicles each day travelling through the centre of Margaret River during the beginning of the peak tourist season. It is expected that the proposed road will reduce congestion and enhance safety for pedestrians, tourists and local traffic in Margaret River.

To facilitate the proposed construction, Main Roads has requested the excision of 24.49 hectares from state forest 56. The proposed excision will result in the clearing of native vegetation and part of the Margaret River pine plantation. The native vegetation affected by the proposal was identified as primarily jarrah and marri forest, with endemic understory species. Main Roads has commissioned an environmental impact assessment, which has been reviewed and endorsed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the Conservation Commission of Western Australia, the vesting body for state forests. As a condition of the Conservation Commission's endorsement and prior to commencement, Main Roads was required to develop a detailed construction and environmental management plan in consultation with the Department of Parks and Wildlife. This has been completed.

Main Roads has been working with the Department of Environmental Regulation to provide an environmental offset for the clearing of native vegetation associated with this proposal and other road proposals in the south west. The proposed offset will be purchased on a like-for-like basis and have similar conservation values and size to the areas proposed for clearing. Main Roads is also compensating the Forest Products Commission for the early harvesting of the pines in the Margaret River pine plantation. The compensation ensures that the Forest Products Commission will not be financially disadvantaged by the early harvesting of a portion of the Margaret Pine Plantation.

This proposal has the support of the Forest Products Commission, the Department of Lands and the Shire of Augusta–Margaret River. It has also been endorsed by the Conservation Commission. I recommend this revocation proposal to the house and ask members to support it.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Gosnells)** [10.53 am]: I take the opportunity to rise and offer the opposition's support for this revocation. Let me begin by thanking the Minister for Environment's staff for providing us with a comprehensive briefing about what is involved with the revocation. I acknowledge that this particular reduction in the area of the conservation estate will be met to some extent by the implementation of environmental offsets. However, I take this opportunity to tell the minister that we need greater clarity about the value of such offsets given that there will still be a net reduction in the area of the conservation estate and a net reduction in the area of native vegetation. That is a concern, not especially in this case because, in fact, the vast bulk of this particular offset involves a pine plantation area. The issue is about compensating the Forest Products Commission for the early harvest of pine trees which, had they been allowed to stay in position for an extended period, would have meant greater profitability for the Forest Products Commission. That is a minor concern, but the broader issue is about the quality of environmental offsets. The fact that an organisation acquires land as an offset is not much of an offset. Yes, it might provide for greater security of tenure, but it does not get away from the fact that there is still a net loss of overall native vegetation area. The minister will have to tackle that problem for other revocations.

The issue of vestings comes up with this particular proposal. When I looked at the land surrounding the revocation area, I noted that a number of areas are covered by management orders, which were previously known as vestings, when the land was vested with the local government, which is along the Margaret River area and adjacent to the proposed area. We acknowledge that this road upgrade is important and that it has been planned for some time. The actual area of Bramley National Park that will be lost is relatively small and represents a realignment of certain areas. We accept that, but I put it to the minister that when he is presented

with further revocations, he needs to ask a bit more about the nature of the offsets involved. It is not a major issue for this particular case, but in other circumstances it could well be. I am very happy to support this revocation.

Question put and passed; and, on motion by **Mr A.P. Jacob (Minister for Environment)**, the Council acquainted accordingly.