



House of Assembly

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PARA WIRRA RECREATION PARK

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light)
(15:46): I rise to indicate my support for this motion.

Para Wirra is a wonderful park that combines natural bushland with great recreational facilities, including a sports oval and many bushwalking trails to suit all levels. It is one of the 50 national parks and reserves within 50 kilometres of the Adelaide CBD, covering a total combined area of over 13,000 hectares of land. The proposed reclassification of Para Wirra Recreation Park to a conservation park will give better recognition to the park's significant natural and historic importance.

The South Australian government is committed to the ongoing provision and development of recreational opportunities in parks. This is reflected in our nature-based

tourism action plan, which recognises the importance of tourist and regional growth investment opportunities. But, in order to grow this important industry that already accounts for \$1.1 billion in expenditure in South Australia each year, we must ensure that our open spaces are protected and remain attractive to visitors.

The state government has an outstanding record on increasing our network of parks and reserves. In total, South Australia has over 300 parks showcasing a diverse range of natural attractions, including Seal Bay, Flinders Ranges, Cleland, the Kangaroo Island Wilderness Trail, and Naracoorte Caves. And, we have systematically added to this network of parks and reserves.

Over the past 13 years, this government has proclaimed 69 new parks and added land to 76 existing parks. In addition, when Labor came into government in South Australia in 2002, just 70,000 hectares of South Australia had wilderness protection status. We have increased this to 1,843,448 hectares. South Australia now has the largest percentage of both public and private protected land of any Australian mainland jurisdiction—approximately 27,675,000 hectares; that is equivalent to the size of the state of Victoria.

We have also worked hard to ensure that our parks and reserves offer visitors a great experience. This has been at the

heart of the state government's \$10.4 million investment to improve metropolitan Adelaide's parks and reserves, including the Para Wirra Recreation Park. The proposed upgrades to Para Wirra have been designed to be sustainable and sensitive to the natural surroundings, and include:

- a nature play space to engage children in the natural beauty of the park;
- improved picnic and shelter facilities;
- and education and information hub;
- new camp sites to provide opportunities for northern metropolitan residents to enjoy bush camping in an easily accessible location;
- improvements to the parks' entrance, car parking and information;
- walking and cycling trail upgrades;
- toilet upgrades and drinking water facilities;
- a scenic lookout; and
- an additional ranger to assist with delivering improved park information, park events, educational activities and seasonal programs on park.

I understand that the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has engaged a private company to develop concept plans, if the park operates. Early drafts of the concept designs are due in September, and we expect works to be scheduled after the

detailed design stage is finalised towards the end of 2016.

Tourism in South Australia is already worth \$5.3 billion a year and employs 32,000 people, approximately. These measures will help achieve our target of boosting the industry to \$8 billion a year and increase employment to 41,000 jobs by 2020. If we are serious about attracting visitors from interstate and around the world to explore our fantastic network of parks and reserves, then we have an obligation to protect our parks for today's and future generations. I therefore strongly recommend the motion to members.