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Title:

Speech at the dedication of the Blackhill Conservation Park

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Parliamentary Colleagues, Ladies, Gentlemen :

Some two years ago in the 1973 Environment Policy Statement, we promised to provide in this area, to serve the people of the northern suburbs, a major conservation park. It is to dedicate this Park that we are here today.

The proposal then was to establish a native flora conservation park of some nineteen hundred acres. It was to be construed as a wilderness preservation area of limited access, a woodland recreation area, and a native flora park and bird sanctuary of intensive cultivation.

Accordingly, following the election, officers of my Department contacted Professor Lindsay Pryor of the Australian National University's Department of Botany. Following this contact, Professor Pryor accepted a brief to undertake a feasibility study into the establishment of the Blackhill Conservation Park and his report and its recommendations have substantially been accepted by the Government. (I should mention at this point that Professor Pryor was one of the designers of the Canberra Botanic Gardens which is the only native flora park in Australia comparable with what is proposed here).

He recommended, firstly, that this Athelstone Wildflower Garden with its rare collection of Australian plants, shrubs and flowers, then owned by the Campbelltown City Council, be acquired by the Government and be slightly expanded to serve as a nucleus and basic botanical collection of the new park.

Secondly, he described an area extending south from here in a wide and uneven breadth running along the base of the total Blackhill escarpment and down to the Maryvale and Montecute Roads, as an area to be developed as an intensively planted native flora park and bird sanctuary. Its total area is to be in the order of some one hundred acres and will feature water and swamp places, picnic areas and group recreation points.

Thirdly, he disposed of the bulk of the park .. which includes the main hill forms and extends right over to the back of this ridge of the Hills Face Zone - in two ways, as a wilderness area of limited access and as a woodland public recreation area.

The Government has been very pleased to accept this plan for a number of important reasons.

The establishment of the Park sees put into practice some fundamental environmental policies. By setting aside a wilderness preservation area on Blackhill proper, we are protecting what is ^a unique flora for the central Adelaide Plains and one which would be lost if the hill were opened up to large numbers of people. On the other hand, the woodland recreation area and the flora park will be used as major recreation areas by the people of the northern suburbs. Further, the flora park is being established on a hills face quarry now owned by the State.

Then again, in dedicating this area as a Conservation and Native Flora Park, the Government is anxious to provide a ready source of properly cultivated native trees, shrubs and flowers for private, municipal or Governmental use throughout the State. The project therefore has a research and developmental aspect. The plants are to be seen in a park area in which the highest possible standards of Australian native garden design and plant development ^{will} ~~can~~ be found.

The Blackhill Conservation Park will now form part of a series of major bushland, conservation or recreation parks extending along the first crest of the Adelaide Hills, within easy driving distance of the city and its suburbs.

The Park is owned and controlled by the Department of Environment and Conservation. There will be an Advisory Board chaired by Mr. David Symon of the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. Other members of the Board are Mr. Geoffrey Heath, a representative of the City of Campbelltown; Mr. Stefan Rohozinski, representing the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects; Mr. Ivan Holliday of the State Planning Authority ; Mr. Graham Foreman from my Department and Mr. Noel Lothian, Director of the Botanical Gardens. It is my pleasure to announce these names today and to welcome these gentlemen to their tasks, one of which will be to assist in the selection of a landscape designer and botanist equal to the task of directing the establishment of this project.

Finally, may I say that the creation of such a unique city park as this, is a long task. For the present, we have accepted Professor Pryor's basic four year plan which will see the main shape of the park emerge. From then on, growth, development and an increasing specialisation in native flora will give the people of Adelaide's northern suburbs such as Tea Tree Gully, Highbury, Rostævor and Hectorville, a park of which their communities can be proud.

SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, AT THE DEDICATION OF THE BLACKHILL
CONSERVATION PARK.

7.5.75.

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