

Division 40: Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions — Services 2, 6 and 7, Tourism, \$155 936 000 —

Mr S.J. Price, Chair.

Mr P. Papalia, Minister for Tourism.

Mr M. Webb, Director General.

Ms M. Reynolds, Executive Director, Rottnest Island Authority.

Mr A. Abraham, Acting Chief Financial Officer, Rottnest Island Authority.

Ms J. Ardern, Principal Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: I give the call to the member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the sixth item in the table on page 572 under “Resource Agreement”, which refers to conserving habitats. The Minister for Tourism is listed as a responsible minister. This is a relatively general question, but I am hoping that the minister may be able to answer it or refer it to someone else. Has there been a shift in the approach towards developing mountain bike trails in national parks?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the member mean trails on Rottnest Island?

Ms L. METTAM: No. Is this division specific to Rottnest?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am locked into speaking about Rottnest. The member is talking about the minister representing the Minister for Environment in other areas.

Ms L. METTAM: I will ask a different question. I refer to the eighth dot point on page 571, which states —

Rottnest Island Authority, with the support of Main Roads WA, is reviewing transportation needs and options on the island.

Can the minister can expand on that point?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I will get Ms Reynolds to explain that.

Ms M. Reynolds: Yes, there are 42 kilometres of roads on Rottnest Island. We are working with the Department of Transport and we have an arrangement whereby the department funds us \$150 000 per annum for road maintenance and the like. We have determined that a strategy for our roads is necessary. We are looking at issues with our road network, what type of vehicles are utilising that road network, how we work with a very small number of vehicles on the island and how we move an increasing number of visitors around the island in the most environmentally friendly way.

Ms L. METTAM: Will the future planning and these options include segways?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Segways already operate on the island. A segway tour operates from next to Kingstown Barracks and goes all the way to Wadjemup Lighthouse and back. They already operate, mostly on paths. They go on roads, particularly around the settlement, but mostly they are on paths. Does the member mean further afield than that?

Ms L. METTAM: I met with the Rottnest Segway Tours WA people. I wonder whether segways will be incorporated into this plan.

Ms M. Reynolds: We are looking at all vehicles on the roads, particularly around the settlement area. Segways will probably come into it, but not to the same degree, as the minister has indicated. The tour is mainly on tracks and the like. They take to the main arterial roads in only small numbers.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to item 2 in the table headed “Service Summary” on page 573. Is there a reason for the fall in funding over the forward estimates?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am informed that the decrease in funding from the estimated actual in 2017–18 to the budget estimate in 2018–19 relates mainly to the budget reduction of \$3.4 million for the roof restoration project. Additional funding was allocated for that purpose and that project is now complete.

Ms L. METTAM: I assume that the reason that this project has ceased is that the project is complete. Can I please get some clarification?

Mr P. PAPALIA: That component of the project is complete. The infrastructure on Rottnest Island will require ongoing enhancement and maintenance forever. Regular projects associated with restoring and renovating the infrastructure on the island will be necessary. It is a matter of budget management over time. I am told that \$1.85 million is budgeted for 2018–19, which will be used to pay for the balance of works, and the small remainder

of works in 2019–20 will be specifically for the hotel—the Governor’s residence—section. That will not end the need to continue to reinvest in the infrastructure on the island and to look for ways to achieve that. A key element in funding the island is increasing visitation, because that is, essentially, its source of revenue. The more we can grow visitation, the better.

[12.30 pm]

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the fourth dot point on page 571 of budget paper No 1, volume 2, where it states, in part —

On Rottnest Island the former Aboriginal prison building known as the Quod, ... will return to the management and control of the Rottnest Island Authority.

What is underpinning that decision?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Quod was leased—it has just finished—to Karma Group to utilise it as hotel accommodation, but that was deemed to be inappropriate in our more enlightened times. The Rottnest Island Authority saw an opportunity, to not only return the Quod to management by the island but also, in conjunction with Aboriginal people from around the state who have a keen interest in this matter, establish an appropriate commemorative site. The Wadjemup Working Group has been established by Ms Reynolds, which draws membership from Aboriginal communities right across the state. That group is collaborating with the Rottnest Island Authority on developing a plan for the future use of the Quod and the treatment of the burial site adjacent to it. My view is that there is an opportunity to create an appropriately reflective and respectful commemorative site that can also be an attraction. Some people do not agree with that, but I think it is possible. It is done around the world and will be a key education centre. I think it is a great outcome that has been managed very well by the Rottnest Island Authority to date and I look forward to the ongoing collaboration.

The appropriation was recommended.