

Division 41: Planning, Lands and Heritage — Services 9 and 10, Aboriginal Affairs, \$16 801 000 —

Ms J.M. Freeman, Chair.

Mr B.S. Wyatt, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr G.A. Gammie, Acting Director General.

Mr J. Deery, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr D. Corr, Executive Director, Land Use Management.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: I give the call to the member for Warren–Blackwood.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I refer to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 590 of budget paper No 2. The first dot point refers to the Aboriginal Lands Trust. In the past the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs has advocated his desire to dispose of lands out of the Aboriginal Lands Trust. I am interested in a progress report on that. I know that I found it very frustrating when dealing with this area and I hope the minister is finding it just as frustrating.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, I can confirm that I have found it just as frustrating. There has been a pretty good response from Aboriginal groups around the state. The member would be familiar with the tenure difficulties around it. For things like freehold land and pastoral leases, if I could get them out the door and off to a group, I would be desperate to. There are still six pastoral leases in the ALT and I have asked the ALT to start thinking about what needs to happen to divest those. I have asked Aboriginal groups themselves, particularly when traditional owners are identified under the Native Title Act, to identify lands for me, because I am very keen. When it is freehold or that sort of lease, it is easy to do. To be frank, it has had some success and some frustrations. I suspect that it is probably similar to what the member experienced.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Is the minister happy to provide by way of additional information those that he has been successful in transferring out of the ALT estate since coming to government?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Can I do that by way of supplementary information?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Yes.

The CHAIR: Minister, would you clarify what the supplementary information is?

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member is asking for land that has been divested out of the Aboriginal Lands Trust estate since March 2017.

[*Supplementary Information No A15.*]

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Does that included town-based reserves?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Town-based reserves will be part of the estate, yes.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Has the minister made any budgetary allocations in relation to dealing with contaminated sites issues to resolve that prior to transfer?

Mr B.S. WYATT: There is a spend on contaminated sites coming through the Regional Services Reform Unit, because ALT effectively does not have a budget, incredibly—it has been that way for however long. There is a spend of \$4 million or \$5 million on contaminated sites.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Is that royalties for regions moneys under the town-based reserves funds out of the Pilbara?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, that would be part of that fund.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Those funds were specifically for town-based reserves. I am assuming that there will be other assets that will not have an allocation of funds, or was that a global allocation to all ALT lands that the government is choosing to decontaminate?

Mr B.S. WYATT: The member would know those I am talking about, where obvious contamination is being remediated. There are also contaminated sites in the broader estate, but we do not yet have a budget for them, but they are not necessarily town-based reserves.

Mr K.M. O'DONNELL: We talked about the successful groups. Are there any unsuccessful groups trying to get land or infrastructure from the ALT? Is it top heavy? Are there a lot not getting it, through no fault of their own?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Not necessarily. It is often difficult to divest land because whatever the tenure issue is, if it can be resolved, an organisation that can then take on the liability of land ownership must be found. If it is freehold in a large regional centre, that is not such a big issue, but it might be an issue in other circumstances when it comes to cost. Of course, having conversations around land that is contaminated as part of the ALT estate, why would an Aboriginal group take on something like that? That is a conversation that has been had. Cullacabardee has contamination. It used to be nowhere near the city and now the city has grown up around it, so it is an area of land that is now very much

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Chair; Mr Terry Redman; Mr Ben Wyatt; Mr Kyran O'Donnell

within the metropolitan area, but it does have a not insignificant contamination. If people came to me wanting land divested to them, particularly if they were a traditional owner group, I would be hard pressed to say no.

The appropriation was recommended.