

MYALUP, PROPOSAL FOR USE OF PUBLIC LAND

**1038. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:**

- (1) Is there a proposal currently before the minister or the Department of Agriculture for approximately 300 hectares of public land at Myalup, just north of Bunbury, containing immature pine trees for the growing of carrots and other horticulture crops?
- (2) If so, who is putting the proposal to Government?
- (3) Is it intended to sacrifice these immature pine trees to clear this land for horticulture?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank the member for what is a very interesting question.

- (1)-(3) It would be reasonable for me to answer the question in the affirmative that such a proposal exists. To avoid misleading the House, I need to say that it is not a formal proposal as we normally understand it. A matter is under consideration about that pine forest area. It has been put to us by representatives of the horticultural industry. It applies to that area of land which lies between the Myalup horticultural area, as we now know it, all the way through to the irrigation area and the dairy country which runs west from Harvey. It is an interesting proposition; it is no more than that. A range of issues would have to be addressed, including those concerning future timber availability, because the area contains both mature and immature pine trees that would have to be either accommodated within a horticultural precinct, on a patchwork basis, or abandoned. Obviously the cost of each of those options needs to be weighed up, as would the cost of making available alternative resources. The Forest Products Commission would have to assure itself that it did replace what was lost by alternative means, such as buying a private plantation in its stead, so that the commitments it has made into the future for the supply of pine could be met.

A decision has not been made on the matter. We are consulting with a whole range of people. I am pleased the member has raised this issue at this stage because it is something about which everybody should be aware. The rationale behind the proposition, which originally came to me from Mr Nick Tana on behalf of the horticultural industry, was that that particular block of land at Myalup is probably the last large-scale block of land we could designate as a horticultural precinct. We have had initial discussions with a range of people, including the FPC and the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, all basically on a tentative basis. We would be interested to see whether such a proposition could be put together and is feasible. That is the stage this matter is at; it has gone no further. A formal proposition has not been put to government, but it is looking at the possibilities. I am personally hopeful that it will be successful.