

Division 53: Western Australian Planning Commission, \$84 488 000 -

Mr McRae, Chairman.

Ms MacTiernan, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr M.L. Harris, Acting Director General.

Mr P.S. Frewer, Executive Director, Integrated Planning and Policy.

Mr R. Carleton, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr M. Burgess, Acting Executive Director, Public Transport Services Division.

Mr A.W. Hubbard, Executive Director, Transport Systems.

Mr L. Preece, Senior Finance Officer.

Mr BOWLER: On page 906, a major initiative for 2002-03 under metropolitan and country region schemes is to purchase lands required for the Peel region park. In discussion on an earlier division, the minister said that Western Australia was missing out on federal funds because WA did not have a federal National Party member. We do have state National Party members. Does the minister think they are doing enough to alert their federal colleagues to this problem?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I know the member for Roe is here. I can only ask him for his intercession to help us get a fairer share of federal funds. I mentioned that with the roads of national importance funding we are now receiving only three per cent of the national funding. A large sum of money was taken off us. Western Australia receives 10 per cent of the total national highway funding, although 25 per cent of the national highway is within our boundaries. In any analysis, Western Australia is not getting a proper and fair share of federal funding. I find it particularly unfair because Western Australia produces a substantial portion of the nation's wealth in export earnings, far beyond the size of our population. To do that we have to provide infrastructure, and transport infrastructure is a very important part of that. For example, with a lot of the mining activity that is coming on stream we have enormous road needs. We receive mining royalties, but for every cent of mining royalties that we receive from those projects a deduction is made from our general government grants. In fact, we gain no advantage from those royalties, yet the federal Government gets the benefit of company tax and income tax. The inequity that Western Australia faces, particularly as a developing State that is making a major contribution in those mining areas, is unfair. It creates a real burden on us. I am of the view that the new funding arrangements that have been flagged by the federal minister will make Western Australia's position worse, for the reasons I outlined this morning. We will not be in a position to make the same level of contributions to these projects and, as all funds from now on will be based on a matching grant, we will be very badly off.

Mr BOWLER: Will the minister give us a ballpark figure of how many millions we are down, and what she considers to be a fair sum - not what she would like?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I do not have the figures in front of me. I would have had them in the Main Roads division. I have a chart that sets out the gross sums and the percentages. I am more than happy to provide the member with a copy of that. It is very instructive.

Mrs EDWARDES: On page 896, the second dot point in significant issues and trends states that our increasing population and resulting urban growth must be accommodated while protecting environmental values and maintaining a high quality of life. An issue that has huge planning implications and with which the Western Australian Planning Commission will need to deal has arisen in the Southern River-Wungong area and involves drainage. I understand that the Water and Rivers Commission has introduced a new paradigm under an urban water management strategy. The commission will no longer approve man-made lakes. It believes in living streams, and before developers start any development it will require them to monitor the whole drainage issue and provide baseline monitoring, all of which will add a huge cost to the developer and will obviously increase the development cost. That dot point talks about balancing urban growth with environmental values. What role has the Planning Commission played in the development of this new paradigm that the Water and Rivers Commission is releasing, and at what stage is the Planning Commission likely to come into this - if it has not already - to assess what is being put in place? It should be at an early stage.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The member for Kingsley has asked an interesting question. I understand the Department for Planning and Infrastructure has been involved in the various technical working groups that have led to the position taken by the Water and Rivers Commission, but it has not yet formally gone to the Western Australian Planning Commission. It alerts us to a number of problems. Much of the easily developed land in the metropolitan area - the coastal sands - has been developed, and new developments are occurring in areas that are

Mr John Bowler; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Chairman; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Rod Sweetman

more difficult to develop. On a weekly basis in my electorate I deal with the legacy left by a former female planning minister of some notoriety in the late seventies - not a person of the Labor Party persuasion - who on appeal approved a large subdivision in Westfield, an area that is notoriously low lying and for which no real steps were taken to address the major drainage problems. There was a lot of connivance between the engineers and the builders to obtain approvals for houses that were constructed in that area. The building approvals totally neglected to take into account the very real challenges of building in that area. There has been a response to that and over the past six to 10 years the industry has thought of creative ways to deal with drainage problems. The industry has created lakes from what used to be swamps, and in Ellenbrook and other areas they have developed those swamps into a feature. It appears that in future the Water and Rivers Commission will not necessarily give its imprimatur to that; it wants a more natural solution to the drainage problems. We will have to look at the impact of that. There will be a real impact on building costs. However, it can be done. There are all sorts of possible solutions. Houses can be put on stilts. There are ways in which we can adapt to that. However, at the end of the day, we must have a sensible balance between the environmental considerations and the capacity of the community to pay for land that is being developed. It has been a real constraint on growth in that south-east corridor. This new position adopted by the Water and Rivers Commission will increase that challenge even further. However, we will have to work our way through it. The Western Australian Planning Commission has been working with the Water and Rivers Commission but has yet to formally adopt that position. We must accept that there is a desire on the part of the community to have a greater degree of environmental sensitivity, and we must work our way around it.

[4.50 pm]

Mrs EDWARDES: The minister is right. Thirty years after the 1970s people have a lot more knowledge, and more technology is available now than was available then. Is the minister saying that the Water and Rivers Commission has formally adopted this as policy or that it is being worked through by the interagency committee and is still to go to -

Ms MacTIERNAN: The member should ask the Minister for the Environment. I will not venture into fields that I am not totally sure of.

Mrs EDWARDES: If the minister is not aware of that, that is fine.

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, I do not know precisely.

The CHAIRMAN: I am struggling to see how this question relates to this appropriation. I know it has an association with it, but it is clearly covered by another portfolio area and is not part of this appropriation. Although the member might need or want the answer, I do not think we will get it out of this division.

Mrs EDWARDES: If it is not within the minister's knowledge, I am not pressing the issue.

Mr AINSWORTH: Page 906 lists the major policy initiatives for the coming year for metropolitan and country region schemes. The first initiative refers to the Bush Forever program. On page 907, a \$14 million capital works program is listed for the same purpose. Will the minister list the sites that will be purchased under that \$14 million capital works program; or if the minister does not have that information available, will she provide it by way of supplementary information?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, we can do that. I do not know whether that is a notional allocation or whether actual sites are involved in it. Some of these sites have already been acquired, and we can provide the member with a list of those that have been acquired. Precisely which ones we will acquire in the coming year has not been determined. This is led very much by the demand from the landowners, who trigger a mechanism whereby they require the Government to purchase the land from them. However, I would be interested to know the member for Roe's interest in Bush Forever.

Mr AINSWORTH: I have wide interests. I would be interested if the minister could provide that list of land that has been purchased.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I have a list here that I can help the member with. Some of the areas are big. There is an area in the Swan Valley; \$3 million for an industrial site on the corner of Roe and Tonkin Highways; \$2.7 million for Badgerup Lake; \$900 000 for the extension of the Jandakot Botanic Park in Southern River; \$900 000 for Ellenbrook; \$2.2 million for parts of Alexander Heights; and \$950 000 for site 65 on Abernethy Road. That is basically the list, plus parts of the Stake Hill Swamp. We do not have the actual sum for that.

The CHAIRMAN: I want to get some brief indicators of two issues under significant issues and trends on page 896. First, I refer to the second dot point of significant issues and trends and to the sixth dash point, which relates to identifying and planning for appropriate means of transport. That is a significant issue, as the minister knows, in the south metropolitan region. There has been a level of excitement about the southern railway system

Mr John Bowler; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mrs Cheryl Edwardes; Chairman; Mr Ross Ainsworth; Mr Rod Sweetman

going through and the beginning of the consultation process on the interconnection with that spine. Can the minister give any indication of how she envisages that consultation moving ahead? My second question also relates to significant issues and trends, but the reference is on page 897. The fourth dot point on that page relates to the transfer of the Canning River Regional Park to the Crown for vesting in the Department of Conservation and Land Management and portions in the City of Canning being specifically progressed. Will the minister give a timetable for that transfer of title? If not, perhaps the minister could provide that as supplementary information.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will deal with the Chairman's second question. The land acquisition has been completed. Therefore, we believe that the transfer to the City of Canning and to CALM will occur in this financial year. We look forward to that being completed.

The CHAIRMAN: Could I be provided with details of that by way of supplementary information?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No A39]

Ms MacTIERNAN: The first issue is a broad one that covers a lot of the work we are doing, in particular on the metropolitan freight network. I think we discussed this at some length earlier today. We are looking at the size of the transport task and trying to determine the most appropriate modality - for example, to what extent we can get transport off road and onto rail, and to what extent it makes sense economically, environmentally and socially to do so.

The Chairman is perhaps interested in another issue that we discussed earlier today; that is, providing better connectivity between the spines of the public transport system and the ways we can go about doing that. I pointed out this morning that perhaps the big success in public transport of the previous Government was the introduction of the circle route because it dealt with that issue of improving the connectivity. We have talked about how we could get better connectivity between the Armadale line, the new fast, direct line from Mandurah to Perth and the Fremantle line. We are doing some work on developing a project on that. I can assure the Chairman that he will be the first to know.

Mr SWEETMAN: I refer to the second dot point and perhaps even the seventh dot point on page 904. This question is along the lines of one I asked in the Estimates Committee hearings in August or September last year about a development proposal or application to the Shire of Carnarvon to build two or three accommodation units on a pastoral lease very close to the coast. It seemed to be within the jurisdiction of the shire to approve that, without the Environmental Protection Authority or the Department for Planning and Infrastructure having a say on it. My understanding now is that those units have been given planning approval by the local shire, even though a coastal strategy is in place. The draft of that strategy at least seems to conflict with the approval that has been given. Is the minister aware of that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We are aware of this matter. It raises enormous numbers of issues, not just planning issues. I would have thought that special approval must be given under the terms of the pastoral lease, because that proposal is inconsistent with the pastoral lease. Secondly, we have instituted coastal setbacks. I am not sure how close to the coast those setbacks are proposed to be.

[5.00 pm]

Mr SWEETMAN: About 500 metres.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The planning approval is within the jurisdiction of the council. We would be concerned if the council was not acting in a way that was consistent with the Carnarvon coastal strategy, but at the moment that is strictly within the power of the council. Our coastal task force is looking at whether there should be any overlay on top of that. Are the issues really planning issues or are they issues of competition and the capacity of the pastoral industry to seemingly have first bite of the cherry?

Mr SWEETMAN: Perhaps -

The CHAIRMAN: I am required by the standing orders to put the question for the remaining division.

The appropriation was recommended.