

SWAN VALLEY — DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**869. Mr F.A. ALBAN to the Minister for Planning:**

I was pleased to see the release last Friday of a new plan for the Swan Valley. Could the minister please update the house on how the government is protecting this important area?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I think all members here would share the view that the Swan Valley is a very important part of the Perth metropolitan area, particularly for its agricultural production, tourism, heritage values and history, both Aboriginal and post-European settlement, and that it is essential to protect and enhance the character of the Swan Valley to ensure appropriate development in the future. I think there is also quite a general view these days that although we have had quite strong protections as a result of the Swan Valley Planning Act, which was introduced 20 years ago by the then coalition government in relation to residential subdivision, we can and need to do a lot better on the aesthetic and designs aspects of some of the buildings, signage and other development aspects in the Swan Valley. The area attracts more than 600 000 visitors a year and contributes more than \$200 million annually to the Western Australian economy, so it is very important from that point of view. It is only about half an hour, and less in some parts, from the CBD and is certainly a wonderful place for people who live there and for those people who visit.

Over the last three years or so a process has been underway to review the planning arrangements in the Swan Valley. I will not go over all of the steps that have been taken, but we have now, I am pleased to say, got to the point of putting out for public comment the draft “Swan Valley Development Plan 2015”. This was put out for comment last Friday and is open for public comment until 15 December this year. A lot of work has been put into developing this plan within the Department of Planning, involving consultation with the relevant stakeholders, but there can now be the formal public comment period and input from all those with an interest, both those within the Swan Valley and more widely. In brief, the development plan is intended to be the new statutory plan that will guide all proposed development in the area. It will replace the current planning arrangements. Some of the key aspects include a modest expansion of Herne Hill into a town centre servicing the Swan Valley. It also provides for four separate tourism nodes that will provide a focal point for a range of more intensive tourism activities. There will be a focus on tourism proposals that support agricultural enterprises. There will be measures to protect agricultural land from subdivision, and there will also be much stronger direction on the architectural character, building material, signage and landscaping for new development. Legislation is also being drafted to give effect to this Swan Valley development plan that will replace the Swan Valley Planning Act. Once that act is repealed, it will mean that we will no longer need the Swan Valley Planning Committee and more contemporary planning arrangements and controls will be put in place, subject to the very strong protections contained within the “Swan Valley Development Plan”, which I hope will be finalised next year. I encourage anybody with an interest to make comment during the next two months.