

ROTTNEST ISLAND TASKFORCE, NEW WORKS

345. Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH to the Minister for Tourism:

Following the minister's statement in the House yesterday regarding the appointment of a new chief executive officer to the Rottnest Island Authority and the implementation of the recommendations of the Rottnest Island Taskforce, will the minister advise the House of the first major initiatives and when work will commence?

Mr R.C. KUCERA replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

The major issue that was identified in the Auditor General's report and, indeed, the task force report was the replacement of infrastructure on the island. Addressing key infrastructure issues, including power and water, is paramount. The Auditor General's report clearly stated that some issues need to be dealt with immediately, and the Government is moving on those issues straight away. As a direct result of the recommendations of the task force and the Auditor General's report, the Rottnest Island Authority and Western Power are negotiating a wind turbine program to be put in place and the ongoing management of the services on the island. It is timely this week that the federal Government has highlighted the need for alternative power sources. Already the State Government has received a commitment from the federal Government regarding an alternative source of energy on the island. I am pleased to advise the House that the wind turbine is scheduled to arrive in Western Australia within the next fortnight. The project is expected to be not only completed but also operational by next summer.

Another key issue identified by the task force was the development of a series of beach wells. Just before question time today I heard the member for Hillarys talking about the vision that the Liberal Party has for Rottnest Island. That wind turbine project will be in place at the end of this year at a very reasonable cost. The Liberal Party's plan is to spend an estimated \$30 million to connect either a pipeline or an electricity supply to Rottnest Island from the mainland or through Garden Island. That is the vision proposed by members on the other side of the House, and it is very different from the Government's vision. That source of sea water that will come from the new wells that will be dug will form part of the desalination program. That is paying heed to what not just this Government but also the federal Government have been saying about sustainability. We are not proposing to run pipelines through Garden Island or mess up the good anchorages at Rottnest with further pipelines from the mainland at a cost of \$30-odd million. We are using the sensible resources of the island to ensure there is a reliable source of fresh water for the future.

An extensive refurbishment of accommodation at Fays and Longreach Bays is about to commence. All this work is being done. I have visited Rottnest on many occasions, so I know what is needed, unlike the fellow opposite who has his holidays in Brighton. All this work marks the start of a long series of improvements of the island. I will be very pleased to keep the House informed over the coming months on this issue.

Just before question time, the member for Hillarys referred to a question that he had asked during the estimates debate. The question is supplementary information No B23, and it states -

Mr Johnson asked for information on the costs of the Rottnest Island Taskforce through to the end of April.

That question is unequivocal. We clearly said that the cost is \$51 000. Had the member for Hillarys asked me what was the total cost of the Rottnest Island Taskforce and how was that arrived at -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr R.C. KUCERA: I take objection that when I clearly answer a question put to me in the estimates -

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, members! I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the third time.

Mr R.C. KUCERA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is important, because I take objection when the member for Hillarys talks about untruths. The total cost of the task force was \$273 800 over the five months that it was in operation. This includes the salaries for the three executive staff, and the costs for computer equipment, the lease of office space, and stationery, printing and telephones etc. The only task force member who was paid was the chairman, as he spent considerable time meeting with stakeholders, and writing and researching. The chairman was paid \$357.14 a day for five months work, or 140 working days, which comes to a total of \$50 000. The quality of the report and the fact that the chairman has now been asked by the Prime Minister of England to go back to that country to run one of the largest agencies in England are testament to his calibre. The other

members of the task force gave their meeting time for free. People like John Longley and John Schaap charged nothing. These are top quality people in this State. One of the largest expenses of the task force was the \$40 000 that the Water Corporation charged for the analysis and report on the state of sewerage and water supply on the island. Unfortunately, when the Auditor General reached his conclusions on that facility, that analysis had not been done. By any measure, that is value for money. I repeat what I said yesterday: Rottnest is open for business.

Government members: Hear, hear!