

IMINTJI COMMUNITY — PROPOSED AIRSTRIP

496. Hon SHELLEY ARCHER to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

I refer to the planned airstrip at Imintji community that was the site of the near-tragic helicopter accident on 12 May 2008.

- (1) What recent steps has the minister taken to further the development of the planned airstrip at Imintji?
- (2) Has the government considered compulsorily acquiring pastoral land needed to build the local airstrip?
- (3) Given that the Gibb River Road is fast becoming a tourist destination and Imintji a growing regional centre, when does the minister expect this project to be completed?

Hon SALLY TALBOT replied:

On behalf of the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has provided the following response.

- (1) The regional airports development scheme awarded \$100 000 toward the construction of an airport at Imintji in 2006. Remaining funding, to a total contribution of \$364 000, has been sourced through other state government agencies. A number of issues require resolution, including land tenure as the proposed airstrip lies on a pastoral lease. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure has suggested a special lease for the purpose of the airstrip.
- (2) The Department for Planning and Infrastructure is in discussions with the pastoral lessee and has requested urgent resolution of the land tenure issues. The easiest and quickest resolution is to place a lease over part of the land for the purpose of an airstrip. There are also ongoing discussions between the DPI and the Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation, on behalf of the Imintji community, about the ongoing management of the special lease.
- (3) The Centre for Appropriate Technology, or CAT, has been appointed to manage the construction of the project. CAT is undertaking precursory work and preparation to ensure that the airport construction is undertaken as soon as possible. CAT has advised that once the outstanding issues are resolved, the construction of the airstrip should take six to eight weeks, weather permitting.