

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, MOBILE TELEPHONE CHARGES

3095. Mrs C.L. Edwardes to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

I refer the Minister to the answer to question on notice No. 2381 of 2003 and ask -

- (a) what was the reason given for the 51% increase in mobile phone charges, for the Geraldton Port Authority, between the financial years 2000/2001 and 2002/2003;
- (b) what was the reason given for the 192% increase in mobile phone charges, for the Dampier Port Authority, between the financial years 2000/2001 and 2002/2003;
- (c) what was the reason given for the 41% increase in mobile phone charges, for the Fremantle Port Authority, between the financial years 2000/2001 and 2002/2003; and
- (d) what was the reason given for the 141% increase in mobile phone charges, for the Port Hedland Port Authority, between the financial years 2000/2001 and 2002/2003?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- a) The Geraldton Port Authority has experienced a 51% increase in mobile phone charges due to the following reasons:-
  - i) There has been a marginal increase in the number of mobile telephones due to a change in the manner in which they maintain contact with their on call employees for the purposes of conducting moorings and unmoorings.
  - ii) The period 2002/2003 was the period of extensive activity within the Port due to the deepening project and a large proportion of employees were constantly in contact with the many and varied contractors that were working on the many facets of the Port Enhancement Project.
- b) The Dampier Port Authority's increase in mobile phone usage can be attributed to:
  - In house management of the Dampier Cargo Wharf resulting in the employment of the Dampier Cargo Wharf Manager
  - Increased activity within the Port resulted in employment of an Environmental Manager and Port Development Manager
  - Increased mobility of Port Staff
  - Lack of alternative land line connections on the Burrup Peninsula
- c) Fremantle Ports procured the bulk cargo handling business at Kwinana from BHP Billiton in 2002/03 requiring more employees to operate outdoors in locations where there are no fixed phone lines.

In addition, as an organisation required to conduct its business affairs based on prudent commercial principles, it is essential for staff to be able to respond efficiently to customer needs.
- d) From the information provided by PAPA in the answer to PQ 2381 mobile phone expenses increased from \$5,400.51 in FY 2001 to \$8,577.44 in FY 2003 an increase of \$3,176.93 or 59%. We are unsure how the 141% was calculated for PQ 3095.

Nevertheless, the main reason for the 59% increase, which occurred predominantly in FY 2002, was the appointment of staff to new positions and to positions that were vacant for a period of time in FY 2001, together with a marked increase in port activity over the two years.