

HERITAGE BILL 2002, STATUS OF DRAFT

314. Mr J.P.D. Edwards to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage

I refer to the long-delayed Heritage Bill 2002 and the claim by the Minister for Heritage in March of this year that she had requested a Cabinet minute be prepared by her office in anticipation of signing, and ask -

- (a) what is the status of the draft Heritage Bill 2002; and
- (b) given that the Bill will address critical issues such as Municipal Inventories and in light of the recent public debate on heritage matters, will the Minister undertake to introduce the Bill as a top priority so that contentious matters may be debated and resolved in the public interest?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

- (a) The main principles for the draft Heritage Bill 2002 have been approved by State Cabinet, with the exception that some issues connected with the Heritage Council's authority to approve works and local heritage protection which are being further considered by the Heritage Working Party I appointed recently. The Working Party includes representation from local government, the Department of Planning and Infrastructure and the Heritage Council.
I expect that work on drafting of the new bill will commence in the near future.
- (b) The bill is one of my top priorities, and I will be seeking to ensure that it is drafted and introduced at the earliest possible time. There are however two matters which have to be addressed thoroughly before any bill reaches the Parliament, namely:
 - recommendations made by the Heritage Working Party; and
 - consultations with key stakeholders.

As your question indicates, there appears to be significantly more community interest in this legislation now, than there was in 1999 and 2000.