

HERITAGE COUNCIL, FUNDING

1093. Mr Edwards to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage
- (1) In reference to page 744 of the Budget Estimates for 2001/02 and specifically the item listed under 'Decisions Taken Since State Election' referring to a negative figure of \$47,000 -
 - (a) how much of the \$47,000 relates to consultant costs; and
 - (b) how will this impact on the operations of the Heritage Council?
 - (2) Given that the overall increase in the Heritage Council's budget does not allow the Heritage Council to meet its statutory obligations, what action will the Minister take to ensure there is adequate funding for the Heritage Council in future years?
 - (3) Given that the Output Measures for the Heritage Council indicate that four precinct assessments will be completed in the 2001/02 financial year, which precincts will be assessed?
 - (4) In reference to the list of 850 heritage places awaiting assessment by the Heritage Council, how are priorities determined in addressing this backlog?
 - (5) Given that the 'establishment of a combined Heritage and Environment portfolio' was identified as a major achievement for the Heritage Council in the 2000/01 financial year, how does this relate specifically to the Heritage Council's achievements?
 - (6) The Heritage Grants Program provided approximately \$1m per annum in previous years for conservation works and conservation planning, yet approximately \$7m worth of applications were received in this last financial year, and I ask what action will the Minister take to increase the amount of funding available under this Program?
 - (7) What measures will be taken to ensure that the Heritage Council's decision making processes are transparent to the community?

Dr EDWARDS replied:

- (1)
 - (a) \$19,000
 - (b) The Heritage Council will endeavour to keep the impact on operations of a reduction funding available for consultancies to a minimum.
- (2) It is recognised that the Heritage Council must make its contribution to the savings required to keep the State Budget on target. The Heritage Council will present the Government with proposals for increased funding in the budget round in future years.
- (3) Precincts in the Current Assessment Program are:
Chinatown Conservation Area, Broome
Bulwer Avenue Precinct, Perth
Aberdeen Street Precinct, Perth
Central Perth Precinct
- (4) Priorities in addressing the backlog are determined by consideration of:
 - (a) the level of perceived threat a place may be under;
 - (b) opportunities for assessments to be produced at the owner's expense (eg: Government Heritage Property Disposal Process);
 - (c) opportunities for assessments to be produced on a share cost basis with Local Government;
 - (d) opportunities to prepare assessments in-house from Conservation Plans;
 - (e) opportunities to commission the assessment of groups of country places; and,
 - (f) opportunities to take advantage of regional visits by consultants.
- (5) Separation of the Ministerial responsibilities of Heritage and Planning was essential to enable a more independent decision making process. It will enable identification, conservation and management processes across the combined portfolios to be examined.
- (6) Over the past few years, Heritage Council has made a number of approaches to Treasury for increased funding overall and in respect of the Heritage Grants Program. To date these approaches have been unsuccessful.

- (7) The Heritage Council's decision making processes are determined by the Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990. Its decisions are made at meetings of the full Council or delegated to its subcommittees. Minutes of these meetings are kept for record purposes and are available for perusal.