

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Dr Judy Edwards; Mr Martin Whitely; Dr Janet Woollard; Chairman; Mr Tony O'Gorman;  
Mr John Hyde; Mr Bernie Masters

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**Division 46: National Trust of Australia (WA), \$4 982 000 -**

Mr McRae, Chairman.

Dr Edwards, Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

Mr R. Mitchell, Manager, Membership and Volunteer Services.

Mr EDWARDS: I refer to page 744 and dot point two in relation to cultural tourism. Can the minister identify a dollar cost in the National Trust budget for cultural tourism; and, if so, how much has been allocated? I should have also asked this question of the Heritage Council; however, I will leave that to the minister's discretion. If no funding is provided, why not? To extrapolate a little further, does the tourism budget contain a dollar cost for cultural tourism? Obviously, the areas cross over.

Dr EDWARDS: I need to start by saying that the National Trust is something of an unusual organisation. This is the first time it has appeared before a budget estimates committee. That is a good step.

Mr EDWARDS: The advisers were here last year but they did not get an opportunity to talk.

Dr EDWARDS: No, we did not get to them. The National Trust is an authority with its own statute. It also receives income from grant sources and its membership base. We are dealing with what comes from the consolidated fund. With that qualification, I will ask Mr Mitchell to comment on the member for Greenough's question.

Mr MITCHELL: Philosophically, the trust would regard all its expenditure as being in support of cultural tourism in that it is associated with identification, education, awareness and conservation of heritage assets. However, a number of site-specific or product-specific projects are included within this. I give examples such as the walk trail from Mundaring Weir to Northam, the Greenough interpretation and visitors centre and ongoing interpretation at Bridgedale, our property in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes. I would have to provide supplementary information to detail a list of site-specific and product-specific projects that are more directly focused on cultural tourism outcomes as opposed to the generic, overall approach.

[12.50 pm]

Mr WHITELY: The last dot point on page 748 refers to increased coordination and integration of programs promoting nature conservation on private land. Will the minister outline the nature of these types of programs and whether they are voluntary; and, if they are, how the trust will encourage people to participate?

Dr EDWARDS: I will make some comment and then get Mr Mitchell to amplify on this matter. The National Trust has a very good covenanting program, so it is a nature conservation focused program where they apply covenants to land that people are putting forward on a voluntary basis. The National Trust has also been given money from the State and federal Governments to run the Bushbank program, so the trust's role in providing yet another avenue for landowners to protect conservation has been recognised. I guess the member for Alfred Cove would like this agency because it is doing built heritage as well as natural heritage. I will ask Mr Mitchell to comment on that response and the program.

Mr MITCHELL: One of the features incorporated in the National Trust Act 1964 is the ability to receive covenants. All of these covenants are entered into voluntarily by the landowners, whether it is for restrictive covenants in the built environment, natural heritage covenants or the private sale of land under the Bushbank program; they are all voluntary programs and are essentially complementary to other programs which exist in other areas within and without government through non-government organisations.

Mr WHITELY: Can the minister clarify Bushbank and Bushplan; is there a relationship between the two?

Dr EDWARDS: Yes and no. Generally speaking, no. Bushbank is a sum of money that the National Trust administers. It is a pot of money that has come together from state, federal and other sources. The aim is to purchase conservation land that is under threat, with a view to conserving it, but then on-selling it so that Bushbank is acting as a bank for that type of vegetation. I will get Mr Mitchell to make a few more comments on that.

Mr MITCHELL: Both programs operate on the principle that the conservation of the natural environment cannot be undertaken exclusively by government but that there is an ongoing role for private initiatives. Bushbank has just purchased its first property. The process is that a conservation covenant would be placed on that land, and then at some time in the future the land would be resold to a private owner and the proceeds reinvested in another purchase. That is the concept of Bushbank. It is beginning its operational phase with the purchase of the first property and will be accelerating as the program comes on line.

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Mr EDWARDS: I refer the minister to page 744 again, dot point four. This matter probably follows on to some extent from the last question. The dot point states that critical to the urban landscape in metropolitan Perth and regional centres is the need to carefully identify and manage remnant urban bushland and other cultural landscapes, which to me is a bit warm and fuzzy. How will the National Trust identify these areas of the State's natural heritage, and how does it intend to manage these places?

Mr MITCHELL: The process of identification is a combination of scientific study and community input. In respect of urban bushland, the Australian Council of National Trusts has adopted a policy applicable to the six state and territory trusts which guides this. In many areas it is primarily a case of moral persuasion - because the trust does not own the land but can encourage community participation - the active participation of local government and the provision of advice. At the present time the trust essentially does not own any urban bushland, nor does it manage any directly. It is in a position to provide advice, community facilitation and support for those processes.

Dr WOOLLARD: I congratulate the members of the National Trust. I think these are significant issues. It is interesting that point six on page 744 states that there is a growing community expectation of a holistic, integrated approach to the three environments: natural, which would include our urban bushland, our landmarks and forests; our historic buildings; and our indigenous cultural heritage. Is there any cross-communication between the departments? The Heritage Council objectives seem to be back in the 1970s, whereas the National Trust's significant issues and trends seemed to be keeping up with the times in the year 2002.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the question in relation to this dot point?

Dr EDWARDS: I think the question was: is there any cross-relationship or cross-fertilisation?

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you for helping out.

Dr EDWARDS: The answer is that there is.

Dr WOOLLARD: It would not appear so from what is planned for the Heritage Act.

Dr EDWARDS: We have a member of the National Trust on the board of the Heritage Council, and indeed the current chair of the Heritage Council has been very involved in the National Trust. I have said to both organisations that I would like them to work more closely together. One of the things we have been doing recently with a review of the National Trust, as part of the machinery on government review stage 2, is to look at the roles and responsibilities of both the Heritage Council and the National Trust, so that they might in some way set out the territory more clearly, but then in other ways to see how they might work together in a more synergistic way. I guess the member for Alfred Cove is getting back to a policy issue -

Dr WOOLLARD: I am getting back to the Heritage Act and the fact that the Government is developing an Act for the 1970s or 1980s, rather than the year 2002.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that makes the point to which I was drawing the attention of the committee. That is not a matter that is before us at the moment, so I will move on.

Mr O'GORMAN: On page 750 there is an appropriation of \$1.5 million for Luisini Wineries. What will the developments be at Luisini, and what will the impact be on the current buildings and the surrounding area of Kingsley-Woodvale?

Mr MITCHELL: At the present time there is an ongoing process to develop a conservation plan, an interpretation plan and a business plan. The conservation plan has been completed, identifying those areas of the built site that are significant. The business plan has also been completed; it is now being processed through community consultation and trust evaluation. The interpretation plan tenders have been offered for that work to be done. The site is a complex one and it offers the opportunity not only to provide social amenities and community assets but also to link the built heritage with the natural heritage through the Yellagonga Regional Park. The final outcomes have not yet been determined, but there is an ongoing process of community consultation and development within the three aspects in order to come up with an appropriate balance.

Mr O'GORMAN: Will that \$1.5 million complete the project, because there are no further appropriations into the future?

Mr MITCHELL: Philosophically the trust would say that no heritage project is ever completed in that it is an ongoing commitment to future generations. The funding as identified is sufficient to carry out the projected conservation works, to establish what is hoped to be a self-sustaining business environment, and to provide the interpretation not only of the adjoining wetlands but also of the built site. It is hoped that further donations will be received both from the wine industry, which is interested in the site from an educational and training perspective, and also from the Italian community in particular, for whom this site has great significance.

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Mr HYDE: I refer to output 3 at page 745, heritage education and awareness. I have gone to a number of meetings of community groups to which Tom Perrigo and other members of the National Trust have turned up to get the word out in local communities. Will the minister confirm that the overall contribution of the State Government to the National Trust is \$4.9 million? Given that the Government is putting that significant amount of money into the National Trust, does it have a legislative right with regard to membership of the board of the trust or to the activities of the trust?

Dr EDWARDS: I confirm that that is the appropriation to the National Trust from the consolidated fund. Traditionally a government person has been on the board of the National Trust. I am happy with the relationship between the National Trust and me as the minister responsible.

Mr MASTERS: I refer to the covenanting program, which is mentioned at page 747. I understand that that funding will finish in September of this year. What is the likelihood that further funding will be provided from other sources?

Dr EDWARDS: I have encouraged the National Trust to look at a range of funding sources. In the case of this covenanting program, the National Trust is providing an excellent service. The issue for all covenanting programs is how do we provide recurrent expenditure in the years that follow, because once a covenant is in place, work still needs to be done - in some ways, more work needs to be done. We need to make sure that the values are protected. We also need to give advice to the people who have put on the covenant. I have asked, through the cabinet standing committee on environmental policy, that a short review be done of covenanting programs. We have covenanting programs through the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation and Land Management, and this very good one through the National Trust. I am keen to ensure that the National Trust covenanting program continues. I have some ideas in the back of my mind, but I want first to have this very quick and short review of the current covenanting programs to see where the gaps are, what the community prefers, and what works well and what does not work as well. This program works very well, and I want it to continue; and I will be continuing with my endeavours in that regard.

**The appropriation was recommended.**

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*