

Division 19: Heritage Council of Western Australia, \$4 474 000 -

Mr A.J. Dean, Chairman.

Dr J.M. Edwards, Minister for the Environment.

Mr I. Baxter, Director of Heritage.

Mr E.A. Munro, Finance Manager.

Dr J. Phillimore, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Heritage.

Ms S.R. Dowling, Principal Policy Officer, Office of the Minister for the Environment.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I refer the minister to output 1, cultural heritage conservation services, on page 351. Before I ask the question I want to make it quite clear that I am aware of the sensitivities of this issue, in terms of memories. I refer to Solidarity Park. I know the minister is not the minister concerned but the question must be levelled at her. Given the massive backlog of places awaiting assessment, and the limited number of assessments completed by the Heritage Council in the 2004-05 financial year, will the minister explain why the Minister for Heritage directed a union-built seven-year-old barbecue to be entered on the state heritage register, when it does not meet the generally accepted definition of "heritage"? I take that a stage further. Did the minister consult with or take advice from any union group on this matter? As I understand it, the definition is a place that has been inherited from the past and is valued enough today to conserve for future generations.

[12.40 pm]

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I am not sure why the member thinks this matter is sensitive or contentious. Solidarity Park was interim listed. It first went on the register as an interim site in June 2003. From memory, a media release was issued about that listing. When a place goes on the interim register, it is advertised and objections are sought. No objection was made to the listing during the submission period. The Heritage Council determines its work program and what it will look at. I think it was given to me when I was minister. It was ticked off and interim listed. No objection was made, and it was subsequently permanently listed. It was standard procedure. It was entered into the State Register of Heritage Places on a permanent basis on 20 April 2004. With respect to the criteria, the Burra charter guidelines were followed, particularly for identification of cultural heritage significance. It has been defined and identified by the Heritage Council as having social and historic values and rarity, representative and aesthetic values. It is important to note that a place does not necessarily have to be old to warrant recognition as part of our heritage and the State's history.

Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO: I refer to page 349 of the *Budget Statements*. Will the minister expand on the huge increase in the budget? From my reckoning, it has increased from \$3.4 million to \$4.4 million, which is an approximate 35 per cent increase. Will the minister give some background to such a huge increase, and what it means for heritage in this State?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: A major component of this increase is the \$1 million in the budget for the heritage grants program. That program had been cut back in previous years, and Lotterywest had picked up its own grants program and provided money that effectively substituted for the heritage grants program. The decision was made to cut the heritage grants program in the past because that money was directed to deal with a large backlog of assessments that needed to be done, particularly as people who had developed applications wanted the certainty of knowing whether their place was under consideration. I am delighted that \$1 million is allocated to fully reinstate that program. At the same time, the Lotterywest program will continue, which is good news for people looking for grants.

Money is also included for the heritage loans program, which is a good initiative between state and local government. I understand that 19 local governments are participating. Low-interest loans are provided to people who want to undertake conservation works on private properties.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: Will the minister outline the budget for the heritage grants program for 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04? Will the minister tell me the reductions, and as a follow-up question while the officers are looking for the papers, how many heritage agreements are currently being administered by the Heritage Council?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I will answer the second question first. There are presently 54 heritage agreements in place; that is, 49 between the Heritage Council and landowners, and four between landowners and other organisations, including local government and the National Trust. Regarding the heritage grants program, I refer the member to page 356 of the *Budget Statements* under grants and subsidies: it was \$964 000 in 2002-03, \$741 000 in 2003-04, \$822 000 estimated actual in 2003-04, and it jumps to \$1.2 million in 2004-05.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I refer to the third dot point on page 349 of the *Budget Statements* in reference to heritage agreements. Will the minister please outline the number of heritage agreements in place, and the benefits of such agreements for the long-term conservation of places?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: Heritage agreements are a very good mechanism for clarity about listings and what will happen in the future. Presently, 54 agreements have been entered into over a 12-year period from 1 July 1992. Over half this number were made in the past five years since 1999. Three memorandums of understanding have been entered into between the Heritage Council and organisations to achieve mutually beneficial arrangements for the management of registered heritage places. I am informed that another 52 heritage agreements and MOUs are currently under negotiation.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: Page 353 outlines major initiatives in the third dot point. Will the minister tell me the purpose of the Local Government Heritage Working Party, when it was established, who comprises its membership, and whether any terms of reference have been established for it - if so, will the minister table those terms or at least explain them?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I do not have the precise date when the Local Government Heritage Working Party was established. I think it was 2002, but I am not totally certain. It is operating in two stages. The first stage focused primarily on local government related provisions in WA's heritage legislation. It looked in particular at the role of local government and the State Government and the need for a state planning policy on heritage. Stage two of the working party's program will commence shortly. Money is allocated in the budget for that purpose; I saw such reference in the papers. It will aim to produce common standards for local heritage inventories in heritage areas, and produce a draft state policy for heritage. Stage two will also look at concrete recommendations for improved incentives, possibly through further collaboration between state and local government.

Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS: I have an additional question. I understand that local government and the State Government are involved with the working party. Are any other members on the working party?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: From memory it comprises local government, the State Government with the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and the Real Estate Institute of WA. I ask Mr Baxter to explain.

Mr BAXTER: That is correct. There is a representative from REIWA, a representative from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure and numerous local authorities.

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: With reference to page 353 and the last dot point under major initiatives referring to community education programs, what type of information is available to the public from the Heritage Council that may be of use to community groups, historical societies or educational institutions?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I will ask Mr Baxter to expand on that matter. A wide range of information is available. I was delighted to go into my own waiting room a couple of days ago and pick up a lot of pamphlets. A lot of information is available to people in standard pamphlets, and a lot of information is sent to people if their place is either under consideration for heritage listing or already heritage listed. On top of that, I understand there has been more work on the web site recently.

[12.50 pm]

Mr BAXTER: In addition, we produce a number of information pamphlets and brochures on valuing heritage, which are based on case studies we have undertaken to indicate the real value in conserving heritage. We have upgraded the web site to provide more information. It is an ongoing program to provide as much information as possible on issues such as development applications, which are constantly under review. We also produce newsletters to all the regions in the State as an ongoing program to inform registered owners.

Mr N.R. MARLBOROUGH: I refer to the output performance measures at page 351. To what extent do the performance measures include services to regional Western Australia? What steps has the Heritage Council taken to ensure that the State's regional built heritage is protected?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS: I thank the member for the question. The task for regional heritage is incredibly important. I have been told that about 70 per cent of the work that needs to be done is in the regions and that a lot of attention has been focused on the central business district, the city and the suburbs, with less on the regions. For those reasons we established a regional heritage service a few years ago. A lot of work has been done and will continue to be done through the regional heritage service. I understand that quite a number of local governments are now involved in the regional heritage service. In 2002-03, 16 local governments were contributing. The Peel Development Commission also contributes by representing the local governments in its area. I have seen the regional heritage advisory services in action in certain regions. They provide advice, in

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particular, to local government about heritage and conservation significance, the assistance that is available and the procedures. They also provide advice to owners and community groups. They are an excellent initiative.

The appropriation was recommended.