

Mr Jeremy Edwards; Dr Judy Edwards; Mr John Hyde; Chairman; Mr Tony O'Gorman; Ms Sue Walker; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr Bernie Masters

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**Division 45: Heritage Council of Western Australia, \$3 308 000 -**

Mr McRae, Chairman.

Dr Edwards, Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

Mr S. Carrick, Acting Director.

Mr E.A. Munro, Manager Corporate Services.

Mr EDWARDS: On page 734, the significant trend at the fourth dot point is that the introduction of new heritage legislation to replace the 1990 Act is listed as a high priority. It is again listed under the budget estimates for 2002-03. When will Parliament be seeing the new heritage Bill?

Dr EDWARDS: Very shortly, I hope. The cabinet minute is drafted. It has been going back and forth between my office and the Heritage Council while I get some further refinement of it and have some further detailed questions answered. I believe that I have got to the end of the stage of sorting out some of my questions. I had some questions to do with our election commitments. One of them was to investigate giving the Heritage Council more power than it has currently. I need to make absolutely sure that I am comfortable with that before I take it to Cabinet.

Mr EDWARDS: Will that be before Christmas of this year?

Dr EDWARDS: I have learnt that it is always really hard to give time frames. Certainly it is my intention that it happen.

Mr HYDE: One of the initiatives on page 738 is the three-year program to reduce the number of places awaiting entry into the state heritage register. As the member for Perth, one of my bugbears is that when we took over government, 830 or 850 places were still awaiting assessment for the register. Given that money is being allocated over three years, what sort of reduction in the overall list of places awaiting assessment can we expect and what are the details of the three-year initiative?

Dr EDWARDS: Basically, we have diverted money that would otherwise have been spent on the heritage grants program to do a program of accelerated assessments to address the backlog. We have made sure that heritage grants do not miss out, because the Lotteries Commission has increased its funding to cover the gap. The grants program figure in total for the community will be the same, but it means for us that we can go on and do these rapid assessments. We will have around \$900 000 for the accelerated assessment program in 2002-03, which is up from around \$460 000 in this current year.

Mr CARRICK: We will be assessing around 740 places under the accelerated program. It is starting to get towards the completion of the comprehensive state register.

Mr HYDE: What is the process for places coming up for assessment? Part of my experience from being in local government is that sometimes some well-meaning people are putting places up for assessment that should not be clogging up the process.

Dr EDWARDS: If I may answer the question in two parts, what we will do as part of the accelerated program is to look at the current list we have and the backlog and prioritise. Any place that is facing development pressure has a high priority. We will be looking first at places to urgently assess whether or not they need saving. If people are making a nomination for the state register, because they are nominating a place for the Heritage Council, a committee looks at it and has a sorting out process that assesses whether a place is worthy of possible registration. If a nomination gets over that bar, it is given a further assessment of priority for whether it needs to be done in the near future or whether it can remain on the list. However, the good news from this budget is that we are tackling the list. There is a significant backlog. When places on the backlog are subject to proposed development or are threatened, their assessment becomes really urgent. We would rather be managing the list in a timelier manner.

Mr EDWARDS: In regard to significant issues and trends, what additional funding is committed for 2003-04 and future years to adequately resource the necessary protection of heritage places identified in municipal inventory reviews? Given that 20 000 places have been identified, is there a need to improve that?

[12.10 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: Our focus is on those places that have got over the bar for the state heritage register. In the out years under the capital contribution on page 734 of the *Budget Statements*, the member will see that extra money has been allocated for 2004-06 to increase the grants program. Money will be put into those places on the state register that need help. The municipal inventory is very valuable, but at this stage our focus is on the state register. Our focus within the State is on regional areas. Seventy per cent of the state heritage register's task

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will involve regional areas, which is why we have put in place regional heritage advisers. Fifteen local governments are happy to take part in that scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer to the minister's comments that the state heritage register will focus on regional areas. Many small towns and hamlets in the central and eastern wheatbelt have been under pressure for the past few years. Given their declining populations, do local government authorities in those regions have the resources and the motivation to be involved in the development of heritage lists?

Dr EDWARDS: As Minister for Heritage, I have found that people have a keen interest in heritage matters. Even many small centres have their own historical societies and they have their own views of what buildings are valuable to them. The focus of the State Government is to consider what buildings in the regions must be placed on the state register. However, we always encourage the community to add buildings on the municipal inventory if it believes they are worthy and if local government assesses them to be worthy. It is a difficult issue, particularly for areas that are depopulated. However, the flip side is that they are not under the threat of immediate development proposals; there are swings and roundabouts.

Mr O'GORMAN: Page 738 of the *Budget Statements* shows that in the past year, 13 additional local councils have come on stream. What are the reasons for that dramatic increase? What does it mean for local councils and what do they have to contribute? Are they metropolitan or rural councils?

Dr EDWARDS: The regions are the focus of this program. We have chosen to focus on the regions because, despite comments made by some members, heritage matters in the city have been considered but we are only starting to scratch the surface in regional areas. The Government has put aside \$85 000 as part of the regional heritage advisory service. This year we have increased the service, and we will do that again next year. To make our money go further, we have engaged local governments to make small contributions to this service so that people who are closely identified with their local area are involved. Ideally, we want someone who lives in the local area and who is connected to it to be involved. Councils have to be committed to heritage matters. They must contribute some small resources and the State Government will contribute further resources to provide the regional heritage advisory service. We want to build up the number of hours that regional councils have access to a regional heritage adviser. For instance, if a council had to make planning decisions or review its municipal inventories, it could call on that expertise.

Mr EDWARDS: The minister has probably answered this question, but I will ask it anyway because it specifically refers to regional advisers. The Government recognises the significance of regional heritage. Its identification and conservation are also recognised as important contributors to regional economies and as factors in the State's sustainable development. I refer to the last dot point on page 734 of the *Budget Statements*. Will the budget for the Heritage Council of Western Australia be increased in 2003-04 in the forward years to ensure that a more thorough commitment is made to funding regional heritage advisers and the proposed regional heritage coordinator? If not, why not? If yes, what is the minimum amount that the Government will commit to fund staff for the regional heritage programs over the next three years?

Dr EDWARDS: Page 734 of the *Budget Statements* shows an increase in the purchase outputs and the grand total in 2004-06. I will say what I have said previously: when the budget is pretty tight across the whole-of-government, ministers do not always get what they ask for. We will continue to push for funding for heritage. I will continue to focus on the regional areas in particular. I am pleased that this budget provides money for the local government heritage loan scheme. I have asked the Heritage Council to be more creative about how it engages communities and other entities and how it works with other organisations to carry out these heritage tasks. The Heritage Council does an amazing job considering its budget and considering that until this year, a large part of its budget went to administering grants that went directly to people with heritage properties. I always have my eyes open for some other creative way to ensure that the heritage money goes further and goes to the regions in particular.

Mr HYDE: I refer to the details of controlled grants and subsidies on page 743 of the *Budget Statements*. I refer to the Carnarvon One Mile Jetty, the Golden Mile Loop railway line, the Kalgoorlie and Boulder town halls - they are magnificent parts of our cultural heritage that the Labor Party committed to refurbishing during the election campaign - and the heritage loan scheme interest subsidy. Will that work finish and will the money be allocated this financial year so that those four projects will not be deferred?

The minister alluded to the heritage loan scheme interest subsidy. I share credit for that with the member for Greenough. We pushed the previous Minister for Heritage to adopt that scheme for places including Savannah, and Georgia where it has been a tremendous fillip to heritage. The Government is going full steam ahead with an \$80 000 allocation this year, rather than the \$50 000 that was previously allocated. Are those funds ongoing? The money was always in the budget but was never spent.

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Dr EDWARDS: The Heritage Council is administering \$250 000 for the work currently under way at the Carnarvon One Mile Jetty. The Carnarvon Heritage Group is the recipient of that funding and we are working closely with it to undertake that work. Similarly, \$100 000 has been allocated to the Golden Mile Loop railway line and will be administered under the heritage grants program. Also, restoration work is continuing.

Work is being conducted on the Boulder and Kalgoorlie town halls. The Heritage Council is administering \$100 000 for both of those projects. The City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder is the grant recipient in both cases. They have decided to start work on the Boulder town hall first followed by the Kalgoorlie town hall. I reassure the member that the money for those commitments is being spent as the work is done. The projects will be funded over the next couple of financial years, but that is a normal process when an authority is given a grant and work must proceed under supervision.

[12.20 pm]

Dr EDWARDS: The local government loan scheme figure is \$80 000 because money set aside previously has been carried over and put into it.

Ms SUE WALKER: I refer to page 734. It is stated that heritage expertise within local government and a commitment to heritage conservation as an important town planning objective will need to improve if the 20 000 places identified through the municipal inventory process are to receive adequate protection. In 1995, the City of Subiaco had 300 places on its municipal inventory. Last year, at the Government's direction, the council reviewed that process. There are now approximately 2 800 places on the inventory. That is a 900 per cent increase and covers one-third of the council area. The Government has no mandate to blanket conservation areas, but areas within that council's boundaries have been blanketed. A 900 per cent increase in six years suggests that the next review in four years will result in the entire area being covered. Mention is made of 20 000 places. I am not sure where they are in the State. One council in the electorate of Nedlands has included one-third of its area. I also draw to the minister's attention that no public meeting has been held about this issue. It lapses on 24 June and the council will make a decision. It involves 13 precincts. People have been invited to a meeting, but they must register. That makes it hard for the people to get together. Neither the Government nor the City of Subiaco has a mandate to do this, and public meetings are not going to be held following the release of the draft inventory. It is stated that new heritage legislation will be introduced. What provisions will be introduced and how will they impact on people's homes, which are their major asset? Control of those properties will be given to a council. The majority of places in the council area are in categories one and two, which means they cannot be demolished.

Mr HYDE: The municipal inventory process was established under the Local Government Act rather than the Heritage Act. This question would be more appropriately asked during the examination of the local government budget.

Ms SUE WALKER: Page 734 contains a reference to the municipal inventory process.

Dr EDWARDS: The state Act refers to municipal inventories.

The CHAIRMAN: I am happy for the minister to answer the question. However, it gets the prize as the longest question asked.

Dr EDWARDS: The Heritage Act provides for municipal inventories and states that they should be reviewed after a period. Obviously that is what has happened in Subiaco. The member has referred to a dramatic increase. That does not have much to do with the State; the Government sets the overarching legislation and local government implements it. I hope that local government authorities do consult. If they do not, they will have rebellion. As the member knows, heritage is contentious in her electorate and near it. I recently visited Cottesloe and met some very happy and some very unhappy heritage property owners. That is probably the story everywhere. The legislation is still in draft form and has not yet gone to Cabinet. The Government is seeking to clarify municipal inventories and precinct listings. A listing on a municipal inventory - depending on the level - does not have the same status as a listing on the state registry. If the local government concerned has not consulted and explained all the aspects, there will be tension.

Mr CARRICK: I am aware of the City of Subiaco issues. It has moved to a precinct identification process rather than an individual property process. That is why the numbers have increased. It has approached a difficult problem well by identifying whole precincts rather than individual properties. It has written to every City of Subiaco resident and owner to address the problem. It has also organised a number of meetings to which people have been invited. The Heritage Council is looking at precinct registration rather than individual registration as a focus. It shares the issue of heritage and provides better clarification of development and what people are able to do. By identifying more, it provides more flexibility overall, especially in historic places such as Subiaco.

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Mr O'GORMAN: I refer to page 739 and the Heritage Council's capital works program, which mentions providing in-house software development and information technology. Will that speed up the registration of places on the heritage list?

Mr MUNRO: The database needs to be upgraded on a regular basis. The development of municipal inventories will need to be accommodated. It is part of the whole process.

Mr EDWARDS: I refer to page 735 and the management of Cossack townsite. Has a management plan been developed? If so, is it available? Has a conservation plan been developed for the townsite?

Dr EDWARDS: Funding has been provided for 50 per cent of the annual running costs at Cossack. The Government knows something must be done and it is keen to do it. An additional one-off amount of \$140 000 has been allocated in 2003-04 for due diligence work prior to major capital investment.

The Pilbara Development Commission and a number of other entities, including the shire, produced a report on the area that contained a number of options. However, debate about the best option is continuing. My inclination as Minister for the Environment and Heritage is to have low-key relevant development which helps the economics of the site but which does not impinge on the heritage value. Other people believe that we need a great deal of development to make the site economically viable. A range of views and scenarios is still being worked through, but crunch time will come soon. I will find out the stage that report has reached and will get a copy for the member as soon as I can.

[12.30 pm]

Mr EDWARDS: Can I have that as supplementary information?

The CHAIRMAN: Will the minister specify the information that she has agreed to provide to the member for Greenough?

Dr EDWARDS: I will provide the member for Greenough, by way of supplementary information, with an update on the progress at Cossack and, if I can, a copy of the report. If that is not yet finalised or available, I will provide it to the member when it is available.

*[Supplementary Information No B6]*

Dr WOOLLARD: One of the main complaints that I hear about the Heritage Council is that it focuses on bricks and mortar and not on the environment. I refer to page 734, and one of the Government's significant issues and trends, which is the high priority it places on the introduction of new heritage legislation to replace the 1990 Act, which continues to be an obstacle to achieving more positive outcomes in conservation of the built environment. Will the Minister for Heritage ensure that in the future any heritage issues involve not only the buildings but also the environment?

Dr EDWARDS: There is some need to move on the legislation that has been drafted, which will continue to deal with built heritage. The current Act pretty much confines the Heritage Council to dealing with built heritage, although some items of natural heritage are able to be picked up; for example, the jarrah tree in Armadale that is the subject of a heritage agreement. With regard to broader heritage issues, the Department of Conservation and Land Management picks up world heritage issues and also looks closely at natural heritage issues. It is a perennial discussion, but in the short term this new legislation will deal only with built heritage.

Ms SUE WALKER: This is a follow-on to my last question on the fifth dot point on page 734. The minister said that listing on the municipal heritage inventory was not as powerful a tool as listing on the Register of State Heritage Places. Is the minister aware that the Subiaco City Council has no power at all over places listed on the municipal inventory, and under its town planning scheme No 4 will absorb a list of 2 800 places, which will give the council greater power. Is the minister aware of the powers of the council to prevent the demolition of and dealing with properties listed on the first two of the three levels?

Mr CARRICK: A number of the places on the first level are probably already on the Register of State Heritage Places in regard to demolition. I am not aware of any more detail of the planning scheme of the Subiaco City Council.

Mr HYDE: My question relates to the second last dot point on page 738. A major initiative for 2002-03 is that the Heritage Council will establish a heritage precinct in the city of Perth. We all acknowledge the significant heritage fabric in that area. I would like a fair amount of detail on that. Have we dedicated an area for this precinct, how much is involved and is there a consultation partnership with the City of Perth on this issue?

Dr EDWARDS: The Government is keen to see a heritage precinct established in the city of Perth. The member will note the recent decision made following his exhortations that the St John Ambulance building be placed on the Register of State Heritage Places. It is important that we recognise the heritage in the city precinct; it is

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important not only to the City of Perth but also to the broader community because our cities were populated and established first, so they have a lot of heritage buildings. The Heritage Council has been working on a heritage precinct, which, from memory, is in the area of Wellington Street, Elder Street, Hay Street and Pier Street. It is looking within that precinct to see what are the heritage values and how they should be managed. Dealing with a precinct takes a lot of time. All the owners have to be contacted and we need to get a lot of information from them. A high level and degree of assessment needs to take place, so we know what is in that precinct and, naturally, we need a lot of interaction with local government. I have been delighted that the Heritage Council has had a lot of interaction with the City of Perth. The Lord Mayor is now a regular attendee at Heritage Council monthly meetings, so I believe there is better communication and interaction at that level. The Heritage Council will continue the work on this precinct. It is also working on a number of other precincts, but this is a very important precinct. We hope the work will be completed in the first half of 2002-03

Mr HYDE: Is the Lord Mayor on the council as a member de facto with his position or as a representative of the local government association?

Mr CARRICK: The Lord Mayor is a representative of the City of Perth when an item is being considered for the Register of State Heritage Places and that item is located within the city of Perth.

Mr EDWARDS: I refer the minister to a major initiative for 2002-03 on page 738, which is the development of a heritage tourism strategy. What other agencies will the Heritage Council consult and seek collaborative partnerships with in the development of this strategy?

Dr EDWARDS: The Heritage Council produced a document on this issue that considered the economic opportunities that go with heritage. I do not know whether the member has seen it; it is quite well done. It reassures people, particularly in the regions, that they need not be scared of heritage because other opportunities can flow from it. As part of this work, the Heritage Council will liaise with local government, because local government is very important, particularly in regional areas. I have also encouraged the Heritage Council to liaise with the regional development commissions to pick up more of that economic side of the activity. I will ask Mr Carrick if he has anything to add about who the Heritage Council is liaising with.

Mr CARRICK: It is liaising with the Western Australian Local Government Association, as well as local government authorities.

Dr WOOLLARD: I refer to the fourth point on page 734. Does the minister agree that heritage is that which we have inherited from the past and value enough today to conserve for future generations? If she agrees with this definition of heritage, why is this Government wasting taxpayers' money on introducing a heritage Bill that deals only with buildings?

Dr EDWARDS: The current Act deals in the main with built heritage. We need to make changes to that Act; and that need has existed for some time. We are keen to progress that.

The member for Nedlands has raised a very important area to do with municipal inventories. Part of what the Government wants to do with the new Act is to clarify some of these issues. I am confident that heritage does not just reside with the Heritage Council. Heritage issues are broader than that. Within government, CALM and a number of other agencies play a part in heritage. Indeed, Aboriginal heritage is spread across a number of different areas. I take the member's point that, as a policy issue, she would like to see this changed. However, in the short term, we will concentrate on built heritage and the current tasks of the Heritage Council.

[12.40 pm]

Ms SUE WALKER: I refer also to dot point four on page 734, and the fact that the minister is now promising even more legislation to provide heritage cover for the built environment. She just said that that area will be reviewed. Will she consider imposing a moratorium while she looks at the dramatic increases in the registers of local councils, which cover people's major assets? The Subiaco council's register has had a 900 per cent increase in six years, and a review will not be held for another four years.

Dr EDWARDS: The issue of the municipal inventory is the business of local government.

Ms SUE WALKER: No, it is not.

Dr EDWARDS: The Act states that councils should have municipal inventories. It is up to each council how it deals with that.

Ms SUE WALKER: It is under the minister's direction.

Mr MASTERS: I refer to page 735 and the first line item on the output and appropriation summary, which is purchase of outputs. This relates to output 1, cultural heritage conservation services. Could the minister explain

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why there was a significant decrease in expenditure from this year's budgeted figure of \$4.652 million to the actual estimate of \$3.4 million?

Mr CARRICK: Some moneys under the heritage grants program were not spent in this financial year. Therefore, they will be carried over.

Mr MASTERS: Why would that money have not been spent? Was the Heritage Council not able to live up to its bureaucratic and legislative requirements?

Dr EDWARDS: No. It is to do with the nature of the grants program. When people receive a heritage grant, they do not get the whole sum of money at one time. The money is fed out as they do the work. In fact, there is a carryover in the current financial year, with money being spent in this year for grants that were given out last year. It is a normal occurrence. It happens in this agency's budget fairly often.

Mr HYDE: Having been on a local council, I know that a municipal heritage inventory does not stop a person submitting a development application, or a demolition licence being granted. I am sorry that the member for Nedlands has left the Chamber again. I think that it is an important difference. I know that part of the education role of the Heritage Council is it letting people know that, if their property is on an MHI, it does not mean they cannot apply for a demolition licence.

I refer to dot point 2 on page 738. One of the major achievements for 2001-02 was that four precincts were assessed. One of those, Bulwer Avenue, is in my electorate. I would be delighted if there had been a public announcement about that, but I do not think that has occurred yet. Is that the case?

Dr EDWARDS: With respect to the first comment, the Heritage Council makes sure that it liaises closely with local government to inform it of its obligations and give it information about heritage. I check up on this, and I am happy with the work the Heritage Council does with local government.

The Heritage Council does all the work in assessing the precincts. Any objections by owners come to me. I am working with some of the owners to listen to the nature of their objections and give them a good hearing. The member will have to watch my media releases.

The CHAIRMAN: This question involves some detail. I am looking at the third dot point of the major achievements for 2001-02 on page 738 and extrapolating that into the future. Is the old Riverton Bridge in my electorate of Riverton included in the Register of State Heritage Places; and if not, does the minister know whether it has been nominated for inclusion?

Dr EDWARDS: I will need to take advice from Mr Carrick.

Mr CARRICK: I do not know the status.

The CHAIRMAN: Can you provide that as supplementary information?

Dr EDWARDS: We will take as a supplementary question whether the old Riverton Bridge in Riverton is on the state register or whether it has been nominated.

*[Supplementary Information No B7]*

**The appropriation was recommended.**