

ROTTNEST ISLAND — MANAGEMENT PLAN

**351. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Tourism:**

Many people from my electorate take the opportunity on weekends and holidays to travel to Rottnest Island to enjoy this unique Western Australian destination. Will the minister inform the house of the progress in the development of the management plan for Rottnest Island for the next five years?

**Dr E. CONSTABLE replied:**

As the member for Morley suggested, these days Rottnest Island is a very popular tourist and holiday destination for not only local people but also international travellers. For both daytrippers and longer-stay visitors it is really important that the island be well managed and covered by a management plan. Indeed, the act requires that every five years a new management plan is provided. The next management plan will cover the period 2009 to 2014. The management plan covers all aspects of the island's operations, including the facilities, the bookings, the visitor and environmental services and so on. The current draft plan has been out for public comment for two months and there has been robust debate among some quarters of Perth residents in particular. The comment period closes today at five o'clock. The next step will involve an internal group of the Rottnest Island Authority to review that independently with a probity auditor. When that has been done, any changes sought will be presented to me and then gazetted.

It is very important that this process be understood and that people are involved in it, as they have been this time, because it is considered to be everyone's island, the running of which everyone has an opinion on. I think it is extremely important that the public have an opportunity to comment on the proposals for the next five years. A number of proposals are included in this plan, such as a feasibility study for a commercial marina, which obviously has been very positively received by the boaties, although others have commented on it less positively. Generally speaking, I understand that the submissions to date have been very positive in supporting most of the initiatives proposed in the plan.

One erroneous public claim is that the island will be privatised. I can assure members and the public of Western Australia that that will not happen. Some concerns have been raised about suggestions in the plan that there should be increased guest accommodation near the hotel, an ecotourism development at Thomson Bay South and a permanent camping ground. I think it is important that a range of accommodation is provided and that it continue to be reviewed. The five-year provision in the act gives us a real opportunity to review what is happening at Rottnest. Of course there will be strict controls over any new developments and public comment will always be invited.

One other suggestion has been made by some people that charges on Rottnest Island, such as electricity and water, should be subsidised. This government does not believe that should happen, just as the previous government had the view that Rottnest Island should be self-supporting.