

KOONDOOLA NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE REVITALISATION PROGRAM

28. Mr I.M. BRITZA to the Minister for Planning:

I believe that the minister recently facilitated progress on the much-delayed Koondoola neighbourhood centre revitalisation program, and I understand that this was yet again another important project much talked about by the previous government but about which very little was done.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr I.M. BRITZA: Can the minister please update the house on the causes of this delay and what steps the government has taken to resolve it?

Ms M.M. Quirk: This will be very interesting, minister!

Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:

I note the interjection of the member for Girrawheen, who I think previously had an interest in this area. I know the member for Nollamara has a serious interest in the area as, indeed, does the federal member for Cowan, Luke Simpkins, who has also made representations on this project.

The Koondoola neighbourhood centre revitalisation project commenced under the previous government. The initial commitment was made in January 2005, slightly more than five years ago, when the government, to its credit—I presume it was an election commitment at the time—followed through with the allocation of \$1 million towards the project, which was intended to revitalise and improve the amenity and, indeed, the safety of the Koondoola neighbourhood centre; essentially, the shopping centre and surrounding land. When the change of government occurred in September 2008, only \$14 000 of that \$1 million had been spent, so very little progress had been made in the succeeding three and a half years or so. A major problem was that it was, unfortunately, not possible to get agreement from the owners of the shops in that neighbourhood centre. It is a strata title arrangement; therefore, it is much harder to get collective agreement than if one owner owns the property. Nevertheless, the fact that three and a half years went by without much being achieved is not exactly to the credit of the previous government. When we came into government, there was no —

Ms M.M. Quirk interjected.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Mr Speaker, this is good news for Labor electorates, or a Labor electorate, as it previously was and still is. When we came into government, there was no obligation on us to maintain that funding. I was certainly of the view, given that a commitment had been made and particularly given that there are high social needs in the Koondoola area, that it would be desirable to go through with the project. I am pleased that the Treasurer accepted that argument, albeit there were substantial pressures on the state budget for the reallocation of funds to meet the changed financial circumstances which we faced. However, the funds have been retained.

We made another attempt to get agreement from the property owners, the shop owners, to do what was originally intended. That was not forthcoming. Following discussions with the City of Wanneroo, advice from the Department of Planning, significant involvement of staff in my office and various discussions with and representations from the current local state member and the current local federal member—both of whom made representations with very good intent, I must say, to ensure that the funds could be used in that area—I certainly made it clear the funds should be used in the Koondoola locality. Agreement has been reached to spend approximately \$575 000 of the funding to improve the local streetscape by undergrounding the existing powerlines along Koondoola Avenue in the area directly adjacent to the neighbourhood centre. The balance of the available funds, as I agreed last October, will be put towards upgrading local community parks. Subsequently, in November of last year the City of Wanneroo made a request for \$220 000 of the funds to be used to upgrade the intersection of Butterworth Avenue and Beach Road to make it safer —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: The minister has retired hurt! It was a difficult project.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is incredible that the soon-to-be-departed member for Armadale would even have the nerve to interject on this issue. She was minister for over three and a half years —

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: I thought the minister was going to announce he was actually able to pull it off! I thought, “Fantastic!” That is why I did not say anything until —

The SPEAKER: Member for Armadale, I formally call you for the first time. I also suggest to the minister that if he is going to invite some response from the member for Armadale, the experience in this place is that he might expect to receive that! I formally call the member for Armadale for the first time.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think it is pertinent to make the observation that the member for Armadale really should not be commenting on this given that the project was incomplete for all of the time the former government was in its second term in office.

Ms A.J.G. MacTiernan: I thought the minister was going to say he had actually achieved it! He had not. I was going to cheer him on, until he said he had given up; that he is not going to upgrade the town centre!

The SPEAKER: I do not quite know what to say at this point. Member for Armadale, I will formally call you for the second time. I think the minister has heard what I have had to say.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The outcome is that the funds are being used in the Koondoola central area in the only way that has proved to be possible following requests from the City of Wanneroo, I think with the support of the local member for Nollamara and also the federal member for Cowan. There will be an upgrading of the streetscape, there will be an improvement to traffic safety in the area and there will also be funds put towards improving Butterworth and Rendell Parks. I am advised that the works are on schedule to commence and will be completed within the current financial year. This government has followed through. We will ensure that this project is completed in the best way possible in all the circumstances, as we have done in maintaining funding commitments that were made by the previous government, which this government was under no obligation to follow through, for improvements in Mirrabooka and also in Maddington and Kenwick. We have followed through on the commitments that were made because they are areas of need and we recognise that. We have put the work in to ensure there will be improvements in all three areas.