

EAST PERTH POWER STATION, SALE OF SURROUNDING LAND

837. Mr J.P.D. EDWARDS to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer to the alarming revelation in *The West Australian* of 11 June 2003 that announced that the Gallop Government will sell the land surrounding the heritage-listed East Perth power station for residential development and that the future of this industrial heritage icon remains uncertain.

- (1) Have the local residents been surveyed about their views on the future of this part of the State's heritage and what were the outcomes of that survey?
- (2) What consultation with the broader community took place before the proposal to sell the land was put to Cabinet?
- (3) Has the minister taken any action to address concerns expressed by the Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust of Australia (WA) that the Government's plans will destroy the heritage of the site?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1)-(3) I find this question extraordinary, particularly the reference to the lamentations of the Chief Executive Officer of the National Trust. The previous Government could not find anyone interested in taking over this site. Under a previous Minister for Planning, who became the Chairman of the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, the Government had instructed that it was not interested in doing anything to ensure that this important heritage site was conserved. Therefore, nothing happened. Western Power came up with this fabulous little deal that it would give the National Trust \$5 million to take the building off its hands, to which the National Trust agreed. The National Trust had plans to develop a number of residential towers surrounding the East Perth power station and I am amazed that it is now saying, "Shock, horror!", and that the Government should not develop the site.

I have been working closely with the member for Perth to ensure that the local community is kept informed of what is going on. I attended a meeting on-site with the residents of that local area and set out, as I have set out time and again in this place and in the Press, this Government's approach. We believe that the arrangement with the National Trust was simply unworkable and would leave the National Trust and, ultimately, the State with an enormous liability. The National Trust business case was out by about \$11 million. We have to make a hard decision and determine how much money we can direct towards the conservation of this site from the consolidated fund. As we have explained, none of the development proposals for the surrounding land will recoup the entire cost of conserving the exterior of the building and remediating the site. Even with the best will in the world, the development opportunities are not sufficient to provide for the conservation.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Western Power is taking responsibility for remediation.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Western Power will accept the responsibility for remediation, which will cost about \$2 million.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I have been open about this in this place. I have said that the conservation project will require the expenditure of \$10 million to \$13 million from the consolidated fund, or some other source. The Government must make some serious decisions about whether this project is a priority it can manage.

In the meantime, we are exploring a few other opportunities that have become available. We are optimistic that we may be able to find another solution to this problem. There is no point providing the community with details until we have some idea of the base case. If we decide to proceed with the redevelopment of this site through the East Perth Redevelopment Authority, we will go through the public consultation process. However, there is no point consulting people until we know the ground rules.