

Division 36: Peel Development Commission, \$1 696 000 -

Mr McRae, Chairman.

Mr McGinty, Minister for Peel and the South West.

Mr K.G. Fisher, Acting Director.

Mr M. Timoney, Acting Assistant Director.

Ms S. Dowling, Policy Officer, Office of the Attorney General.

Ms QUIRK: I refer to the last dot point on page 595 of the *Budget Statements*, which states that the commission acknowledges the importance of continuing its practices. It has been suggested that the Peel Development Commission is being wound up. That is inconsistent with the fact that the commission has stated its future plans. Will the minister clarify the situation?

Mr McGINTY: I will make a confirmation about two great Peel institutions. Firstly, the Peel Development Commission has a bright future, continuing to operate as it has done previously. Any suggestions to the contrary are mischief making and incorrect. The Peel Development Commission was formed by the former Labor Government, and it is a great initiative for the people in the Peel region.

The other recent innovation in the Peel region is the Peel Thunder football team. If Peel Thunder's existence continues to be threatened, I will ask the Peel Development Commission to get on board the fight against the organisations that are trying to bring the team to an end. If need be, I will even ask the commission to make a financial contribution to the legal fighting fund that has been established to preserve the Peel Thunder Football Club that is based in Mandurah. I have not exactly responded to the member's question, but it was a good answer.

The CHAIRMAN: As a long-time supporter of the South Sydney Rabbitos, which have also had to battle antagonistic forces within its football competition, how will the Peel Development Commission support a mutually agreed amalgamation between Peel Thunder and East Fremantle?

Mr McGINTY: As a South Fremantle supporter, I would be pleased to see East Fremantle leave Fremantle. If the team agrees to move, such a move would be strongly supported. We are not happy with the forced termination of the licence of Peel Thunder.

Mr OMODEI: I am sure the member for Peel will be happy with the minister's comments about keeping Peel Thunder alive. He is not here today because he has other responsibilities. However, he has asked me to ask a number of questions. I refer the minister to the fifth dot under major initiatives on page 598 of the *Budget Statements*. What will be done to assist in the redevelopment of the Forest Heritage Centre in Dwellingup?

Mr McGINTY: I presume the member should have said the member for Dawesville, and not the member for Peel. Like me, the member for Peel happens to be a South Fremantle supporter.

Mr OMODEI: Yes, I do not think the member for Peel would have a great deal of interest in the Peel region.

Mr FISHER: A study carried out by a number of the partners involved in the Forest Heritage Centre has looked at the future of the facility. I sit on the board that is considering the development of the centre, and it has discussed the directions the centre will take. At this stage, all the discussions have been very positive. The future of the centre looks good. The board is keen to develop the centre, to provide further training facilities and to enhance it as a tourist facility.

Mr OMODEI: That is good news.

I refer the minister to dot point six under major initiatives. What plans have been put in place to expand business development and migration to Peel?

Mr FISHER: We have employed Mr Peter Reading as business development manager for an initial three-month period. He has a commercial background and is used to cold calling. He is attracting and contacting various businesses, both in the Peel region and in the Perth metropolitan area. The initial period finishes at the end of June. From all reports, the three-month period will be extended for a further 12 months. For the first time we are also looking at migration and at attracting industry and other opportunities to the Peel region. We are also looking at the possibility of appointing an Austrade officer and at export opportunities. Our actions have started to take effect in a bright way.

Mr OMODEI: I refer to dot point nine under major initiatives. What locations are being considered for the site of the Peel Regional Zoo?

Mr FISHER: At present, Boddington is the only possible site. A previous study looked at a number of sites, but at this stage, the Boddington site is in the lead, and it is the site for the feasibility study.

Mr HILL: I refer the minister to the seventh dot point on page 599 of the *Budget Statements*. I would like more information about the Mandurah Online Centre.

Mr FISHER: As far as the regions are concerned, the Peel Development Commission has led the information technology industry. The Mandurah Online Centre is an initiative that we are trying to put in place. We have a location in mind, and we are negotiating that location with the Mandurah City Council. We have already developed a business plan for the centre; however, the negotiations have a fair way to go.

Ms QUIRK: I refer the minister to the tenth dot point on page 598. How successful was the Mandurah Opera Festival?

Mr MCGINTY: It was magnificent. It was my first visit to the Performing Arts Centre in Mandurah, and it is a venue of which the people of Fremantle would be jealous. It is a great facility, and was packed when I went to see the performance of *Carmen*.

Ms QUIRK: Did the minister have decent seats?

Mr MCGINTY: Indeed!

Mr FISHER: It was a tremendous opportunity for Mandurah and the regions to have the Mandurah Opera Festival incorporated as a part of the Perth International Arts Festival. As the minister indicated, it was highly successful and really brought the town to life. We are looking to support the same festival next season.

Mr OMODEI: I refer the minister to dot points two, three and four on page 599 of the *Budget Statements*. How will the equine, aquaculture and horticulture industries in the Peel region be expanded?

[3.50 pm]

Mr FISHER: First, the commission has been involved in that industry for the past three or four years and has conducted several studies into the Peel equine industry. Currently, the commission employs an equine officer to look at the development of that industry. It has tremendous potential, particularly in the Serpentine, Jarrahdale and Murray areas. The industry is worth in the vicinity of \$75 million a year and has enormous potential to employ people. As the member knows, the region requires employment opportunities. That is a very strong industry. We have supported it for a number of years and we will continue to support it, and hopefully the industry will grow sufficiently to be recognised within our State.

The aquaculture industry in the Peel region also offers tremendous opportunities. A number of fledgling industries are starting in that area. We intend to research and develop those opportunities even further, and likewise with the horticulture industry. Our business attraction manager is picking up and working with both the aquaculture and horticulture industries. The Peel region offers opportunities for market gardeners presently operating in Perth who are being squeezed out and who are looking for somewhere else to go, so we are trying to capitalise on that.

Mr O'GORMAN: I refer to the dot point on page 599 that refers to facilitating a regional refuse site in Waroona. I assume that will be a solid waste to energy recycling facility, landfill, a waste to fertiliser facility or something similar.

Mr FISHER: This is one of those projects on which the commission works in partnership with others. In this case, the commission is working in partnership with the Waroona Shire Council. At this stage, it probably will be a landfill site, but consideration is also being given to recycling, etc. The commission is looking at a regional site, not just Waroona. Waste will be taken from Mandurah, Murray and elsewhere in the region.

Mr HILL: I refer to dot point three on page 600. I seek further information on the Peel regional leadership group.

Mr FISHER: One of the weaknesses in the Peel region at present is probably the lack of aspiring leaders. Further south or south west there are a number of shining lights, including Dr Manea, and various leaders from around the State can be identified. It is a bit harder to do that in the Peel region. We recognise that there is a need to develop a regional leadership group and to grow the leadership within the region. It is an initiative that the commission and its chairman, Mr John Collett, are looking at. We are working in collaboration with local government and industries to develop that leadership ability. It is a weakness that we can identify and it is something we need to work on and grow.

The appropriation was recommended.