

SHIRE OF PLANTAGENET, TIMBER PLANTATIONS, TOWN PLANNING SCHEME AMENDMENT

2771. Mr M.G. House to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure

- (1) Is the Minister aware that on 28 November 2000, the Shire of Plantagenet, through its proposed Amendment 28 to the Town Planning Scheme, sought to introduce a separate land use category and clear definition for 'Timber Plantation' to enable it to, (among other things) exercise control over the use of rural land for tree plantations?
- (2) Is the Minister aware that on 26 February 2002, the Shire of Plantagenet resolved to adopt Amendment 28 for final approval?
- (3) Will the Minister advise when the Shire of Plantagenet will be provided with a written response on the status and progress of Amendment 28?
- (4) Is the Minister aware that in July 2001 the Shire of Plantagenet sought to modify the D1 Precinct of the Porongurup Rural Strategy to enable the Shire to respond to development pressure and land use conflicts associated with timber plantations?
- (5) Is the Minister aware that in the response from the Western Australian Planning Commission, dated 13 September 2002, not to support modifications to the D1 precinct, the Commission was 'of the view that the Council's proposed Town Planning Scheme No. 3 Amendment 28 will be able to control the effect of tree plantation on the landscape'?
- (6) Does the Minister agree that in the absence of effective planning controls, the Shire of Plantagenet has no mechanism to regulate or guide the appropriate development of timber plantations in the Shire?
- (7) Will the Minister advise when the Farm Forestry Policy: Planning Bulletin No 56 will be finalised?
- (8) Does the Minister concur that as Amendment 28 is generally consistent with the intent of the Draft Farm Forestry Policy and will bring the Shire of Plantagenet Town Planning Scheme No 3 into line with the Model Scheme Text and the Town Planning Schemes of other local authorities in Western Australia, there is no reason to delay the progress of Amendment 28?
- (9) Will the Minister advise when Amendment 28 will be finalised?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1) Amendment 28 to the Shire of Plantagenet's Town Planning Scheme No. 3 was initiated by the Shire in November 2000. The amendment sought to distinguish between the commercial growing of timber as an integrated farm activity, and the growing of timber as a plantation monoculture. To this end the amendment proposed to add two new definitions into the planning scheme, "Agroforestry" and "Plantation Forestry" respectively, and modify the existing definition of "Rural Use".
- (2) Amendment 28 was advertised by the Shire and 153 submissions were received, of which 92 opposed the amendment, 60 supported it, and 1 expressed neither support nor opposition. Amendment 28 was forwarded to the Western Australian Planning Commission in March 2002, seeking final approval. The Shire's request for final approval to the amendment included substantial modifications to the documentation for Amendment 28 first proposed and advertised.
- (3) In March 2003, I considered the Western Australian Planning Commission's recommendation that Amendment 28 be substantially modified to address relevant matters, including those raised via public and industry consultation. I decided to consider the amendment further following finalisation of the draft WAPC Farm Forestry Policy and I will advise the Shire in writing of that decision in due course. The Shire has, however, been verbally advised of this position.
- (4) The Shire of Plantagenet resolved in July 2001 to change the provisions relating to Precinct D1 of its Porongurups Rural Strategy to facilitate the subdivision of rural land. Subdivision was envisaged as a way of encouraging rural land uses other than commercial timber growing to establish in the precinct, and thus preserving the scenic value of the existing tourist route through the precinct. The Shire advertised the proposed changes to the strategy and forwarded a significantly modified proposal to the Commission for endorsement in December 2001. A further modification to the strategy was requested by the Shire in June 2002.
- (5) The Commission considered the proposed changes to the strategy in September 2002 and resolved not to support them. The Commission considered that Amendment 28 would be able to control the effects of tree plantations on the landscape, and did not support the approach of subdividing rural land to facilitate an alternative rural land use as envisaged by the proposal. When Amendment 28 is finalised,

- there is nothing to suggest that the Town Planning Scheme provisions introduced via the amendment will not be able to fulfil this expectation.
- (6) The Shire's current mechanism for regulating commercial timber growing is by considering commercial timber plantations as a "use not listed" in the rural zone and then considering their establishment via a Town Planning Consent Application. Amendment 28, in its final form, will provide regulatory controls with greater clarity and certainty to those currently in operation in the Shire.
 - (7) The WAPC draft Farm Forestry Policy will be finalised when the State Farm Forestry Strategy under the Minister for Agriculture, in consultation with the Western Australian Plantation Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee, determines the most appropriate and co-ordinated approach to the timber industry. The development of the state strategy is scheduled to be completed within 6 months. Finalisation of the Farm Forestry Policy will be undertaken in part concurrent with this, with a draft final policy to be presented in the last quarter of this year.
 - (8) Amendment 28 is far from being presented in its final form and thus it is not yet possible to judge its consistency with other planning instruments.
 - (9) Due to the significant modifications to Amendment 28 requested by the Shire, which are likely to require readvertising the Amendment, and the need to ensure a consistent co-ordinated approach to the timber industry in the State envisaged in the draft Farm Forestry Policy, it is not possible to give a date for the finalisation of Amendment 28.