

ALBANY FORESHORE REDEVELOPMENT

550. Mrs C.L. EDWARDES to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer the minister to the multimillion-dollar Albany foreshore redevelopment, which is a major piece of infrastructure for the tourism and fishing industries, with massive flow-on economic and social benefits.

- (1) On what basis did the minister abandon a publicly accepted plan for the foreshore redevelopment, which was the subject of four years of community and expert consultation, and which was passed unanimously by the City of Albany?
- (2) Why is the minister using the East Perth Redevelopment Authority - based some 400 kilometres away - to develop a new plan for Albany, rather than the City of Albany and other local stakeholders?
- (3) Given that \$13 million has been allocated for this important project, the community was satisfied with it and extensive expert advice has been sought, why is the minister now holding up this project on the advice of a small group from the city?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1)-(3) I thank the member for some notice of this question. Of course, all of the assumptions underpinning her question are wrong. We went to Albany some six weeks ago and acknowledged that the development had made some significant advances. There was an understanding that some short-stay accommodation was needed on the site to make it work; that is, so that the very considerable development would not be a white elephant.

Mr P.B. Watson: It was very well accepted by the community, too.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I commend the member for Albany for the work he has done in developing that acceptance, because without that we would not be able to progress this project. As I say, it is important to have at the centre of our minds why we are doing this. This is not just a boat harbour. This is about providing a redevelopment opportunity for Albany to allow it to refocus itself on the foreshore and to develop a vibrant tourism hub that will ensure that the absolutely magnificent natural landscape of Albany can be utilised as a major tourism attractor. After we looked around the world to determine what worked and what did not work in boat harbour developments, we were very concerned that the direction this particular proposal had gone would not provide Albany with the full benefits it deserves. As I said to the people of Albany, I had two choices. I could have pretended that I had not seen or heard that there were much better ways of doing it, much better ways of achieving an interface between port activities and the waterfront, and much better ways of integrating land use with waterfront uses. I could have pretended that it was too hard and that I did not know anything. Alternatively, I could have told the people of Albany that there were other alternatives and asked the community whether it was interested in having the Government explore those alternatives. I took the latter approach. Our breakfast meeting was extremely well attended. We put forward the possibilities and the notion that perhaps the original concept had been very much focused on engineering and engineering solutions and was not sufficiently focused on what was needed to achieve quality redevelopment. My reading of the response - I think the member for Albany would agree - is that people wanted to explore the other possibilities. We have done a lot of work in the interim and we are hopeful that within the next two weeks we will have a firm proposal to put to the people of Albany. Much of the work that has been done to date will be utilised. One of the big conceptual breakthroughs is that the council has signed off on the need for short-stay accommodation. We do not have to go through the process of whether there will be short-stay accommodation. I might add that we had yet to receive environmental approvals for the particular proposal that was under way. Our Government has committed a substantial amount of money to Albany. It is in the bank and we want to spend it. However, we want to make sure that the redevelopment is not done for short-term political expediency, but in a way that brings home the bacon for the people of Albany and that presents the recreational and tourism opportunities that this absolutely magnificent landscape and town deserve.