

Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Mr Mark McGowan; Chairman; Ms Katie Hodson-Thomas; Mr John Quigley; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Hendy Cowan; Mr Rod Sweetman

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**Division 51: Land Administration, \$39 058 000 -**

Mr Andrews, Chairman.

Ms MacTiernan, Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Mr G.J. Searle, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Department of Land Administration.

Mr M.P. Smith, Manager Financial Services, Department of Land Administration.

Mr M. Woodcock, Department of Land Administration.

Ms K.A. Guthrie, Principal Policy Officer, Office of Minister for Planning and Infrastructure.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Department of Land Administration: I do not know whether we have any general comments to make. There has been one significant change to the department and that is that much of its land development function is in the process of being transferred to Landcorp so that will have some consequences in the budget. Landcorp will be responsible primarily for land development, development of government property, including potentially Duncraig House, but other than that there has not been major structural changes to this department as of yet. One other thing I should mention is that the valuer general's office has now been moved into the administration of DOLA.

Dr WOOLLARD: It was my understanding, Minister, that if there was any discussion of, say, the Duncraig House or the lower lands at Heathcote, it would come up tomorrow under housing and works. I am asking this because I was going to go to the Environment and Heritage Committee but if that comes up on to this agenda, then I obviously need to stay here.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I do not believe that it will come up under this agenda. The administration of that project is a complex one. As I think we discussed this morning, the land is within the health budget. The value of the land and the ownership of the land is within the health budget. Currently the administration of property lies with the government projects office which is part of the Ministry for Housing and Works but obviously Landcorp has a role. In fact our agency is looking at which portions of that we can develop, how we can in fact rationally use the asset and get some return for the health budget.

Dr WOOLLARD: You mean for Duncraig House or for the lands or both?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The site as a whole.

Dr WOOLLARD: The site as a whole.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr McGOWAN: I refer to the net amount appropriated to the Department of Land Administration and ask in relation to DOLA's total budget - - -

The CHAIRMAN: It is page 846 you are referring to now.

Mr McGOWAN: Page 846, item 81. In relation to DOLA's total budget do you envisage there will be any savings achieved as a result of the Machinery of Government Task Force and recommendations and programs implemented by the Government?

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will let Mr Searle answer this one.

Mr SEARLE: Thank you, Minister, through you, Mr Chairman. There will be some savings made as part of that process. They will not actually all be achievable in the first year. Some of it relates to rental currently paid by the valuer general's office. There are issues about expirations of leases and getting appropriate subleases in place if we can. In this year there is about \$150 000 directly attributable to the amalgamations that will result in savings, mainly in corporate service areas.

Mr McGOWAN: Can I just expand upon that?

Mr SEARLE: Sure.

Mr McGOWAN: In terms of savings do you envisage as a result of the Machinery of Government Task Force that you will actually have less staff or are you saying you will have less office accommodation that you will be utilising, less vehicles or less agencies, some amalgamation of agencies or what?

Mr SEARLE: There has already been the amalgamation of the valuer general's office with DOLA. That has already happened. Administratively there is only now one employing authority. There is one finance branch, one HR branch. Those sorts of things are already in place. There will also be some costs involved in the

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amalgamation in terms of ensuring that things like electronic communications between the new branch offices are efficiently and effectively done, particularly with IT systems. However, by merging, for instance, our functions in Bunbury there will be some savings in reductions in the car fleet. So there is a whole range of issues that are now being addressed and worked through within the department.

Mr McGOWAN: In what time frame do you expect to complete all these changes to effect the savings through the Machinery of Government review?

Mr SEARLE: Most of them will be resolved within the first 12 months. The longer term issue is really that of lease management, particularly around the Mount Street premises that are occupied by the valuer general. It is too early to say how those negotiations will go.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Can I say to you, member for Rockingham, that we have been very vigilant across our portfolios generally to get better utilisation of government properties and have been very keen to insist that buildings such as the WAGR premises in East Perth be more fully utilised rather than seeing expansions into the private sector property. Sometimes agencies resist moves to areas that they see perhaps as not prestigious as other sites but I think we can provide good quality, good standards of internal fittings and the fact that some buildings might not appear to be the most attractive on the outside should not be a deterrent. We must utilise those government properties fully.

[2.10 pm]

Mr McGOWAN: It was mentioned in earlier estimates I was in today how the department actually moved its headquarters to Midland. Do you envisage there will be further decentralisation out of the centre of Perth into outer lying suburban areas of any of your resourcing and, from my point of view, any shifting to the deep southern suburbs of Perth?

Ms MacTIERNAN: More in a planning role rather than a land administration role, I would say that that is certainly something that we are contemplating. There are a number of options that we are considering at this point of time, not specifically at this point for Rockingham but certainly we are wanting to look at that Midland model and how that has contributed to the success of the revitalisation of Midland. It is not a complete answer in itself but it certainly can be a component.

Mr McGOWAN: If one were to put in a submission to show the benefits of one area, how would one do that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Minister for Public Sector Management or indeed myself. As I say, one of the ideas that is raised very often is the idea of a telework centre. I think in Mandurah and Armadale it has been suggested, for example, that we could have a conglomerate State Government office. I think the member of Mandurah might be familiar with this concept. I think it came up at some meeting we had recently as well. Various public servants, for example, that might live, say, in the Mandurah area but work in a variety of different departments might be able to go to a central workplace in Mandurah and work online to their particular agencies. That is another model that can be explored.

Mrs HODSON-THOMAS: My question relates to page 848 under outputs and performance information and it is in the second table, Minister. I notice that the less operating revenue - estimated actual last year was \$4 288 000. In the budget estimate for this year it is \$2 051 000. Why has the operating revenue halved this year?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The change in operating revenue is mainly due to excluding revenue in the form of valuation services with \$1.8 million previously provided free of charge by the valuer general's office, so there has been basically a change in accounting consolidation principles regarding the elimination of transactions between associated parties. I gather that there used to be a notional entry for those sorts of services that were provided by the valuer general. There is no longer such a price accounted for. Therefore, there has been no change in actual money flows. It is basically an accounting technique.

Mr QUIGLEY: I refer to page 846, "Appropriation and Forward Estimates". Could the minister outline for me the impact of this year's budget on the overall draw on the consolidated fund?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Basically there is \$6 million. The draw on the consolidated fund is approximately \$6 million less than it was in previous years. That is for a number of reasons. That is partly arising out of some efficiencies of course within the department doing the same for less but it is also attributable to the cycle of the valuer general's work. The valuation cycle is a three-year cycle. We are now in that part of the cycle where there is the maximum revenue received from external parties for the work that they do; hence the draw on the consolidated fund is less.

Ms HODSON-THOMAS: My question relates to page 861, "Statement of Financial Performance (Controlled): Expenses from ordinary activities, Salaries and Allowances". In the budget estimate column 2001-02, the salary costs there are \$42 792 000 as compared to the estimate in the previous year of \$43 773 000. I notice at the

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bottom in (a) the FTEs are actually up by 10; yet the salary and allowance is actually down. I wonder if you could expand on that, Minister.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Perhaps I will pass that one to the acting CEO.

Mr SEARLE: Thank you, Minister. There are a number of issues involved in changing salary structures within DOLA. Some of this reflects restructures that have resulted in lower classifications of work doing some tasks, so whilst the numbers have not changed much, the profile of salaries has changed slightly. That has affected the change.

Ms HODSON-THOMAS: When did the profiles change?

Mr SEARLE: The profiles are changing relatively regularly. For instance, \$125 000 of that difference which is about 10 per cent of it is through one of our staff members taking a package as part of the SES reduction.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It might be true to say too that the nature of the work is changing as there is a move to digitalisation. DOLA is one area where there has been considerable change in the technology that is used and then that having a consequential change on the jobs that use the data that DOLA has produced. It will be fairly fluid.

Mr McGOWAN: My question relates to page 847 and it goes to decisions taken since the State election and it refers to travel, advertising and consultancy savings. It says that for this budget year and each of the three out years, there is going to be approximately an \$100 000 saving in each of those areas - travel, advertising the consultancy savings. It has often been talked about, Minister, that governments will be able to achieve these sorts of savings. I am wondering how you managed to do it and where you have managed to cut in terms of making these savings of \$400 000 over the next four years.

[2.20 pm]

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is basically, can I say, for example, simply within travel. We have basically instructed the agency that the travel budget will be reduced by that quantum and that they have their travel in accordance with that. That might mean perhaps less travel, shorter travel, more focused travel. We get monthly reports and with any travel applications that come in, it is the responsibility of the CEO to show that they are within the revised targets. I understand it has been able to be achieved.

With advertising, we are certainly still doing all the statutory advertising that we are required to do. Perhaps pamphlets have been a little less glossy, less extensive or voluminous than they previously were. Do you have anything you wish to add to that?

Mr SEARLE: I think that covers it. There has been strict management control implemented by the minister over the travel budget and we have been able to deliver those savings through better planning.

Mr BARNETT: Even with cumulative savings, because it is 1.5, plus two plus two plus two.

Mr SEARLE: We are confident that the savings committed to by the minister will be met within the department.

Mr BARNETT: You understand they are cumulative.

Mr SEARLE: Yes. \$110 000 is cumulative, year by year.

Mr McGOWAN: On page 846, minister, the third dot point from the bottom talks about the requirement for integrated legislation to manage infrastructure and service corridors to enable efficient economic development. As you know, Minister, in the south west corridor, the principal industrial area of the State, there has been talked about for a long time an actual service corridor to service the Kwinana industrial strip and this corridor would be required to basically bring in from the east any infrastructure or any of the raw materials needed for some of the industries there - for instance, the shipbuilding industry - and also the opportunity to remove heavy items of plant that are constructed there on the strip out and take them on their way to the various mining sites and downstream processing sites inland in Western Australia. What will this integrated legislation mean and would it further the cause of this particular service corridor that has been talked about a great deal in the Kwinana area?

Ms MacTIERNAN: As I see it, there are two aspects. There is the planning aspect. There is the need to identify those corridors and there is the need to provide adequate buffers around those corridors so that they are sustainable into the future. We all know the problem with roads in and out of ports which then become particularly subject to residential development and then there is pressure placed on those roads and even on those rail corridors then to reduce their operations. It is, firstly, planning for the corridors and, secondly, then providing that they are supported by adequate buffers. It is also ensuring that the various agencies work together to provide their particular services along those same corridors.

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In relation to the specific site that you are interested in, we have allocated in the previous budget, I think, \$14.1 million. In the planning infrastructure budget there is \$14.1 million set aside for the implementation of the high/wide load corridor which is part of what you are talking about. That is funded through the Department of Planning and Infrastructure but basically it involves not only some reworking of the road pavement but also the undergrounding and the removal of overhead wires from the Western Power services.

Mr McGOWAN: What is the geographic location of the particular corridor?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Of which one?

Mr McGOWAN: The one down -

Ms MacTIERNAN: It is from Jervoise Bay through to Kwinana down to - I think it goes all the way into Fremantle. There are a number of high/wide -

Mr BARNETT: It goes the other way, sorry. It goes out onto the Great Northern Highway.

Mr McGOWAN: It is to get out of town.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Out of town, yes. There are a number of those corridors that have been planned, some of which we have put on hold until; for example the one down the southern end of Albany Highway. We have indicated that we would not be proceeding with that at this stage because that may, of course, not be necessary once Tonkin Highway is extended and there are others that may be made redundant as a result of the finalisation of Roe Highway.

Mr COWAN: Why would you not continue with a high/wide load corridor irrespective of the fact that it might include Tonkin Highway?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Could I say, Mr Chairman, I do not want to stifle debate but I do not have my particular adviser. This is Department of Land Administration. This has absolutely nothing to do with Department of Land Administration per se, but I will just say I sat down with the CCI in relation to this and part of the thinking of the southern end of Albany Highway was that that was the only conduit out of the area. If it is the case that Tonkin Highway could actually take the transport that we are talking about, why would you duplicate? Tonkin Highway will be constructed in such a way - this is the extension - to make it possible to service those high/wide loads. Why would you expend the money -

Mr COWAN: That is the answer I wanted, thank you.

Mr McGOWAN: The second dot point from the bottom on page 846, Minister, refers to home sites around urban centres and also higher settlement density. It has always been my view that you cannot continue on an urban sprawl forever and to have a city with the population of Perth and its size and length and so forth is pushing the boundaries of what is possible in terms of servicing all these people with all of the electricity, water, community facilities and transport and all those things that you can do. I think Perth in a lot of ways has reached its limits in terms of its actual length, certainly its length along the coastline, and the ability to provide a reasonable level of service to all these people.

You say here you are going to work towards acceptance of higher settlement densities. What sort of measures are you going to put in place in relation to that? I do recall that the former minister for planning was talking about boutique suburbs. I remember that had a lot of airplay here about eight months ago or so. I thought it sounded like a fairly good idea actually. I am just wondering what sort of steps the Government is going to be taking in terms of ensuring that we do achieve an acceptance of these higher settlement densities in the Perth metropolitan area.

Ms MacTIERNAN: It certainly is a very interesting area and one that goes to the heart of what people want out of their home. It is not an easy issue and there are those that would tell you, "If we move to medium and high density, we could solve the urban sprawl." The research does not necessarily support that. There is also an issue, I think, where some communities do actually value the backyard. There are members here that represent suburbs where backyards and leafy trees are highly valued and I do not think that we should be dismissive of it, but I think there are nevertheless real opportunities to provide diversity and one of the things that we are going to be very much focusing on is the redevelopment around the transport corridors and, Mr Chairman, as you would know, around Gosnells, for example.

We should be increasing the intensity and the density of populations particularly where we have that transport infrastructure in place. There are a whole range of synergies that can result from that. We get better utilisation of that transport network. It means that we can quite properly allow high densities and reduce the level of parking that is required because you actually have people living in an environment where they may not indeed need to use a car. Again I do not think there is an easy solution to urban sprawl, but certainly increasing

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intensities around those nodes where we have particularly good transport corridors and other services I think is an important part of the process. We need also to look, I suppose, to more concentrated efforts for relocation of resources down into rural areas to attract populations down there.

Mr SWEETMAN: Minister, just in relation to issues and trends on page 846, dot point 2, what additional complications will be caused as a consequence of carbon rights trading and impact of issuing title? Is that going to be along the lines of caveats or encumbrances that exist in relation to clearing land that already exists or other policies that then exist as part of the issue of title?

[2.30 pm]

Ms MacTIERNAN: Sorry?

Mr SWEETMAN: I want to know how the carbon rights trading is going to be some significant problem or challenge.

Ms MacTIERNAN: In relation to Department of Land Administration we are doing preparatory work at this particular stage so that if this does in fact come into effect, we are in a position to actually utilise it. Obviously to have on our title system a notation for a bundle of rights that are the rights that one gains from the carbon that supposedly has been captured and to then be able to have some system where those rights can be transferred independently of the underlying title is, of course, a rather complex matter that the titles office is trying to get on top of.

It is because you are creating a right that arises out of a parcel of land that then that right can be detached from that parcel of land and transferred independently. You then to have a whole protocol and indeed a whole software regime that would enable you to do it. It is the same sort of issue that will face us if we ever go down the route of plot ratio transfer that has been suggested. Certainly the City of Perth from time to time has suggested that in order to protect heritage, for example, we have the capacity to trade plot ratio. It is the same issue. I do not know whether you want to talk any more deeply about what you are doing in terms of that.

Mr SEARLE: Just very briefly, Minister. The core issue is under a Torrens title system you should be able to identify all the interests in the land from the title and clearly carbon rights trading is a potential issue in terms of the rights vested with that land. We are working now with a number of State Government agencies to work out whether the title is in fact the best place to record those carbon rights so that people can keep track of all the interests that actually arise from that parcel of land.

Mr COWAN: Chairman, this is supplementary to that but not associated with carbon trading. Have you done any work then in respect to those landowners who have timber agreements where there is a record of the timber rights being noted on a title deed?

Mr SEARLE: Not specifically timber, but we are looking. One of the things that we see as happening over the last 140 years since we adopted the Torrens title system is that the new interests in land are recorded on a large number of registers and within councils in terms of restrictions, etc. What we are trying to do is look towards the future about how we best give the public access to all that information from a single point of contact. Whether that is done electronically using the Web and those associated technologies or whether we try and bring all of that registration function back to the title is one of the issues the Department of Land Administration is trying to work through with the minister now to try and find the best way to do it so we do not have the paper chase that goes on at the moment with people having to chase around a large number of agencies to make sure they capture all the interests in a parcel of land they are interested in buying.

Mr BARNETT: I refer to "Output 4, Rating and Taxing Valuations" and particularly at the top of page 855 it states, Major Achievements, "The supply of 95% of provisional Unimproved Values to the State Revenue Department for land tax purposes by January to allow modelling of tax scales." I imagine by way of supplementary information, but I would seek to be provided with a table format of unimproved values for residential property broken down from zero to \$100 000 in \$100 000 steps up to \$2 million and \$2 million and over, the numbers of properties occurring in each of those categories.

Ms MacTIERNAN: The numbers of properties?

Mr BARNETT: The number of residential properties occurring in each of those valuation ranges, zero dollars to \$100 000, \$100 000 to \$200 000 and so on up to \$2 million.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Is that information readily available?

Mr SEARLE: Is this for the whole State?

Mr BARNETT: Residential property, yes, the whole State.

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Mr SEARLE: Is this for the unimproved land or the improved?

Mr BARNETT: The unimproved values used for State revenue tax purposes.

Mr SEARLE: I would need to seek further advice as to how easily that data was available.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes.

Mr SEARLE: I am prepared to try and obtain that.

Mr BARNETT: I am informed it is readily available, in fact even down to an individual property owner.

Mr SEARLE: Individual properties, certainly, but the ability to collate that information rapidly, I am not sure of how -

Ms MacTIERNAN: We will provide what we can in terms of what is reasonable within the time of supplementaries, but you may wish to also put it on notice so that we can have more time to - you might want to explain to the Leader of the Opposition the process of putting questions.

The CHAIRMAN: For my own personal information, Leader of the Opposition, could you just clarify it again?

Mr BARNETT: I simply want to know a breakdown into a simple table of categories of the unimproved values of residential land in Western Australia by \$100 000 increments.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Just to make sure we are absolutely clear for Hansard, I will ask the Leader of the Opposition to put that on notice so that we have time to -

Mr BARNETT: Are you refusing to provide it, Minister?

Ms MacTIERNAN: No, I am not. I am asking that the Leader of the Opposition put it on notice so that we have time to provide it.

Mr BARNETT: I have a supplementary question. As information is available for individual residential properties, could you provide a printout of the names and addresses of every residential property to a value of \$1 million or more? 900, I understand.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will need to seek some advice, Mr Chairman, on that, whether or not that is within our brief, whether or not there are privacy issues that arise out of that, so I will ask that the Leader of the Opposition put that on notice to give us time to get advice on that.

The CHAIRMAN: So that will be put on notice.

Mr COWAN: Minister, I notice in your initiatives for 2001 and 2002 with respect to native title it barely has a dot point that talks about providing native title policy support in response to anticipated future decisions by the Federal Court at the top of page 850. One of the significant issues is not so much the matter of decisions that might or might not be made by the Federal Court, but the capacity of DOLA to actually deal with native title clearances. I think most members of Parliament would be growing a little tired of the comment or response that comes when a query is made by somebody who is seeking to develop property that this will not be progressed until such time as native title clearance has been granted. I would like some elaboration from either the minister or from the DOLA representatives of just what additional resources are being made available to ensure that those clearances can be expedited so that it is not used as a reason for delay in the release of title to land.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I can understand some of the member's cynicism.

Mr COWAN: No, it is not being cynical. This is a fact. I can give you any number of occasions, and I am not being overly critical. I am just making the point that where people are seeking a land release, that land release is usually unduly delayed on the basis that native title clearances have not been granted. I just want to know whether in your initiatives for 2001-02 there is something being done that might in fact ensure that it is not a question of native title clearance. It is just a general manner of due process that gets land made available.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. We are I think trying to take a very constructive and cooperative approach so that we can actually get early resolution of native title issues so that where land is in short supply, that land can be made available. I have to say that I am concerned that there may have in fact been past practices where it was not necessarily seen to be the desired outcome, but certainly our aim is to have a far more cooperative approach in relation to native title. In respect to DOLA's involvement in that, where there have been errors, where we have identified where there is a real urgent need for the land release, we have been putting in extra resources to get those native title issues resolved and in particular I point to Karratha where there is perceived to be a need by the local authority for more land release. We have potentially 2000 lots that we can develop and we have put a lot of effort into trying to get the native title issues in that area resolved.

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To some extent there are a few process issues, but there are also questions of the preparedness of the Aboriginal community to negotiate and we have been trying to improve the relationships between Government and the Aboriginal community so we are more likely to get early outcomes.

[2.40 pm]

Mr SEARLE: Mr Chairman, there have been some changes in DOLA in the way we are trying to process native title. The two key ones of those are that we are trying to be far more proactive. Rather than just following the processes outlined in the legislation, we are trying to involve the native title parties before the applications are advertised to try and get consent rather than have to go through the objection process and, once an objection process is started, DOLA does not control the time lines. The time lines are beyond our control. The second thing we are trying to do is work with proponents and get expressions of interest in taking up land subject to the native title issues being resolved and then working with particular proponents to work with native title parties to work through those issues. The minister has been involved in a couple of cases, looking at aged care housing in particular, and trying to work through those particular issues in that way.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, in Dongara.

Mr COWAN: Mr Chairman, if I can just conclude by making the point, this was a specific case, if you want a specific example, in the township of Hyden where they have been seeking to develop a new residential area to the west of the town and it did take, I think, an unacceptable length of time to clean up and, to probably add insult to injury, I received informal advice from DOLA for which I am very pleased that native title clearances had been approved and two days later the local authority received a letter from Homeswest advising them that because native title clearances had not been approved, their application for a senior residential development could not be approved, so there is a twofold approach here. One is to get the clearances approved and whatever you are doing, irrespective of how you go about it, it does need to be done and, secondly, it would be a great idea if other government agencies that are not within your ministerial responsibility are notified of the clearances when they do occur.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Perhaps you could talk to some of the shires. Perhaps we should look at the approach being taken in relation to Fitzroy Crossing where the local shire and the Aboriginal communities are sitting down together with the Department of Planning and Infrastructure to actually come up with an agreed town plan so that we can negotiate an outcome that all parties are happy with. Maybe there needs to be a little bit more effort in some of those places where native title claims exist to actually incorporate the Aboriginal people into the planning process. You might find that the clearances are able to be given more freely. It is a challenge but I think it is something that would be a positive move forward.

Mr QUIGLEY: On this subject of native title on page 847, I wonder if the minister could explain to me what changes have been made, if any, in the budget for the spending by DOLA on native title and why.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Where is this?

Mr QUIGLEY: You have set out that you are making provisions for changes within DOLA for native title. What are the changes for DOLA's spending on native title and why? How much is going to be spent?

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Innaloo, do you have a line that I can follow please?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We have got some information on this. There is going to be basically an increase of \$860 000 for mapping of land claims which will facilitate the resolution of Federal Court cases. The amount will ultimately be recouped from the Department of Premier and Cabinet which manages the WA Government's position on such cases. In all we have put basically \$860 000 in so that we get better quality mapping.

Mr QUIGLEY: Most of that will be recouped from the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes, that is right.

Mr SWEETMAN: Again, Minister, in response to dot point 3 on page 849, native title, who is the minister who has prime responsibility or carriage of native title issues in the Government?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The Deputy Premier.

Mr SWEETMAN: Is there still a native title unit within DOLA and how many staff approximately are employed in that?

Ms MacTIERNAN: We have two units within DOLA. The native title unit, land administration services, has eight staff in it. It is responsible for policy and procedural development and review in relation to native title and Aboriginal land issues. It is involved with the statutory processing of land title proposals under the requirements of the Native Title Act, negotiation and consultation in respect to a future act, land title proposals under the NTA

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with native title claimants on possible indigenous land use agreements and land applications by Aboriginal persons, in particular for community living areas.

Then there is a lands claim mapping unit, geographic services. That has five full-time staff with an additional 13 staff contracted or under secondment, working on historical tenure research associated with native title claims. The Deputy Premier is responsible basically for the policy settings and really DOLA comes in and provides detailed administrative support on basically the land issues.

Mr SWEETMAN: How many claims do you have currently lodged with DOLA?

Ms MacTIERNAN: The claims are not lodged with DOLA. They are lodged with the native title -

Mr SWEETMAN: Or that you are dealing with.

Mr SEARLE: I do not have that figure at hand.

Ms MacTIERNAN: We would need to probably go to the estimates involving -

Mr McGOWAN: Page 868, Minister, talks about the national dry land salinity program. I am wondering about the approach of the Department of Land Administration to the issue of salinity because obviously it is an enormous issue. In the 2000-01 budget there was an amount of zero dollars budgeted for it. However, there was \$846 000 spent on it. Because we have the same budget as last year, zero, how much do you think will be spent and what will it be spent on and what sort of measures is DOLA putting in place in consultation with other departments in relation to salinity?

Ms MacTIERNAN: You need to understand that we are not really an agency that is responsible for the sort of policy. Our role is to help identify those areas that are affected. We are basically a land information agency. In the last two years we have received grants from Agwest, from the National Heritage Trust Fund, to identify salt-affected areas, to identify areas of potential risk. It really was very much a mapping exercise. It was using the technology that we had to overlay the data, to incorporate the data in relation to salt-affectedness, so that we could actually get a very clear picture of what areas were salt affected. I understand that DOLA data collection work has completed in that regard.

Mr McGOWAN: So it is not envisaged to spend a great deal more in relation to that because you have already done the work.

[2.50 pm]

Ms MacTIERNAN: Presumably this will need to be updated from time to time but effectively if you think of DOLA as basically the agency that provides mapping and land information, we do not have any part to play in the development of policies or solutions to the actual problem.

Mr QUIGLEY: I am sorry to jump back, Minister, to the point that the member for Carine raised earlier but it is in relation to the operating revenue of DOLA. What is the most significant source of income for DOLA at the moment?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Basically it is land title activities, basically title searches, document transactions. We do not see any abating of that activity. \$38 million is the expected revenue from that. We have for some time been talking about the prospect of actually ultimately having DOLA operating as basically a self-funding GTE. That may be possible in the future once we complete some of the digital back-catch of titles. It is possible that these revenue streams will be strong enough to make DOLA self-supporting.

Mr QUIGLEY: Just a supplementary in relation to that. In relation to the fee structure for search fees and the like at DOLA, is there any increase in this year's budget? Can you just take me to that please?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. Search fees for about a million searches have risen from \$9 to \$11 per search in recognition of cost increases, including the introduction of a business continuity plan. This is the first increase since 1 July 1997. Then the document lodgment fees for some 285 000 transactions have also increased by \$5 per transaction, so there have been some increases but they are very modest, particularly when you consider that there has not been an increase for some four years. We have at the same time introduced a business continuity plan.

Mr QUIGLEY: Can you explain the business continuity plan?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. I was going to get the acting CEO to explain that.

Mr SEARLE: Clearly for the conveyancing community, access to titles on an almost instantaneous basis is critical come settlement time. What we have been planning is back-up and redundancy procedures with the



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NRIT network to enable us to have greater confidence that that system will be there whenever it is required. That involves a significant amount of redundancy within the system. That is what we are in the process of introducing over the next 18 months to hopefully make our system as fail-safe as possible so that we do not bring the conveyancing industry to a shuddering halt.

Mr QUIGLEY: Thank you.

Mr SWEETMAN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, page 848, output 1, management use of Government land. Since the rewrite of the Land Administration Act which enabled pastoralists to diversify, permitted them to do things other than pastoral activities, there has been a marked increase in problems in relation to the public trying to access recreational spots by crossing pastoral land, even though they may well have done that for 40 or 50 years.

Ms MacTIERNAN: And they are being charged fees for it.

Mr SWEETMAN: Almost a boom gate going up. People are being shepherded past the homestead so that you pay a fee. You are not interrupting the quiet enjoyment of that person to carry on the business of pastoralism but you simply want to be able to get to the coast. It is happening the length of the State, I might add. I have been trying to get something done by way of an amendment to the Act, negotiating that with various people in DOLA, hoping that we might be able to come to not so much a compromise, some established regime, pricing or charging regime that might get some equity into it for the pastoralists and also some equity for the visitor so they understand the rate of the charges being applied to them and what it may link to.

Ms MacTIERNAN: And that it is taken into account in assessing the rents that are paid by the pastoralist as well. We had something of this discussion this morning in relation to the earlier budget items. I can say that I think these are very real issues and what I want to do is put them on the table together but with the issues of security of land tenure that is being sought by the pastoral industry so that we can come up with a package that is fair and reasonable to all. So I think rather than trying to hive that off as a separate issue, it really does have to be tied into what is going to be the future of land tenure for pastoral leases and develop a package and take it forward in that way, and that is what we are proposing to do. We have had some discussions. I have met with groups of pastoralists and with the Pastoral Lands Board and I have put that down on the agenda for the first half of next year. We are hoping to have a fairly significant conference to sort these issues out, but I think we have to try to present a package that the pastoralists will sign off on.

Mr SWEETMAN: Yes, or simply that we change the legislation anyway.

Ms MacTIERNAN: Yes. We are going to give them a go to put their point of view and to put their arguments. As I said this morning - I guess I probably share with you - some of the views of many of the people in the community are that they should not necessarily have first right on the freehold bits but of course many of those pastoralists have been there in some cases for generations, albeit only a pastoral lease and one that is very modestly charged for. They feel it is their land and it is not my intention to ride in there and say, "We are changing the legislation." We have to talk it through with them. As I say, I think there may well be some trade-offs in terms of developing some security of tenure.

Mr SWEETMAN: In relation to the charges, I am sure that you will get the same legal advice that we got at the time we were looking at this. Basically the Land Administration Act does not entitle a pastoralist to charge.

Ms MacTIERNAN: That's right.

Mr SWEETMAN: But he can deny access. So there is a compromise.

Ms MacTIERNAN: I am happy to take this further at some other point but I think they have other ways too of indicating what they are charging for. Do you want to comment? We do not actually have anyone here from the Pastoral Lands Board.

Mr SEARLE: The minister through Mr Chair has raised the matter with the Chairman of the Pastoral Lands Board and we have had detailed discussions about the way to go forward. The Pastoral Lands Board in their last newsletter to pastoralists specifically raised this issue and brought it to their attention. It is clearly a matter that the board intends to address. Unfortunately the solution is not simple. Your concerns are shared by the people in DOLA.

Mr McGOWAN: Are they breaching a term of their lease, a term of the Act, by imposing such charges for crossing the land or for tourist activities on their land?

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Mr SEARLE: With your permission, Minister: if they are conducting those tourist activities without the express permission of the Pastoral Lands Board, and the minister suggests they are. However, most pastoralists who are conducting tourist activities have in fact applied for permission, for a permit.

Mr McGOWAN: What about charging for crossing the land in the way the Ningaloo lease is?

Mr SEARLE: They are diverse opinions as to that. It is an issue that we think is better resolved by consultation and agreement or if necessary we will make recommendations about legislative change.

Mr COWAN: You might tell me to read *Hansard* because I did not get here at the beginning of the DOLA division but I am interested in output 1, the management and use of Government land. There is still a reasonably good appropriation for that which obviously means that DOLA is still involved in the development of land. I would be very interested to know what policies you will have to provide developed residential and commercial land in rural Western Australia as opposed to the metropolitan area. I find in my experience that there is usually quite a significant demand by developers to be able to undertake that development in the areas where they can realise a profit but in regional Western Australia where they cannot it becomes a responsibility of the State and I am interested in knowing what contribution DOLA will make to the ready availability of both residential and commercial lots in regional Western Australia.

[3.00 pm]

Ms MacTIERNAN: I will not tell you to read *Hansard* but I did mention when we first came here that by and large the land development activities would pass over to Landcorp. That has not happened overnight and there will be some activity that will still be undertaken by DOLA as we go through that process. It is going to take a while because there is a lot of land involved and Landcorp and DOLA have both got a lot of other things on their agenda. The issue of course with Landcorp is that it does operate under a particular legislative regime which requires it to meet a hurdle rate of return, but nevertheless Landcorp can operate to develop that land with a community service obligation. What will basically be happening is that there will be a more transparent process where the actual cost of developing land in rural areas will be made evident because it will be the subject of a CSO application through Landcorp.

Mr COWAN: Madam Chair, I note there is only a \$200 000 reduction in the appropriation to DOLA for output 1. Does that mean therefore that the policy decision process - in other words, the decision that needs to be taken for the development of the land, whether it be residential or commercial or industrial - stills rests with DOLA and that they are going to recoup the costs that might be met by Landcorp in that particular development? If not, I am really wanting to know -

Ms MacTIERNAN: The decisions lie with Government.

Mr COWAN: If you are shifting the responsibility of development under output 1 to Landcorp, why is there only a \$200 000 reduction in that particular appropriation?

Ms MacTIERNAN: Two reasons: (a) that this is not going to happen overnight, it is in the process of happening.

Mr SEARLE: There are a couple of issues in there. A lot of that management and use of Government land is to do with the reserves management. There are lots of reserves across the State that are vested in councils and a whole range of other people and the vast majority of that money is spent on that sort of management. The money that was spent on development was a capital appropriation that DOLA got which was of the order of about \$12 million a year, and that money is no longer coming to Department of Land Administration. So that was the resource that funded that.

Mr COWAN: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN (Ms Guise): The question is that in respect to division 52 appropriation be recommended.