

KINGS PARK, PARKING FEES

959. Mr J.B. D'ORAZIO to the Minister for the Environment:

I refer to the Kings Park and Botanic Garden Draft Management Plan, which has just been released for public comment. Will the proposal to introduce parking fees in Kings Park receive the minister's support?

Dr J.M. EDWARDS replied:

I thank the member for his question and his interest in this matter. Around five million people visit Kings Park botanic gardens each year. It is not only the number one tourist attraction in the State but also very much an icon for local families and people in the community who want to go there. With so much interest in Kings Park we need an updated management plan. The draft of the management plan has been released for public comment. The closing date for this plan has been extended due to public interest.

One of the issues that has arisen in the plan is the high incidence of vehicle break ins. Obviously it is not very satisfactory for people who have a good experience in Kings Park with their relatives on a tourist visit to return to find their car broken into. For that reason, the board has flagged the possibility in the management plan of parking fees as one way of addressing the security issue. The reality is that the Government will not support that proposal. People in the community should not have to pay to park when they visit Kings Park. That will not happen. I have encouraged the board to consider other ways of addressing security issues; for example, increased lighting, increased patrols and even the installation of closed-circuit television in certain areas. The board will consider those options. I reassure the House that fees will not be imposed on people wishing to park in Kings Park.