

DEPARTMENT OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS, BUNBURY

898. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Indigenous Affairs:

- (1) Will the Department of Indigenous Affairs cease to operate from Bunbury this year?
- (2) If so, when and why?
- (3) Will any jobs be lost and how much money will the State Government save by this decision?
- (4) Which areas does the Bunbury office cover?
- (5) How will the department service those areas in future?

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The answer provided to me by the minister is as follows -

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Department of Indigenous Affairs' Bunbury district office will be closed in September 2003.

Hon Barry House interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! This is not a debatable matter.

Hon GRAHAM GIFFARD: The answer to (2) continues -

Over the past two years the DIA has placed a greater focus on its key areas of responsibility; that is, heritage, culture, land and coordination of services. To ensure the DIA is effective in these areas, there has been a significant degree of organisational change, including the closure of smaller offices. This new regional approach does not rely on maintaining shopfront services and has enabled the DIA to be more flexible and effective in the deployment of its resources towards priority outcomes in the region.

- (3) No staff will lose their jobs, but the positions and resources will be transferred to another regional office to improve cost effectiveness and to address priority issues. The closure of the office will mean an initial saving of \$12 000 per annum in accommodation costs. Other savings may also accrue in time through economies of scale and rationalisation of assets, such as vehicles, communications and consumables.
- (4) The south west region.
- (5) The services provided through the Bunbury office will not be withdrawn; rather, they will be maintained from the southern and metropolitan/wheatbelt regional offices.