

Division 49: Botanic Gardens And Parks Authority, \$14 543 000 —

Ms W.M. Duncan, Chairman.

Mr A.P. Jacob, Minister for Environment.

Ms M. Broderick, Acting Chief Executive Officer.

Mr I. Biddle, Business and Finance Manager.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 3 June 2016. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

I give the call to the member for Mandurah.

[4.20 pm]

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I refer to the heading "Customer Service and Cultural Heritage" on page 560. Can the minister indicate to me whether the board of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority has considered, discussed or assessed any proposal for a chairlift or sky lift from the botanic gardens in Kings Park to the Swan River precinct? If so, what is the board's opinion?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for Mandurah for the question. As he is aware, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority has undertaken a pre-feasibility study, and it has looked at the option of a cable car from Elizabeth Quay to Kings Park. The state government considers that if such a proposal were to be pursued—there is at present no firm proposal, as such—it would be required to be funded by the private sector. If such a proposal were to materialise—at this stage there is a concept but no proposal—it would be required to undergo a thorough assessment process, and I would expect that public consultation would form a major part of that. The MRA has consulted with the board of the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority, which has identified a number of key issues that would require further consideration in any such cable car proposal. Like any proposal, proponents are entitled to pursue one should someone wish to bring one forward.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: When did the board last discuss the matter?

Mr A.P. JACOB: When was the last point of discussion by the board? I will see if I can get an answer for that, but there is no firm proposal as such.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Did it form an opinion?

Mr A.P. JACOB: It did not have anything to form an opinion on.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It knows the concept.

Mr A.P. JACOB: The board has essentially outlined a number of what it sees as issues that would need to be overcome.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: The Friends of Kings Park group has formed a very strong opinion on this project.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I am aware of that.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: I support it. Can I just ask a further question? What is the update on Jacob's Ladder? Is it to be reopened or not?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I do not think that forms part of the BGPA. That is the City of Perth.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: It comes up into Kings Park.

Mr A.P. JACOB: It is the responsibility of the City of Perth.

Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN: Does it not come into the boundary of the park?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I do not believe so. I would be happy to be corrected on that. I take a keen interest in this issue as well, member for Mandurah. I think it has been reopened, but for limited hours.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The minister indicated that when the cable car issue was discussed by the board, the board had certain issues. What are those issues?

Mr A.P. JACOB: They are deliberations of the board. The board has been consulted by the MRA, and it has outlined some issues and considerations that would need to be taken into account, given the significance of Mount Eliza, were anyone to have a firm proposal. At this stage, it has not received or considered any actual proposal, even in terms of a landing point, structure or anything.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand, but the minister said that they had certain issues. I am asking what those were.

Mr A.P. JACOB: To paraphrase the board—I will see what I can provide on that—essentially Mount Eliza is one of the most significant Aboriginal heritage sites. The state War Memorial was just recognised as one of the top 10 destinations in Australia by TripAdvisor. It receives between 40 000 and 60 000 visitors at just the dawn service. On the one hand there is Aboriginal heritage, with Mount Eliza, and on the other Returned and Services League of Australia and state heritage. It is also considered to be one of the top 10 botanical gardens and parks to visit in general. Any proposal would need to be sensitive to these kinds of issues, and would need to address all those concerns. I think that is essentially what the board was putting forward.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I refer to service 2 on page 560, “Biodiversity Conservation and Scientific Research”, which has a net cost of service of \$8.148 million out of a total net service cost for the authority of \$14.938 million. Can the minister advise the budget for the authority’s herbarium? There are some fairly hefty amounts of money on that page. I imagine that within that budgeting there is an amount for the authority’s herbarium, and I would like to know how much that is.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I will pass that over to Ms Broderick, if she has a breakdown of where that herbarium costs sit within that budget.

Ms M. Broderick: The herbarium is a very small facility. We have actually only one full-time equivalent assigned to the herbarium, but I cannot give the member the exact breakdown.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: It is my understanding, though, that there is pretty well a statewide collection in that herbarium; it is a substantial collection, albeit looked after by just one person. Is there a risk of some duplication between the state herbarium at the Department of Parks and Wildlife, and the Kings Park herbarium?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I will again ask Ms Broderick to make some comment on that, but Kings Park clearly has a remit and a focus on flora.

Ms M. Broderick: There is very little duplication between the two facilities. The Kings Park one is used primarily for research into Kings Park native species.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: Does the authority receive funding from the Australian Seed Bank Partnership; and, if so, how much?

The CHAIRMAN: Do you have a budget line item there, member for Gosnells?

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: I think some receipts are mentioned on page 562, under other revenue.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I am just looking to my colleagues here. We might need to provide that by way of supplementary information, member for Gosnells, unless Mr Biddle has a specific answer.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister redefine what we are asking for?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I have been asked whether the Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority is receiving any Australian Seed Bank Partnership funding.

[*Supplementary Information No A85.*]

The appropriation was recommended.

[4.30 pm]