

Division 14: Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission, \$235 000 —

Mr M.J. Cowper, Chairman.

Mr D.T. Redman, Minister for Regional Development.

Mr S. Flanagan, Chief Executive Officer and Director.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: I call the member for Eyre.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Thank you for the committee’s indulgence. I draw the minister’s attention to “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 177 of the *Budget Statements*. I refer to the second-last dot point, which states —

The Commission continues to work with the Department of Regional Development and stakeholders to progress priority projects ...

I am sorry about the reference that the minister made to shopping lists, but it really is important. In those priority projects and fulfilling the regional investment blueprint, where do the minister and the GEDC see the upgrade of the Eucla airstrip, the establishment of the Kalgoorlie Pastoral Alliance pastoral cell fence, the solar thermal project in Coolgardie–Mungari industrial park and the Esperance jetty upgrade?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I will make a general comment. The member is well aware—I think he was chair of the board for the revitalisation funds, along with Hon Wendy Duncan—of the process of projects that come through from across a substantial area; the goldfields–Esperance area covers Ravensthorpe and the rangelands. It is a big area and a range of projects come through to be funded, many of which have been, including some recent announcements as the member highlighted earlier. I will make a comment on the cell fence project and I will ask Shayne Flanagan to comment on the others. Some work commissioned by the former Minister for Agriculture and Food Hon Ken Baston has been on strategies for how we might at a statewide level approach the dog issue, which is substantial and significant right across the southern rangelands in particular. As I understand it, that report is with the current Minister for Agriculture and Food. That will inform us about our approach to investment decisions as it applies to dogs. The cell fence will go into that box.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Is the minister referring to the wild dog action plan?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Yes. The Minister for Agriculture and Food will bring forward any advice around a response to that report. That is the only comment. I will ask Shayne Flanagan as the CEO if he would not mind commenting.

[12 noon]

Mr S. Flanagan: Yes; the Eucla airstrip was actually part of the initial project proposal by the Shire of Dundas, under its revitalisation scheme. The Norseman airstrip has been approved under the scheme but the shire withdrew its application for funding for the Eucla airstrip. We have been in detailed discussions with the Shire of Esperance about the funding avenue through royalties for regions for the jetty project, so we are working through that with the shire.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: The significant point about that is the scope. I do not think the Shire of Esperance has resolved its position. Has it come to a point on the scope?

Mr S. Flanagan: Yes, it has.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: It has.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The minister made the point about the four projects that have recently been announced. Unfortunately, I was not part of that announcement, but I will let that go at this stage; I have made that point. What is the time line for the next round of projects under the Goldfields–Esperance Development Commission and the blueprint?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Under the revitalisation funds?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: Yes.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: I defer the question to Mr Shayne Flanagan.

Mr S. Flanagan: We released an expression of interest for projects on 9 March and that closed on 28 April. We are going through the assessment process for that. That is proposed to be presented to our board on 24 June and subsequently we will brief the minister on that proposal for \$46 million. Those projects are shortlisted and we propose to have the business cases finalised by October so that by December of 2016 we will be in a position to make a recommendation, ultimately through our board, to the minister.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The spend of funding for that next group of projects in the next round will total around \$46 million. Did I understand that correctly?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: That is the resource that has been made available to the revitalisation fund at the direction of the development commission for expressions of interest for projects that meet the requirements. Bear in mind that what gets submitted needs to fit the blueprint work and directions and are transformational projects.

Dr G.G. JACOBS: By the time the election comes, will we have \$20 million still in the pot?

Mr D.T. REDMAN: Why?

Dr G.G. JACOBS: The minister said earlier that there was \$60 million still to be spent. We have spent \$133 million of \$198 million, so if we spend \$46 million, there is some residual funding in there of probably a little less than \$20 million.

Mr D.T. REDMAN: When we come back as ministers in March and April, we can get on with the business, can we not?

The appropriation was recommended.