

FREMANTLE TRAFFIC BRIDGE

608. Ms S.F. McGURK to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the incident of the commercial ship breaking its moorings and hitting the Fremantle rail bridge on Sunday night, and the authority of the Fremantle port harbourmaster to ensure that emergency tug crews are on standby.

- (1) When did the Fremantle Port Authority first become aware of the likelihood of bad weather on Sunday night?
- (2) Were tugboat crews placed on standby on Sunday night?
- (3) If no to (2), why was the emergency management response not implemented?

Mr D.C. NALDER replied:

- (1)–(3) The Bureau of Meteorology advised of strong winds for that night. The tugboats are on standby for gale force winds, not strong winds. The advice received was that there would be strong winds, but of course gale force winds did hit. At this point, we know that a bollard broke free but we are not sure whether it is a fault in the bollard, a fault in the processes of tying down to the bollard, whether the wind caused it or whether there was a breakdown in processes. We are two days into this, and I said at the outset that our priority is to ensure that we get the rail bridge fixed as quickly as possible. The divers went underneath the bridge yesterday and have advised that the bridge is structurally fine under the waterline, so we are now moving towards the top where a lot of the damage is visible, and we have replaced the scaffolding there. Our priority is to get this up and running. Following that, we will determine whether or not there is fault at hand. At this stage, there is talk that it is an act of God, but we will follow this through to ensure that if there is a breakdown of any process, we will put improvements in place. We have said from the outset that we will fix the rail bridge for commuters and freight to and from the port. We will then follow up with a proper investigation to see if there is any breakdown in process.