

Division 60: Heritage Council of Western Australia, \$2 461 000 —

Mr N.W. Morton, Chairman.

Mr A.P. Jacob, Minister for Heritage.

Mr G.A. Gammie, Acting Executive Director, State Heritage Office.

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, 19 June 2015. 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 now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Girrawheen.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to the last dot point on page 688 and the introduction of a new heritage bill. Can the minister indicate when he intends to introduce that bill to Parliament?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for the question. I intend to do it this year.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to page 689 and the heading "Desired Outcome". Can the minister advise—he might need to do this by way of supplementary information—how many interim listings he has refused to permanently list in the past year?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I cannot recall any.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I refer to page 689 and the heritage revolving fund. On the third line at the top of page 689 it states that the heritage revolving fund is the first of its kind in Australia. It is my understanding that there is a similar fund in New South Wales that relates to housing. Is that not the case, minister?

Mr A.P. JACOB: From all of the information that I have received, this is indeed the first instance in Australia where there has been a specific heritage revolving fund. The idea of a heritage revolving fund is not an especially new idea. I think it is a great idea. It has existed in a range of jurisdictions across the world, but I understand, and I have been informed, that this is the first specific heritage revolving fund in an Australian context. I do not know whether Mr Gammie has any further information on that. He does not; that is correct.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I was in New South Wales last year and I met some New South Wales National Trust staff who had been involved in heritage funding, working on houses in Sydney, and they described a revolving fund. When I looked at their website, it seemed to have information about a revolving fund. I thought it was a curious claim that this Western Australian revolving fund is the first of its kind in Australia.

[4.40 pm]

Mr A.P. JACOB: I am not familiar with the National Trust revolving fund model in New South Wales, but even if that one runs along similar lines to what we are running in Western Australia, the point still stands because the National Trust is a standalone not-for-profit institution in New South Wales—it is not a government body—so this is still the first time an Australian government has established a heritage revolving fund.

Ms S.F. McGURK: More front than Myer, but anyway!

Mr A.P. JACOB: Further to that, a revolving fund concept is essentially what property developers do; they invest money in one property, sell it for a profit and often sow the profit into the next. In terms of its commercial value, it is not a new concept, but this the first time that a government has established a heritage revolving fund and a specific heritage revolving fund. There are a lot of specialised heritage developers even here in WA that do similar work based on the same principles as a heritage revolving fund.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I question the veracity of the statement that the heritage revolving fund is the first of its kind in Australia when New South Wales has a revolving fund that it has applied to heritage housing in Sydney.

Mr A.P. JACOB: The National Trust in New South Wales is not a government agency.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I refer to the work that has been undertaken on the prison warders cottages in Fremantle. What is the expected budget for the repair work?

Mr A.P. JACOB: It is \$2 million.

Ms S.F. McGURK: So all that \$2 million revolving fund will be allocated to the work that is being undertaken on the Fremantle cottages.

Mr A.P. JACOB: No, that is only half of the revolving fund.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I misheard the minister; I thought he said \$2 million.

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes, \$2 million, but the revolving fund comprises \$4 million.

Ms S.F. McGURK: Yes, but will the full \$2 million that has been allocated to the Fremantle cottages be spent on maintenance work?

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes. It will all be spent on conservation work.

Ms S.F. McGURK: The work that is being undertaken at the moment?

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I understand that the government is thinking of putting the cottages on the market to sell. Will any of that preparation work be done within existing agencies?

Mr A.P. JACOB: Yes. We do not see that \$2 million will provide for a complete redevelopment. To a certain extent it will de-risk the project and fund essential conservation works and prepare those properties to the point at which we can maximise the return on their sale. It may not ultimately be a sale, but that is a potential option.

Ms S.F. McGURK: I was trying to think of the expression the minister used and it is “de-risk”! I note that the money from the fund will be allocated to projects over the next two years. Can the minister describe the process from which the next projects will be selected?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I will ask Mr Gammie to give further explanation about that. Obviously the warders cottages are the initial project and, to a certain extent, the flagship project if you like or the first run at this. But we have been looking at a range of different options right across the state. I will get Mr Gammie to outline some of those further.

Mr G.A. Gammie: The State Heritage Office, together with the Heritage Council of Western Australia, is working on a number of other revolving fund projects. For example, we are working with Western Power on the number 2 substation in Murray Street, Perth, to work out how that might be adapted and revitalised. We are working with Main Roads Western Australia on the old Coogee hotel as a potential project to bring online. In addition, we are working with the Department of Lands on the Boulder courthouse which, again, is an idle property that is in need of a new use. In that sense, in the early stages we are looking to use the revolving fund to revitalise three other properties.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: Minister, I refer to page 689, which states that the desired outcome is the conservation of cultural heritage places in Western Australia for the benefit of present and future generations. What is the government doing to ensure that the restoration of Guildford Hotel is completed?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for the question. My understanding is that not only is the restoration project well underway, but also that the topping out for the roof is next Thursday. Essentially the State Heritage Office and the Heritage Council have worked closely with the Guildford Hotel owners and their architects in pursuing the development, conservation and adaptive reuse of this project. Throughout the process the project has been documented in detail and a heritage agreement for the Guildford Hotel has been signed. The Heritage Council has endorsed a fit-out proposal that will reactivate the building as a hotel and will also provide patrons with an insight into the rich history of the Guildford landmark. Some of the more creative elements of the design include incorporating the socks that were pegged on the chandeliers. The recent history of Guildford Hotel now forms part of its history going forward. Some of the burnt elements will be retained and will be interpreted from the interior when that fit-out is ultimately completed. The thing that I have most wanted to see, in line with most other residents and most other interested parties around the Guildford area, is a roof getting back on that site. The good news about that, I am informed, is that the topping out of the roof will be completed tomorrow, so just at the start of winter 2015, which should help ensure the long-term sustainability and conservation of that building.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: What role does the minister or the Heritage Council play in the outcome of the proposal for a multistorey building on the vacant portion of that site?

Mr A.P. JACOB: The short answer is none.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Was the Heritage Council given opportunity or did it comment on the proposed amendments through the City of Swan?

Mr A.P. JACOB: Does the member mean the amendments to the block next door?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I think it is referred through the Heritage Council, but beyond that I do not know whether Mr Gammie wants to expand on that any further.

Mr G.A. Gammie: The City of Swan proposal to amend the local planning scheme was referred to the Heritage Council for advice under the Planning and Development Act. The Heritage Council rendered its advice about that as it affects the Guildford Hotel itself and that has been rendered back to the City of Swan that must make a final determination and recommendation to the Minister for Planning.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Minister, I refer to “Desired outcome” on page 689. Can the minister outline which developments, if any, have entered into a heritage agreement on the Elizabeth Quay site?

Mr A.P. JACOB: It is my understanding that at this stage there is just the one and that is with the Chevron proposal.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer the minister to “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” on page 692. What financial assistance is provided to owners of heritage places in regional Western Australia and what is the situation with the Goldfields earthquake restoration program going forward?

Mr A.P. JACOB: I thank the member for that question. There is a range of ways in which regional properties are assisted. In the first instance, some 65 per cent of the heritage grants program that is provided through the State Heritage Office or the Heritage Council, which is in excess of \$1 million a year, is historically awarded to regional projects. That is reflective of the fact that much of our state heritage register is located in regional areas. It also tells us to a large extent the story of the history of Western Australia up to this point. It is also reflective of the need of regional Western Australia more generally. The lion’s share of those heritage grants will typically go to regional areas. I think just about every year they have to a great extent gone to regional areas, and the long-term average is that some 65 per cent of that funding goes to regional areas. As of June 2015, the entire \$5 million of the goldfields earthquake restoration fund has been allocated to 66 grants. Overall it has taken longer than anticipated to see that program utilised and finalised, and that is mainly due to delays in resolving insurance claims with those properties. Nevertheless, that project has seen significant improvements to the conservation status and also the values of the historic Boulder precinct. Late last year I had an opportunity to walk down the main street in Boulder with Mr Gammie and I think the outcome for that spend is quite remarkable. It has absolutely transformed that area. I think Dr Graham Jacobs might have been with us for that visit as well. It is an absolutely phenomenal outcome.

[4.50 pm]

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to “Grants and subsidies” on page 692. Last year four properties received maximum heritage grants of \$100 000. Can the minister by way of supplementary information provide details of how many applicants for that maximum level of grant were unsuccessful?

Mr A.P. JACOB: We can provide that by way of supplementary information. I will provide the number of unsuccessful applicants who applied for the maximum grant.

[*Supplementary Information No B44.*]

The appropriation was recommended.