

Chairman; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr John Day; Mr Ben Wyatt; Ms Janine Freeman; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Matt Taylor; Ms Eleni Evangel

Division 29: Planning, \$54 582 000 —

Mr N.W. Morton, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Planning.

Ms G. McGowan, Director General.

Mr J. Deery, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr E. Lumsden, Chairperson, Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr T.M. Hillyard, Secretary, Western Australian Planning Commission.

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: Member for West Swan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to page 318, the second dot point under the heading "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency", and the issues in the community surrounding development assessment panels and joint development assessment panels. Does the minister consider the DAP process to be a success?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes, most definitely.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does the minister believe that the DAP process, together with the multi-unit dwelling changes that the government put in last year, or a couple of years ago, and together with the local council targets for infill—what I would call a bit of a lazy approach to infill—is creating enormous community angst in relation to density and is actually creating a backlash in relation to density when it should not be?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The issues all relate, but they are not the same. The member referred to multi-unit developments. There is some debate about that at the moment, and a review of the residential design codes, or R-codes, is underway with a view to maybe making some changes. However, that is not the same as the development assessment panel issue.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Most of those developments are not determined by development assessment panels, in fact. I think that the institution of DAPs in Western Australia has been successful. They have been quite widely supported. That does not mean to say that everybody likes them. It is more a case, I think, of people not liking the outcomes and the decisions that are made. A lot of people are unhappy about the fact that Perth is changing. Fortunately or unfortunately—however we like to look at it—the reality is that Perth is growing a lot. We have a very, very spread out Perth metropolitan area. That is recognised by just about everyone. Most people recognise that some changes need to occur. We need to make better use of the areas in which we already have well developed infrastructure, in particular within about 10 to 15 kilometres of the Perth CBD, so that we do not force more and more people to live in the fringes—in the electorates that some of us here represent, and further out—where the actual housing costs might be cheaper in some cases but the total cost of living might well be a lot higher not only in terms of transport costs but socially and so on.

In relation to DAPs, people need to understand that some of the outcomes that are complained about are as a result of the DAP not supporting a particular proposal. Previously, when local governments dealt entirely with applications, applicants could go to the State Administrative Tribunal and seek a review, as it is called, or appeal.

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The matter was then sometimes referred back from SAT, or there was a mediation process, and changes were made. This is certainly the case in the Melville area—which I know the member for Bateman is very interested in, and we had a grievance on this issue—where the outcome was as a result of changes that were made following mediation involving the DAP and involving the applicant and so on. It is the same process as it would be if a local government was dealing entirely with the application. That has not changed. I understand that under the previous arrangement, quite a lot of applications were refused by local governments, or councillors on delegation as the case may be, and the applicant went to SAT and approval was given by SAT. So, the principle of how that operates has not changed. The purpose of having DAPs is to ensure that professional planners and architects play a significant role, together with two local government councillors, so that we can hopefully get decisions that are more transparent and based on good planning and design principles.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does the minister really believe that DAPs is the way to achieve the density targets? The minister combined the discussion on DAPs with a discussion about density. Does the minister really believe that DAPs is the mechanism to achieve properly planned high-density precincts? Does the minister really believe that DAPs is all we need, or do we need better tools and better mechanisms to achieve properly structured precinct planning that will deliver better amenity when we try to increase density?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There is certainly a range of other aspects that need to be considered—I entirely agree. In fact, the purpose of establishing the DAPs was not primarily a way of putting in place higher density. It is for the other purposes that I outlined.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The minister mentioned those issues interchangeably in the discussion. The minister started talking about density —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I was responding to the member's question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What I am saying —

The CHAIRMAN: Member, let the minister finish his answer and then you can ask further questions.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: DAPs were put in place to try to ensure that more professionally-based decision making is undertaken and the process is more transparent. We are dealing with not only the growth issues that we have in Perth but a range of other issues, including major industrial-type developments in some cases. DAPs are not primarily about dealing with greater density issues, albeit that in some cases they serve that purpose, I guess. But development assessment panels need to make decisions, as local councils need to, according to the relevant planning scheme for the particular area, and in some cases the planning schemes may need to be reviewed.

[3.10 pm]

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have a follow-up question on the DAPs. The minister made the point, which I wrote down, that people who tend to not like the DAPs are people who do not like the outcome or decision that has been made. The minister is no doubt aware of a recent DAP approval of a high-rise development on Mill Point Road in South Perth. This development has caused some consternation to the federal member for Swan, Steve Irons. Referring to the minister's DAP process in the federal Parliament on 1 June, he had this to say —

I guess the minister of the day, John Day, would not have thought that he would create such a monster and such a terrible process, which leaves residents and ratepayers at the whim of people who do not even live in the same area making decisions about how their lifestyle will be changed.

I am curious to know whether the minister would agree with Mr Irons, or whether it is just that Mr Irons is not happy with the outcome or decision that has been made?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I cannot say that I agree. Does the member for Victoria Park?

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am interested in the minister's response—from his Liberal Party colleague!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The Liberal Party is a broad church, as John Howard used to say.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We often say that too!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Clearly, in the planning portfolio we have to deal with the planning issues that face Perth. These issues are not dissimilar in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane and to a much lesser extent in Adelaide and Hobart, no doubt because they do not have the same population growth pressures. I have not had any involvement in the particular development in Mill Point Road, but I am aware of it. It is in an area that has high-density development and other quite high-rise buildings. The member would be aware that over the last three nights the ABC, to its credit, has been running a segment in the news on planning issues for Perth and about a couple of people living in a multi-level building over the road complaining about that particular development.

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I can appreciate that people do not like their world changing but, unfortunately, the world does change. Perth's demographics and population numbers are changing significantly. We can cover that matter later perhaps.

However, the DAP process in Western Australia was not developed out of thin air; it actually follows an agreed national agenda. For the information of Steve Irons, or anybody else who might be interested in the origin of the issue, DAPs go back to a review of business regulation in the days of the Howard government that looked at red-tape issues and so on. One of the recommendations out of that review in the late 1990s was for more predictable and efficient planning decision-making processes in the various states. Then something called the development assessment forum was established nationally in which Western Australia played a role. That forum established a leading practice model, one aspect of which was to create a system of DAPs whereby decision-making would be made more on professionally based judgement rather than on a response to local political pressures in some cases. That is therefore the origin of it all. I agree that a lot of other matters need to be considered in relation to higher density developments. Getting a good design outcome is really important. That is something I have talked about repeatedly to people such as those in the Department of Planning and in the Western Australian Planning Commission so that we can, hopefully, get more certain outcomes in that respect. In reality, I think we are doing pretty well in this state where there are some very good examples of higher density and medium-density developments.

I should also make the observation that people use the term "high rise" when they talk about these multi-unit developments around Perth that are the subject of debate at the moment. They are zoned R30, R35 and R40; they are not high rise. They are generally two-storey developments. People use the terms "high density", "high rise" and so on fairly loosely and I think quite emotively. That point needs to be made. We have to bring the community along with us, I agree, but a lot of people actually want a lot of the changes that are being made and they are voting with their feet and taking up residence in these sorts of developments.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I have a follow-up question on that. Mr Irons raised another matter, and stated —

... as I have said, that rubber stamp which says 'APPROVED' in big capital letters is going to be pulled out by a DAP for every project.

Mr Irons raises a valid point about the perception of DAPs. I do not know whether statistics are kept, but is the minister able to provide statistics on applications to DAPs and whether those applications were rejected or approved?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am advised that those figures are not published in the department's annual report each year. I have just been advised that 321 applications relating to about \$4 billion worth of development were considered by DAPs in 2013–14. The vast majority of those applications were dealt with without any major controversy. So far in this financial year to the end of April, 319 applications have been made to DAPs. Most applications we never hear about as they go through fairly uncontroversially.

Mr B.S. WYATT: When the minister says that they go through without controversy, does that mean that they are approved?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: In the majority of cases, yes, but DAPs do not approve everything and nor should they. They are not there to be a rubber stamp.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I agree. I just ask whether Mr Irons is correct that every single one is approved by a DAP. If he is not correct, how badly is he incorrect? What are the stats? Are 80 per cent approved and 20 per cent rejected? I am just trying to understand.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The majority are approved; there is no doubt about that. Sometimes they are approved with modifications. Sometimes they are refused by DAPs in the same way that they can be refused by local governments. An appeal by the applicant is then made to the State Administrative Tribunal, mediation occurs between the two parties and modifications are made that are mutually agreeable. That was the case in the Kitchener Road development, for example, that I referred to earlier. There was agreement between the DAP and the applicant about changes that should be made, and discretion was available within the local planning scheme. DAPs essentially understand the issues of the local government and apply the existing local planning scheme.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Is the majority 55–45, or is the minister saying that 80 per cent are approved?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will provide that as supplementary information, if possible. I should also point out that a review is currently being undertaken by a committee of the Legislative Council. That review follows a clause that was put in the legislation establishing DAPs four years or so ago to which we as a government agreed. That review is underway, but the department also undertook a review last year and we made some changes following that.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister please clarify exactly what he will provide by way of supplementary information?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: We will provide as supplementary information the figures on the total number of applications to DAPs.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I am happy to have the figures for 2014–15 and 2013–14, which the minister referred to—those two—up to date.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: For 2013–14 and as far as we can for 2014–15, we will provide the figure on the total number of applications to DAPs that have been approved either with or without modification and the number that have been refused.

[Supplementary Information No B61.]

[3.20 pm]

Mr B.S. WYATT: Reading through the grievance by Mr Irons in the federal Parliament, I must put this to the minister and the gentleman to his left. Mr Irons went on to say —

Last week in the west Eric Lumsden, who is the head of the planning department in Western Australia—and who is a Labor appointee, kept there by the government—was still implementing the Labor ideology of low housing costs and high density in areas that already have high infill and high density. It is an absolute disgrace that he thinks it is only a vocal minority who are opposed to these changes. He should get out in the street—go down to see and talk to people in South Perth and see how his ideology and his ideas of using the Labor policy of high-density infill is going to affect their lifestyles.

I will put this question to the minister and maybe Mr Lumsden will enjoy the right of reply. Is, indeed, Mr Lumsden a Labor stooge?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The answer is no. That is certainly my comment and observation; Eric might like to comment himself. The answer is definitely no. It is true that Eric was appointed as the director general of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure during the previous government. I thought at the time that he was a very good appointment. When I came into the role as Minister for Planning in September 2008, I welcomed the opportunity of working with Eric, and have done so ever since in all the time he was director general, and more recently since he has been chairman of the WA Planning Commission. He is a very professional operator with a lot of experience in the local government, and now in the state government, arena and operates quite fearlessly I think it would be fair to say. I do not know whether he wants to add anything to that.

Mr E. Lumsden: First of all, let me just say, in a conservative way, I was very disappointed in the member's comments. I have never been anyone's stooge in local government or in state government. I take my role very seriously to give unbiased, impartial advice without fear or favour. Sometimes that may upset some people. Let me make very clear in terms of the South Perth issue that I am well aware of it. High-rise has been occurring in South Perth since 1968. It has had a scheme for some time. When it was developed by the city planner at the time, Mr Ian McNabb, who I trained with—that is showing my age a bit, members—it was quite forward thinking. It operated under the old Clarke–Gazzard codes, which became the GR codes, which increased density in South Perth around the Mill Point Road precinct. Over the last few years, the City of South Perth has done extensive community consultation in developing its planning scheme. The planning scheme was amended to allow that type of development, subject to the provisions of the scheme that guides the discretion-making whether it is a council, a development assessment panel or the State Administrative Tribunal. I understand that without any influence by me, because I have not been in contact with them on this matter, the City of South Perth's planning staff recommended approval. Accordingly, the development assessment panel, as would the State Administrative Tribunal if it was before that, took that into account, but examined every aspect, including people's concerns, as is its role. I certainly had no influence on that. I might say also that when I had the privilege of reporting to past Minister MacTiernan, that minister also had on her agenda development assessment panels in line with the Development Assessment Forum, as the minister has previously referred to.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Thank you, Mr Lumsden.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I trust that gives the member sufficient ammunition to use in his local area with his fellow member of Parliament.

Mr B.S. WYATT: What an outrageous suggestion, minister. I enjoyed the right Mr Lumsden had of reply.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, members. I draw members back to my initial statement that both questions and answers be short and to the point. Although I appreciate that Mr Irons' commentary helped frame the member's question, can we keep them to the point?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Thank you, Mr Chairman, I am done.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will make an overall comment. These issues cause some angst in local communities and obviously Steve Irons has taken that up. He and other members of Parliament need to appreciate the growth pressures we have in Western Australia, as they exist in Sydney, and Melbourne in particular. That is very much an issue on the national agenda at the moment, I believe.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I am about to take up my grievance again, minister; namely, amendment 32 from the City of Stirling to scheme amendment 3, which enables multi-unit developments —

The CHAIRMAN: Sorry, member, can we have a page?

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I refer to the second last dot point at page 318, where it states —

– promote sustainable development of land, taking into account relevant environmental, social and economic factors; ...

I was following on from the minister, really. The minister will be aware, because I have raised this with him previously, that this amendment is quite important. I recently went and looked at a number of the multiple-development applications; I actually went and drove in because we had a discussion about whether they were appropriate. One of the ones I identified was an eight-dwelling site in quite a small suburban lot in the inner urban area. That is in contrast to a 32-dwelling site on Princess Road. I am not sure that 32 is a great number for that area, but Princess Road is a major road through Balga. I get that there is a need for multiple dwellings. The multiple dwelling I looked at would have been nicely located near Metro Area Express if MAX was ever delivered. Maybe that is the point, but at this time MAX is so far into the future that this is not the right thing for these inner suburban areas that have no access to shops or public transport. When will we see an adoption of amendment 32 for the City of Stirling?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I understand the issue and I take it seriously, as I did when the member raised the grievance a few weeks ago. The comments she made and the locality she referred to have been part of the discussions I have had with the department, as have other areas, in particular in the City of Stirling represented by government members of Parliament. The views of both the member for Mirrabooka and their views are being taken seriously. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a review of the R-codes that deal with multi-unit developments underway. It is a very current issue. Amendment 32 relates to that, so partly any changes we put in place—I anticipate changes will be put in place through the R-codes—will impact on the effect of amendment 32. In other words, it will achieve at least a large part of what amendment 32 is seeking to achieve. Amendment 32 has not come to me as yet. It has not been considered by the Planning Commission yet but that needs to happen soon. It is mixed up with the R-codes review, as I said. It is something that has been very much discussed in my office, including with the director general and the chairman of other offices, in the last two weeks, and we will continue to do that over the next week or so.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I understand it has been more than 12 months, if not, getting close to 18 months, since that amendment was advertised and then came to the minister. I note what the member for West Swan said very well and very pointedly that if we want urban development, which none of us oppose, there must be a process and a capacity for communities to be taken along on that journey. The minister is not taking them on the journey. When the local government comes in and says, "We need to be able to change this aspect of it", for the minister and his department to sit on it for such a length of time and say that it is all mixed up in a review, the minister should pass that amendment and do the review separately because all he is doing is undermining good planning in this inner urban area.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I appreciate that. I point out that the changes to the R-codes will allow multi-unit development—it is not entirely new—to a larger extent in R30, R35 and R40 areas. Those changes were put in place in 2000, following advertising and public consultation. There was no major issue at the time, so it seemed logical to make the change. It is true to say, I think, that the ability to undertake these developments has been taken up a lot more than was expected by some in the private sector, and there are probably some developers being rather more opportunistic than was anticipated. The complication in the City of Stirling also, in particular in the member for Mirrabooka's areas, is that at around the same time—I am not criticising the city at all—the Western Australian Planning Commission, with my support, rezoned large areas to R40 without that being really very well targeted. The two things together produced —

[3.30 pm]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: The perfect storm.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: — the unexpected outcome that has resulted in the member's area. I take on board what the member says, and I will ask Eric whether he would like to add anything further to that, just bearing in mind that they have to make a decision and take into account all the facts they have to weigh up.

Mr E. Lumsden: The synopsis explained by the minister is correct. The issue is that initially local governments, in cooperation with the Department of Planning and then through the approval process of the commission, allocated all the residential planning codes within the area, and that included the relevant R-codes. That was done in consultation; it was not done at the direction of the commission, it was worked through the City of Stirling and other local governments in terms of allocation of the codes. When there came to be some revision of the codes in terms of the multiple unit codes, again that was worked through in terms of working groups that involved local governments that included the City of Stirling, and they were then finally endorsed by the commission after that process. I think it is fair to say in hindsight that from both the commission and a local government perspective, they did not appreciate that the codes could be, as the minister said, used perhaps a bit more aggressively in certain areas than was intended. I think the City of Stirling, in terms of its amendment, gave the commission some concern initially in the sense that it wanted to do radical changes that were not in line with the overall commission policy around transport routes; I understand that has been reconsidered. Certainly those issues will be reviewed by the city, but equally it has to be reviewed by the department and the commission in putting through amendments to the multi-unit codes so that those issues cannot occur that have caused angst not only to the local government, but also to the commission itself because they were not intended to be used that way.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to page 318 of the *Budget Statements*, under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". The sixth bullet point regards Middleton Beach in Albany. Can the minister advise what effect the improvement plan for the area is having in facilitating investment at the site?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes. The site of the former Middleton Beach Hotel has been a matter of significant contention for the local community for quite some time. Of course, an overseas company bought the hotel with the intention of redeveloping the site. As I recall, the global financial crisis came along and the company did not go ahead, regrettably after demolishing the hotel that was there, which was not very old; it was a pretty well-used venue, as I recall. It was very certainly a very attractive development. Nevertheless, the site has been vacant now for quite a number of years. An improvement plan has been put in place that enables the state, through the Western Australian Planning Commission, to make planning decisions about what happens on the site. That is being done with the support of the City of Albany, and LandCorp is now involved. The state, through LandCorp, has acquired the site, and LandCorp is currently working on more detailed plans as to what sort of development can occur there. I would expect it to be a mixed-use development, hopefully including short-stay tourism facilities, some cafes, restaurants and shops, and other holiday accommodation together with some permanent residential development. I would hope that although the state has had to outlay some funds to acquire the site—that did follow negotiation with the previous owners—that all those funds will be recovered by the state following the development. I cannot give an absolute guarantee and I do not have the actual numbers, but certainly it would be my personal hope that that would occur because it is not really the sort of development that the state really should be putting funding into; ideally, it is something we want the private sector to do. In this case there has been a market failure, unfortunately, so we have intervened, and through LandCorp plans are being worked on. The City of Albany is very much involved with the project.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to service 1 on page 319 of the *Budget Statements*, "Integrated Land and Infrastructure Policy Development". How closely does the Department of Planning work with the Department of Transport in developing future public transport plans for the area? In relation to the "Perth and Peel@3.5million" draft report released recently, are all the proposed public transport projects approved and supported by the Department of Transport?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: By way of initial comments, there is a lot of interaction between the Department of Planning and the Department of Transport, involving the Public Transport Authority. Clearly, there needs to be. The subregional planning frameworks for Perth and Peel were put out six weeks ago or so and they indicate some future public transport options and routes that need to be addressed. That is a long-term plan over the next 20 years or so. In short, there is a lot of communication between the two, but it is up to the Department of Transport and PTA to work out the finer details of how public transport is going to be provided. The Department of Planning has the critical role of identifying land use, generally where growth should occur and what then needs to be responded to through the provision of various services.

Ms G. McGowan: The director general of the Department of Transport is a member of the Western Australian Planning Commission, and the subregional planning frameworks have been developed by the department on

behalf of the commission, so it has been through that process as well. We have also worked very, very closely with the Department of Transport, PTA and Main Roads Western Australia, as well as with government trading enterprises and utility providers et cetera in the development. I think the underpinning feature of the work that is being done is the amount of cross-government coordination that has gone into the production of the documents. Equally, the Department of Transport is doing some adjunct work, or complementary work, on the transport planning for “Perth and Peel@3.5million” to continue to flesh out what is conceptually outlined in the planning frameworks. Both I and the chair of the commission are part of a steering committee overseeing that work. So, the answer is that we are working incredibly closely with them.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What impact does the cancellation of a commitment, then the cancellation of a project like the Metro Area Express, have on the ability to provide density or infill in that particular area? What sort of impact does the cancellation of such a significant route have?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I guess if a project does not go ahead, or more so if it takes longer to achieve it, obviously it is going to take longer to achieve getting higher density developments along the route. But the options, as I understand it through the Minister for Transport, are being considered, and whether the solution is providing more traditional light rail or whether it is through providing high-frequency similar bus-type services—essentially, a similar sort of vehicle arrangement but on rubber wheels rather than on iron wheels on tracks—is being considered at the moment. So, when the project is delivered, that will allow higher density development. Clearly, if it takes longer, it is going to take longer to get higher density along a particular route, and that is fairly self-evident, I guess. As a state government we have major challenges from a financial point of view, not primarily because of the high-profile projects like Elizabeth Quay but more because of the investment needed and debts incurred by organisations like Western Power in replacing the electricity network, the funding that is provided to the health system for redevelopment and to the education system, and many other major areas of government like that, which impacts on what else we can do. The provision of future public transport is a very big need—there is no question about that—and will present major funding issues for the state government.

[3.40 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to some of these projects and the interaction of planning with transport planning, has the Department of Planning undertaken an analysis of value capture in respect of funding mechanisms for particular rail routes?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The issue has been raised. I have certainly asked about it on a number of occasions in the past. I think I am right in saying that some work either is or was being done in the Department of Treasury because it has a significant role to play in that area. I will ask Gail to add a bit more.

Ms G. McGowan: Quite a lot of underpinning work has been carried out on a number of fronts; firstly, for the development of the draft “Perth and Peel@3.5million” suite of documents—some economic analysis and some underpinning work. It has equally occurred through work being led by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet but involving the whole of government on the strategic environmental assessment for the Perth and Peel region, and equally with some of the other work such as the major transport projects including the Forrestfield–Airport Link project—we are part of the steering committee for that as well. In terms of specific value-capture work, a lot of work is incorporated into that and the Department of Transport would obviously be doing some of its own work on that as well. The chair may have something further to add.

Mr E. Lumsden: I will make a couple of points. Firstly, the frameworks put out through the Western Australian Planning Commission were developed across government, which included, as the director general outlined, the Department of Transport. As chair I asked on three occasions that if any government agency had any difficulty with the proposals in the documents to let us know before they were published. We received that assurance from the relevant directors general. The maps refer to a high-quality public transport network and, quite clearly, we cannot put light rail everywhere through Perth because it would be prohibitive, but bus, light rail, heavy rail and walking are all part of the integrated transport network. In terms of value capture, work has been done on that as mentioned by the director general by, as I understand it, the Department of Transport but primarily through the Department of Treasury. I have to say that my personal opinion is that value capture would be very difficult to implement from an equity point of view, and there may be other better mechanisms to achieve that because not only will the redevelopment take some time, but also some areas will be more developed than others because we are not there to force people out of their homes. Value capture can be a bit like applying a development contribution, which can be problematic when working on a long-term basis because of changing ownership and different expectations et cetera. Although value capture is one mechanism, it would have to be carefully applied to relevant situations where we can work without making the government or a future government liable in terms of costs, which would be difficult to counteract.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to value capture, normally we would be looking at defined areas where we get a significant increase in densities and in value. Some studies have shown that rail delivers a value-capture potential as opposed to buses that do not because it is not something that is permanent or delivers a value to surrounding precincts. The equity argument is always there but the same argument can be applied to development contribution plans. For example, new homebuyers in St Leonards pay \$33 000 in a DCP to get essential infrastructure whereas someone purchasing an apartment in Elizabeth Quay does not pay any DCP for additional playgrounds and public open space or improved road connection. There is always the equity argument but that can be also applied on DCPs and how they apply to metropolitan areas.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As we discussed in the MRA division briefly, people who go into Elizabeth Quay would be making a contribution in that the developer has had to pay for the land. They are certainly getting a big benefit, there is no doubt about that, but the primary purpose of undertaking a development like that is for the wider public interest and the benefits it has to the city and to the state overall. In more suburban areas and greenfields development, somehow or other the infrastructure has to be paid for as well. We believe that having a mechanism whereby landowners will pay something towards that is really the only way it can be done. Governments fund quite a lot of major headworks, major sewerage extensions and electricity network extensions and that sort of thing, but, effectively, in those other specific projects mentioned by the member, it would seem to me that people are paying in a different way.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a further question on DCPs. I know there was a slight revision to the DCP. Is that a continuing watch given the complexity of the policy and some of the questions about nexus of use and all the other issues about the costing and the indexation of the infrastructure over time? Is that an area that the department is looking at?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The state planning policy is still under review. I hope it will come to a conclusion because it has been under review for some time, but I will ask Gail to comment.

Ms G. McGowan: We are close to completion. We have been doing some stakeholder consultation on the DC policy, which is quite complicated and something that we will need to constantly keep under review anyway because of that complexity. The chair may also have some comments on the history as well as the current application.

Mr E. Lumsden: In terms of development contribution policies, I see those as a different mechanism to simply develop a contribution through a development approval process, and that certainly is the case, as the minister has outlined, with Elizabeth Quay. In terms of development contribution policy as first contemplated, it would basically be used to support the community infrastructure that can be justified on a need and nexus basis, of which I think the member is aware. In terms of the approach of some local governments to development contribution plans, I have had some concern in the past and have expressed my concern directly to some local governments which have lodged development contribution plans with contributions being sought for some types of development—for example, the extension of the administration centre of the council, which I could not see as justified and nor was it within the intent or the spirit of the policy. I am also very conscious at the moment that there are a number of mechanisms local government can use to facilitate development contributions, but it should not be using the development contribution policy without sticking to the fundamentals of the intent of the policy as first drafted. The commission has required the Department of Planning to review those issues and when the Department of Planning reports to the commission we will look very closely at not only need and nexus, but also how they justify some of the costs. The current policy requires local governments to be transparent in their costings, but recently I have become concerned when, on occasion, a local government or local governments have sought to put in a development contribution of, say—I will give an example of the perspective—\$6 000 a lot and then a year later wanting a contribution of \$18 000 a lot. I find that hard to justify. It means either that a terrible error has been made in the initial assumptions, or that there may in some cases be an expectation of using the policy beyond its intent. That is why I am very strong on having the policy reviewed so that we can—no pun intended—put it back on the right rails.

[3.50 pm]

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: And put MAX back on the right rails as well!

I refer to page 318 of budget paper No 2 and the first dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” which in part makes reference to —

... a plan for the future development, infrastructure and environmental conservation needs of the Perth and Peel area ...

My question goes to the management of the Bush Forever land in Mirrabooka. Since I was elected to Parliament as member for Mirrabooka in 2008, I have taken an active interest in the Bush Forever land in Mirrabooka. It has

remained under the management of the Department of Planning rather than the Department of Conservation and Land Management. Most Bush Forever sites in other areas are managed by the Department of Conservation and Land Management. While I am thankful that the land has been fenced off under the Bush Forever initiative, we still have major problems with the site being degraded and people breaking the fences and driving four-wheel drives over it. What is happening with the Bush Forever land in Mirrabooka? I asked this question during the last estimates hearings, and I get that the minister sees Whiteman Park rather than the Bush Forever land in Mirrabooka as the “jewel of the north”, but Bush Forever is quite important to the area. How can we ensure that it is managed in such a way that it can become the jewel of Mirrabooka rather than a hazard, which it is currently becoming in terms of fire hazards and bush-bashing? I would really appreciate an update on the Bush Forever land in Mirrabooka.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The expert on Western Australian Planning Commission-owned land is sitting right behind me, Tim Hillyard. I will ask him to provide an update.

Mr T.M. Hillyard: The Mirrabooka open space is actually one of the Planning Commission’s jewels. As a Bush Forever site it has active management and, as the member has rightly pointed out, has also been getting a fair bit of unhelpful access by off-road vehicles et cetera. We continue to manage that by involving the community; it is a very active community that reports illegal activity to the department and we have acted upon those complaints quickly. The original planning policy for all the Bush Forever sites was that the Planning Commission would acquire the lands and they would then be transferred to the ultimate management of the Department of Parks and Wildlife. However, there were issues with a number of local governments that, under their local environment plans, wished to take on the management of particular Bush Forever areas. There has been some discussion between the Department of Planning, the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the various local governments on those specific sites. The City of Stirling at one stage wanted to take over management of the Mirrabooka Bush Forever site, but then declined to. The Department of Parks and Wildlife then said that it would be interested in management, but it also then declined because there was some interaction with the City of Stirling. My most recent advice of about a month ago is that the Department of Parks and Wildlife is interested in taking over management of the area in the short term, and we are working on a policy through to the minister and the government in terms of the general transfer of all Bush Forever sites to the end managers as one activity for the department.

Ms J.M. FREEMAN: I refer to the site that sort of comes into the Bush Forever site in Mirrabooka as it goes across towards Alexander Drive, and that is the Atlas Group site. To avoid boring the house with details about my electorate, I am wondering whether the minister could provide me a briefing on what is going on with the Atlas site.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am happy to; just contact my office and we will make sure it is arranged.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: On behalf of the member for Bunbury I have a question about the Greater Bunbury region scheme. I refer to the final two dot points on page 318 of budget paper No 2, with regard to development and growth in the area covered by the greater Bunbury region scheme. Can the minister please detail what recent planning activities are occurring to manage growth and urban expansion in this region?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Growth in this state is occurring not only in the Perth and metropolitan Peel regions, but also significantly around the Bunbury area as well. Since the final endorsement of the greater Bunbury strategy in December 2013 to manage and direct urban growth in that area, the Planning Commission, with the involvement of the Department of Planning, has commenced putting the strategy in place. It is working with the relevant local governments to ensure that the local planning strategies are consistent with the greater Bunbury strategy, which supports redevelopment and increased densities within the existing urban areas of Bunbury and rural towns to maximise the use of existing services and facilities. That is generally what we need to do in Western Australia. The population of Greater Bunbury is expected to double to about 150 000 by 2050. To accommodate that population growth, a new 1 100-hectare greenfield site has been identified in an area east of the existing Eaton town site. Planning for this area is currently being undertaken by the Department of Planning together with the Shire of Dardanup through a district-level structure plan that will serve as a basis for more detailed planning to follow. The new urban development will provide homes for approximately 70 000 people, accommodated in a mix of higher density developments, including apartments, townhouses and single residential options. Similarly, the department and the Shire of Dardanup are planning for a significant employment area in the Waterloo and Paradise localities of Dardanup shire, directly south east of the Eaton area. The district structure plan covers in total about 1 575 hectares. It is anticipated that the draft structure plans will be advertised in early 2016. Over the next three decades or so, there is going to be significant growth in that area.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thought we were covering both divisions cognately, but I have been told we are not.

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Mr J.H.D. DAY: Effectively, we probably have been, but —

The CHAIRMAN: No, we have actually been dealing with division 29; we cannot deal with division 30 until we have voted on division 29. I am sure people still have questions for division 29, so as soon as that is done, we will move on to division 30.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the Department of Planning's \$3.5 million draft planning document. I would like to go through some of the key areas of the document and ask for some detail about it. It has been put to me that, while some areas of Forrestfield have been marked for urban consideration and urban expansion, a lot of the land at the bottom of the hill near the intersection of Welshpool Road and Tonkin Highway has not been earmarked for urban consideration. What is the logic in relation to where the Department of Planning has earmarked urban consideration or development compared with retaining its current nature?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Sorry; did the member say "has not been indicated"?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The area the member is talking about is in Wattle Grove, in fact. Is she talking about the Welshpool Road–Tonkin Highway intersection?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: To the east of Tonkin Highway. I do not think that is under urban consideration.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think there may actually be some growth indicated there; it is long-term rather than short-term. I will ask Gail to elaborate.

Ms G. McGowan: Certainly, I cannot speak about the individual lots, but in most instances where decisions have been made, the consideration of whether something should be identified as urban, urban deferred, industrial or otherwise has been predicated on information we have about environmental and other values. The recognition that we already have something like 66 000 lots currently zoned for urban development, which we see as a sufficient land supply to take us forward a number of decades, is part of the overall strategy of a compact and connected city and limiting some of that growth. Clearly, one of the reasons the documents have gone out for public comment is to elicit that sort of feedback about whether there are reasons that certain categorisations or zoning should apply to particular land. Invariably, having gone through a process whereby we have actually taken into account the particular basic raw material attributes, environmental values, and our consideration of the need for industrial and employment lands, that is the underpinning rationale. Obviously, there is also employment generation. We would be inviting anyone to put in submissions on that basis.

[4.00 pm]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A lot of this is in the Forrestfield electorate and I see the member for Forrestfield showing some interest here. Obviously, there is growth indicated in the area east of the proposed new rail station, which is Forrestfield and High Wycombe near the border, and also going over Roe Highway into Maida Vale in part. I hope local people understand that and comment if they wish to; likewise in the Wattle Grove area. There is no proposal to have blanket urbanisation across all of the foothills in that area, nor should there be. There needs to be more rural or semirural areas retained to some extent. I will just ask Eric to comment a bit further.

Mr E. Lumsden: First of all can I clarify that the documents are now the commission documents. They were prepared on behalf of the commission by the Department of Planning and through liaising with other agencies. Having said that, the key issues in that area are not only environmental aspects, but also, I think from memory, servicing issues in terms of water and sewerage, particularly sewerage. Part of the objective of the commission, on behalf of government, is to ensure that we add value to existing infrastructure, and where there are proposals to extend existing infrastructure that they not only add value but are also cost-effective, and provide a return on investment for future generations. Without looking at the specifics, I believe they would have been, apart from the environmental issues, a key factor of determining those recommendations.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: This relates more for north of Ellenbrook. There was a big parcel of land, which I think everyone would be aware of in relation to activity to get that into an industrial area, but also there was a plan to have significant residential subdivision north of Ellenbrook being serviced by the new NorthLink project. That does not appear in the plans. Was there any particular reason for that not appearing in the plans?

Mr E. Lumsden: Yes, I know that area quite well from a past life. It is primarily where land has been excluded for either residential or industrial development, basically on environmental grounds: drainage, natural environment et cetera. That constraint—if I could use that word—has been applied right throughout all the documents in conjunction with the strategic environmental assessment process that has been going on through the state through the Office of the Environmental Protection Authority as well as the commonwealth. The other issue is looking at what was the longer term need for that area, and it was determined that our planning had

facilitated—in other areas around Bullsbrook—more than ample potential for increased urban development. Due to other locational needs, such as Perth–Darwin highway and railway, and also the need to facilitate an employment centre's options to serve the north-west corridor, which is significantly constrained in terms of employment opportunities, those sites near Bullsbrook and its east–west connections, through Neaves Road and the like, was a far better strategic land-use planning outcome than simply having extra urban in that area, which was not considered required to that extent. Looking at the amount of infrastructure in the present but also in the future, there was a significant advantage, not only to the north-east corridor and the north-west corridor, but also to the areas north of the Perth region scheme, north of Bullsbrook, for an industrial area to be established there in the short, medium and long term.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I point out that documents are out for public comment at the moment. If people have views, they should be making a submission. Those submissions will be seriously considered.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I suspect they will be, but not through me; probably at a 500 Club function one day, minister.

In relation to sterilised land—I think the minister is probably aware of my obsession with this issue—in particular, it has happened for a number of years, in which development leapfrogs other areas because there is land that cannot be utilised for particular purposes. I am talking about buffers in particular, whether it is mushroom buffers—which I think we all know that story—in my electorate, or the chicken farm issues, and I have got about two or three active chicken farms. I know there is a state planning policy in relation to the prevention of the intensification of chicken farms in urban deferred areas, and that is part of it; not to stop the intensification, but from a planning perspective, is there something further that can be done to ensure the orderly and systematic development of land, and not continuing the issues we have? As we know, all these issues do is increase the cost of land, they leapfrog development, they create fragmented ownership and they create enormous costs and time frame issues across the metropolitan front.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is a difficult issue. It is part of balancing the competing interests that people have between activities that have occurred in a location for a long period of time and new uses that come along; in particular, residential development in that area. I am advised that the state planning policy on this issue has recently been reviewed, and I will ask Gail to comment further.

Ms G. McGowan: On behalf of the Western Australian Planning Commission, the department has actually been looking at the poultry farm—I cannot remember the exact title—state planning policy, and certainly looking at incorporating it into more of a rural land-use policy. That, I think, has just been to the commission and will shortly be coming to the minister for consideration. There will be some changes there to make that more practical. In relation to some of the areas around mushroom farms, in particular east Wanneroo, the subregional planning frameworks, or the draft frameworks, have certainly identified east Wanneroo as an area for potential urban development. Notwithstanding, there are a number of challenges, both environmental and servicing, and some of the things the member for West Swan has talked about, in terms of leapfrogging, have continued to challenge. As a department, and again on behalf of the commission, we have been working quite closely with the Water Corporation and the City of Wanneroo to look at how we identify exactly what has to be done to move some of those parcels of land forward and actually sequence the infrastructure and determine exactly what needs to be done at what point in time. It is still quite challenging because, as I say, there are a number of environmental and other studies that will have to be done, but certainly it is land that we see currently could be made available for urban expansion.

Mr E. Lumsden: In terms of the mushroom farm, which I am very familiar with, that was zoned rural under the City of Swan's planning scheme. The council at the time gave its approval, albeit not being unanimous in the council chamber, subject to some conditions. Having said that, at the time the development area was not proposed for urban development; that came later. That is something we have just had to wear and certainly I think that development became highly problematic for a whole range of reasons—not only how it operated, but also perhaps the negotiations that went on between potential land developers, which I am very familiar with. I hope we do not have one of those again.

Having said that, in terms of poultry farms, other than where we have obviously had ongoing commitments such as at East Wanneroo, which the director general has referred to, and a couple of areas the member would be familiar with in her own electorate, in our future planning for Perth we have been trying to retain poultry farms in other areas of the region scheme, including the Peel region scheme, and that is reflected in the state planning policy that the director general has referred to. Equally, through that review of the policy, we have undergone, through the Department of Planning, very detailed discussion with the relevant poultry and other rural producers, because they seek not only, I suppose, protection of their land uses, but also certainty, and that is what we have been trying to do for the regional frameworks as well. We are hopeful that if our framework is subject to some

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modifications, as the minister has pointed out, it will give certainty for not only urban development but also those rural producers that the state requires to be in place to support the broader economy and community with agriculture, poultry production or whatever it may be.

[4.10 pm]

Ms E. EVANGEL: I refer to significant issues impacting the agency on page 318 of the *Budget Statements*. The fourth bullet point refers to the online lodgement of planning forms and the processes involved. Could the minister briefly highlight the benefits of this rollout scheme for us?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A lot of work has been done in the department on planning reform generally, of course, and a lot of that has involved the government and legislation through Parliament. One particular aspect has been the use of electronic facilities a lot more, the so-called e-lodgement system, and a lot of good work has been done without needing a lot of financial support. There has been some, and going back about seven or eight years there was a plan for a really quite expensive project, but after we came into government the advice was that it was uncertain at best whether it would produce the outcomes needed. Following that, there has been an evolution and a lot of work done, as I said, within the department to make use of existing platforms and to modify them so that, for example, there is now the ability for applicants to lodge subdivision applications online and that is reducing the processing time quite substantially compared with what was the case previously. That is one good example. I think I am right in saying that it is intended for structure plans to be submitted for approval in the same way. I am not sure whether that is the case.

Ms G. McGowan: We are moving that way. Certainly, the centralised platform has allowed us to do some significant work in that regard. Since we did a soft launch in March, we have had 1 150 applications lodged online. Even the preliminary referral to other agencies electronically is doing things such as stopping the need for 42 hard copies of everything to come through to us. Processing time in some areas has dropped to just a few days, but we have taken it overall from an average of 30-something days and dropped it by seven days in total, which is quite a significant saving. We have also introduced electronic payment and now 49 per cent of payments are made electronically, which is something we just did not have the capacity to do. The future stage, as the minister said, is to look at doing structure planning and also some of our geospatial viewing platforms that link in with what Landgate is doing with its strategic land information system so that people can access information themselves. It is all quite good work.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, we will take a short break.

Meeting suspended from 4.15 to 4.25 pm

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Victoria Park.

Mr B.S. WYATT: I refer to page 320 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, and the table headed “Outcomes and Key Efficiency Indicators”, which provides a breakdown of various statistics that the department keeps. The average lot size in the Perth metropolitan region for 2015–16 is 420 square metres. That is actually, interestingly, an increase from 2014–15. Is the department able to provide those statistics over the 10-year period up to and including 2015–16? Does that make sense?

Ms G. McGowan: Certainly, we have figures, or the industry has some figures. The average lot size has been coming down quite substantially. I have some general figures. The current average lot size is about 411 square metres, on the data produced by the independent Housing Industry Forecasting Group and the information that we have. I have tracked it over about the last decade or so, and it certainly has come down substantially.

Mr B.S. WYATT: Can I get that by way of supplementary information? I do not expect the department to have it now, but is that something that can be provided?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes, we can do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Would somebody like to repeat what the minister will be providing?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am happy for the director general to respond to that.

Ms G. McGowan: We will provide, to the extent that it is available, the average lot size over the past decade in the Perth metropolitan region—and Peel, if possible, or does it not really matter?

Mr B.S. WYATT: Yes, and Peel, if you have it.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, can you confirm that that is okay?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No B62.*]

Mr B.S. WYATT: Does the department also keep figures on the average lot price each year, either as lot size or as a square metre average?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The answer I am advised is no. Landgate publishes the median monthly house sale price. Landgate would presumably also have the figures on vacant land. I have a document here—I can either table this or provide the member with a copy—of the median monthly house sale prices, basically from now back to 2010. Interestingly, in April this year, the median house sale price was \$540 000, and in January 2010 it was \$520 000, so there has not been much movement in that time. The median land area, which is also listed in this table, in January 2010 was 700 square metres and in April this year was 680 square metres. This relates to existing house sales. It does not relate to new land development, presumably. The director general will provide some more information.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you going to provide that to the opposition?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am happy to provide a copy, or do you want me to table it?

The CHAIRMAN: No, the minister cannot table it, but if he would like to provide it I am sure our attendant could walk it across. Ms McGowan, go ahead.

Ms G. McGowan: The approvals for lots equal to or less than 320 square metres increased from 1 600 in 2008–09 to 4 400 in 2013–14. The number of lot sizes of between 320 square metres and 499 square metres has more than doubled, from 3 400 in 2008–09 to 7 100 over the same period. We are seeing some smaller lots, but certainly in the area of lots around 400 square metres, there has been a significant increase.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to page 318 and the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. My question relates to transient worker accommodation and some of the issues facing hotel owners, up north in particular. I have had a number of representations about what the state government can do to ensure that TWAs are not used to provide accommodation for people who would primarily or normally target hotels and longer term tourism accommodation.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will ask Gail to comment.

Ms G. McGowan: I think the Western Australian Planning Commission and the chair, Mr Lumsden, have been doing some work in this area. This is an issue that has been raised. The issue is more relevant in those areas of the state that have high levels of resource activity, and it is around the requirement that some local councils are including, or previously have included, in their lease agreements that a certain proportion of any transient worker accommodation, or worker accommodation generally, be made available for tourism and other industries. This was an issue when we were at the height of the accommodation shortages, and it is now sort of having a reverse effect. The commission is certainly doing some general work in this area, although it is not necessarily solely a land use planning issue. The chair of the WAPC might like to add to that.

Mr E. Lumsden: Yes. As an extension of what the director general has mentioned, I have been having discussions through the Department of Planning with the Department of State Development and local governments. This certainly was a concern when the construction phase was very significant in the north west, and there were issues with transient worker accommodation in terms of not only the town sites, but also some conditions being put on leases by local governments in areas covered by state agreement acts et cetera. I think that has been worked through in the state agreements. The town site issue is complex because hotels and motels also provide transient worker accommodation. The issue was not so much about the definition of transient worker accommodation, on which we got agreement following extensive meetings with the Department of State Development representatives, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy and local governments such as the City of Karratha, Roebourne et cetera; the issue was more about getting some planning guidelines around town sites that could facilitate transient worker accommodation, having regard to amenity issues. It was also about having appropriate development conditions so that transient worker accommodation, wherever it was, was site specific such as in Karratha city and other areas, and that it was effectively reflected in the local planning scheme framework. I think we are pretty close on that basis to being able to resolve a lot of these issues for the future. They are certainly not as sharp—if I can use that expression at the moment—as they used to be. From the planning point of view around the town sites with the local planning strategies, I think we will get some common approaches shortly. I think I have managed to get all the players in alignment on that issue. I have expressed to the Department of State Development and to local governments that I have concerns about some of the conditions they are putting on other external town sites in terms of the head of power for local governments to do that. I think that has now been taken up through the Department of State Development, particularly where they are in state agreement areas.

[4.30 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a further question on that. Does the role of councils in some instances as both participant and regulator not throw another level of complexity into people's confidence in councils to regulate an industry in which the councils themselves may be directly or indirectly participating?

Mr E. Lumsden: Yes. In my view, on these issues where councils are both the approving authority of a development and the regulator, even when it is not land under the local council's control, they have to be very careful of conflict of interest issues in their quasi-judicial decision-making compared with perhaps getting more funds for the local government. I have expressed my view on that issue.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer the minister to the third dot point on page 318, which deals with issues of residential lot supply, appropriate regulatory requirements, supporting residential diversity and residential design codes. I note that it is also linked to the minister's recent issue of the planning framework on the population of Perth and Peel regions expected to reach 3.5 million. Can the minister provide an update on the response to the framework so far and what it broadly aims to achieve in the long-term planning of our city?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The four documents that were put out six weeks or so ago are significant. They have involved a lot of work by the Department of Planning and the Western Australian Planning Commission and liaising with local governments and so on. I understand that there has been a lot of community interest following their release. It is anticipated that the population of the Perth region contiguous with the Peel region will increase by one and a half million over the next three decades or so, up to 3.5 million from the current level of two million. That is a large amount of growth. I am told that the documents have received more than 500 000 hits on the Department of Planning's website. Generally, the response has been largely positive. In relation to the proposals, I am advised that the documents build on the "State Planning Strategy" and "Directions 2031" documents that were put out several years ago and are the precursors to this more detailed planning. The documents aim to create a more consolidated urban form and to improve the balance between infill developments, providing 47 per cent of new housing developments, and greenfield developments therefore being 53 per cent. Also, the aim is to provide a greater amount of housing diversity and choice with a range of services for people. We have also taken into account the significant environmental issues that exist across the Perth and Peel regions, as well as future water usage, public transport and industrial land development issues.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I have a follow-on question. I thank the minister for that answer. I am sure the minister is aware that the Town of Cambridge has initiated scheme amendment 31. From the analysis I have completed linked to the population of Perth and Peel regions increasing to 3.5 million, I have three concerns with this scheme amendment on which I am keen to get the minister's feedback. One is that the Town of Cambridge scheme amendment 31 infill strategy is not part of an overarching town planning strategy, nor is it supported by requisite public transport nodes nor activity centres, these being key design principles for Perth and Peel at a population of 3.5 million. My second concern is that the infill strategy is couched as a housing choice strategy, but it does not appear to be supported by appropriate R-codes, appropriate design rules or proper market analysis of the current and future needs of the community. Thirdly, the infill strategy overreaches by a considerable margin its infill targets for two of the seven suburbs, which are the furthest from Perth and have no major public transport nodes or major activity centres. Given these three concerns, is there capacity for the state government to intervene in local government planning scheme amendments to ensure that the state government planning principles and philosophy of "Perth and Peel@3.5million" is applied so that it avoids ad hoc and misaligned long-term density outcomes?

[4.40 pm]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am aware of the amendment. It has not come to me at this stage, of course. I am aware because the member has raised it with me, and I am aware of the general discussion in his local community about this proposal. I understand that it is not primarily about providing greater infill or higher density developments but more about providing some degree of diversity and housing choice for people who are largely from the particular area. We are talking about City Beach and Floreat, I think. I do not want to pre-empt the outcome, of course. I am aware that the Town of Cambridge has advertised a proposed amendment with a number of aspects to it. Whether the town council ends up agreeing to all of that proposal, as has been advertised, remains to be seen. It could be modified somewhat from what it is putting forward to the Planning Commission and what would ultimately come forward to me, obviously taking into account the comment period. I understand a significant number of submissions have been lodged, and I am sure they will all be assessed by the Town of Cambridge officers.

Planning decisions are not just based on numbers, they are also based on the validity of the issues generally. It is not possible for the state to intervene, as has been asked at this stage, but once an amendment is initiated by local government, it will take its course and go through the process in whatever form goes to the Department of Planning for assessment. The Planning Commission considers it and it comes to me as Minister for Planning for

a final planning scheme amendment. That is the general process. As I said, I understand this is not particularly about getting higher density or infill but about providing some diversity and choice for people who want a range of options and who in many cases might be from the existing area. I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment briefly, bearing in mind as chairman of the Planning Commission he has to make a decision and recommendation ultimately, so that is taken into account.

Mr E. Lumsden: As the minister has correctly outlined, the intervention of the commission takes place after the process. The commission and certainly I do not really like to be involved in the process up-front because, one, I do not think it is appropriate as there is a statutory process. Two, the commission recognises that local government, as the local planning authority under the Planning and Development Act, has the right to initiate an amendment and go through the proper process for consideration. As the minister has outlined, it will then come to the Department of Planning for assessment, which will make a recommendation to the commission. Then the commission will go through a process of deliberating on the matter before making a recommendation to the minister. That is generally the process we follow unless a local government asks for the advice—not the determination—of the commission, either through my office or the Department of Planning. We are very conscious of ensuring that on behalf of the government of the day, the commission retains a high degree of independence and examines any proposal or any scheme amendment in regard to state planning policies, other aspects and what I call good planning outcomes. That is where we are at with that.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I note the comments of both the minister and the chairman and that it has been couched as a “housing choices” policy but it will have an infill outcome. That is the connection. Because it is a state government planning policy in what we want to achieve for “Perth and Peel@3.5million”, even after the full process has been taken into account, is there scope for looking at this more broadly across metropolitan Perth to recognise infrastructure, transport and activity centre needs to make sure that what is being planned is not ad hoc?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The short answer is yes; those factors are taken into account in the decision-making process. Going back to an earlier stage of this afternoon’s discussion about not only population growth pressures but also demographic changes in Perth and what has been covered in *The West Australian* in recent times and on ABC TV, we need to get a balance. We need to make more use of well-developed existing infrastructure within a 10 to 15-kilometre distance from the Perth CBD. That does not mean there should be large swathes of high-density housing and multi-unit developments or whatever through residential areas that have traditionally had single housing on relatively large blocks, but equally it does not mean there should not be any change in some areas in a modest and well considered way.

The appropriation was recommended.