

BROOME PORT AUTHORITY

**616. Hon M.J. CRIDDLE to the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development:**

The minister will be aware of the necessity to upgrade the Broome Port Authority and to extend its facilities because of the development that is going on offshore. What provisions has the minister made available or what approaches has the minister made to Treasury to progress that development?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

The specific responsibility for the port is within the planning and infrastructure portfolio. In my capacity as the Minister for the Kimberley, and as an advocate for that process, I ensured that at least serious consideration was given to the needs of the port in the current financial year. The member will see within the budget papers some additional funds that will start to flow through the planning and infrastructure portfolio at the end of this year and will continue into next year. That does not provide for all of the capital works ambitions of the port. The port authority legitimately aspires to improve port facilities. The bids for additional funds, whether they be grants or a capacity to borrow, must be considered in the total budgetary context. This year the port authority made a submission to the federal Government asking for its cooperation in the form of a grant to the port authority to ensure that the port would have the capacity to handle the increased pressure that it is under from its use by the Navy, which is increasingly utilising that port for not only its coastal surveillance activities, but also its work with the boats that are bringing into the north west coastal waters large numbers of people who are claiming refugee status. However, there is no indication from the federal Government that it will favourably consider such a request. This process will need to have the focused attention not only of the port authority, but also of, hopefully, an incoming federal Beazley Government, which would make a commitment to a coastguard for our north west waters. That coast guard would require funds for a port facility that can serve the needs of the people of the north west.