

INTEGRATED WOOD PROCESSING PLANT, NARROGIN

**1664. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the minister representing the Minister for Energy:**

Some notice of this question has been given. Given the Gallop Government's claims of support for renewable energy initiatives, and a report in *The West Australian* on Monday, 8 December with regard to the bio-energy pilot plant at Narrogin, I ask -

- (1) Can the minister confirm that the mallee processing plant at Narrogin has been mothballed because of a \$4 million funding shortfall?
- (2) How much has the State Government contributed to the \$9 million spent on the Narrogin plant so far?
- (3) Given that Western Power has estimated that 10 such plants can be built around the wheatbelt, what is the State Government prepared to do now to help prove the concept of the Narrogin pilot plant?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

On behalf of the Minister for Energy, I provide the following response -

- (1) The integrated wood processing plant has been approved by the Western Power Board to proceed to the proof of concept stage. The site is on care and maintenance while funding applications are being assessed. Commonwealth government departments are considering requests for further grants for the project. The Western Power Board has agreed that when the grant requests are successful, commissioning of the plant will recommence.
- (2) The State, through Western Power, has spent in excess of \$7.3 million on the Narrogin integrated wood processing plant. The Commonwealth has contributed \$1.76 million.
- (3) Project commissioning will recommence in early 2004, subject to successful grant applications. The Narrogin integrated wood processing plant is designed to demonstrate the research and development aspects of the project. No future commitments can be considered past this stage until the process is proved to be viable.