

MUCHEA AND KATANNING SALEYARDS

**739. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:**

I refer to the minister's interview on the ABC *Country Hour* during which he stated that the government could not commit to the future of the Katanning saleyard until the financial outcome of the Muchea facility was known.

- (1) Does the minister know the expected cost of the Muchea facility?
- (2) When will he be able to advise the final cost?
- (3) When can the minister commit to the relocation of the Katanning saleyard, which, like the Midland facility, is reaching the end of its service life?

**Hon KIM CHANCE replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. The Western Australian Meat Industry Authority is acutely aware of the issues at the Midland saleyard and there is a maintenance plan to address immediate occupational health and safety issues. WorkSafe has assessed the saleyard and identified priority areas, which the authority is addressing. I am sure Hon Murray Criddle will appreciate that a major refurbishment is not appropriate given our intention to establish replacement facilities at Muchea, and investment will be limited to reducing personal injury risks.

The maintenance allocation for this year is \$100 000. In August 2004, following stage 1 investigations, government endorsed the continuation of the saleyard relocation project, at Muchea. The estimated cost at that time was \$16.4 million. Since that time, the Meat Industry Authority has been implementing stage 2 of the project, which is scheduled for completion this year. Government will shortly assess the results of this more detailed work and will consider progression to the construction tender stage of the project. Specific details are therefore not publicly available. However, I can say that the project is likely to be completed in 2008, although cost increases are expected due to the buoyant building market, and these cost increases may be significant. As pointed out earlier, the relocation project is being delivered over three stages to improve risk management. This approach allows consideration of improved information from stages 1 and 2 prior to construction. It is appropriate for government to assess the project at this time.

- (2) I have already answered that question as best I can. The government will shortly consider progression to the construction tender stage. Specific details will be available once we make that progression. Final costs will be known when the Muchea facility is completed and the Midland saleyard is decommissioned. Costs are involved in the decommissioning of Midland, some of which are quite high because of the asbestos sites and other matters there. This is expected to be known in 2008.
- (3) The government has a legislative responsibility for the Midland saleyard and will therefore be responsible for the replacement facilities at Muchea. However, the state government does not have responsibility for saleyard businesses across the state, including Katanning. As Hon Murray Criddle is no doubt aware, the Katanning saleyard is owned and operated by the Shire of Katanning. Funding is not available at this time to assist regional livestock saleyards. However, I am sympathetic to the issues faced by regional saleyard operators, including the Shires of Katanning and Plantagenet.