MUCHEA SALEYARDS - ACCESS ROUTE

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture and Food:

I understand that Main Roads Western Australia has changed the access route into the new Muchea saleyards.

(1)   Is this an impediment to the progress of the Muchea saleyards?

(2)   Has a final decision been made on the access route?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank Hon Murray Criddle for the question.

(1)-(2)   I will start with the second part of the question. No; a final determination has not been made.

The answer to the first part of the question is yes. The position that the Main Roads department had originally agreed with the Western Australian Meat Industry Authority has changed. That position was for a cost-sharing arrangement with a total value of work of about $1 million shared between WAMIA and MRD. Two other routes have been proposed, and they are generally referred to as the northern route and the southern route. Both those options are more expensive than the originally proposed central route - the first agreed route. The northern route is affordable but presents some difficulties because it involves purchasing a certain amount of private land that might not be available. The southern route also involves private land, but the landholder is very keen to participate in the process. However, the cost of that option is much, much higher than was previously agreed between MRD and WAMIA. There has been no solution yet. The issue is not one in which I have been asked to intervene personally, although obviously I have been briefed by WAMIA. WAMIA believes that at this stage its best option is to continue its negotiations with MRD. However, it is very clear that this needs to be resolved because it is one of the last of the critical stages of approvals in the development of the Muchea saleyards. Although we thought we had this matter taped down, a change in opinion by MRD has put the matter back on the drawing board, but it will be resolved. I am confident that WAMIA and MRD will be able to come to a satisfactory resolution.