

WATTLEUP TOWN SITE, RESIDENTIAL SURVEY

Statement by Minister for Planning

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister for Planning) [12.04 pm]: In April, the Government announced the final report of the Fremantle Rockingham Industrial Area Regional Strategy. Since the announcement there has been much speculation about the future of the town of Wattleup and, indeed, the intention of private home owners if the strategy is implemented.

On behalf of the Ministry for Planning, I can now report that a professional research company has surveyed private home owners in Wattleup to measure their intentions. The survey was conducted to help quantify the number of private owners willing to sell their homes to the Government to help facilitate the FRIAR strategy. Already the Government has purchased 49 homes in the area, with a further 231 in private ownership. The survey of Wattleup residents, conducted earlier this month, took responses from 95 private property owners, which comprises about 40 per cent of the total number of privately-owned homes in the area. Residents of government-owned properties were not surveyed.

The survey found that 74 per cent of the private home owners in the area would consider selling their homes during the next 20 years. Most significantly, it was established that a clear majority of 57 per cent of private home owners were willing to sell to the Government now. In addition to the properties already purchased by the Government, this equates to 65 per cent of home owners who either are willing to sell now or have already sold to the Government. All home owners were asked about the barriers to their selling now. About one-quarter said that there were no barriers, while the FRIARS report and industrial expansion were each seen as minor concerns to just 3 per cent respectively. Concern over low market value and the replacement value of homes influenced 60 per cent of the respondents. Providing a fair and reasonable price for home owners is a primary objective of the purchase program by the Government and, I suggest, will help alleviate those concerns.

Clearly, the survey demonstrates that most home owners do not want to remain in the area as some opponents to FRIARS would have members believe. As anticipated by the Government, the majority of home owners want to be able to sell their homes for a fair price and move from the area. Of course, it would be simpler and financially more beneficial for the rest of the State if the Government did not purchase the Wattleup properties and allowed industry to develop around the town site. However, the Government has not taken that option because it would not be fair on the people of Wattleup. Indeed, the Government has provided a guaranteed buyer for the home owners to ensure they get the best possible price. The survey shows that it is what they want and what the Government intends to provide.

I now table the report and findings.

[See paper No 123.]