

NEW CATTLE AND SHEEP SALEYARDS, LOCATION

617. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

The minister knows this issue well. Following his announcement of the new cattle and sheep saleyards location to Muchea -

- (1) Has the minister identified a specific site for the purpose?
- (2) Has funding been allocated to upgrade the road infrastructure to allow haulage access to the site?
- (3) Has environmental approval been given for the site?
- (4) Will the money from the Midlands saleyards disposal be available to fund Muchea and other saleyards throughout the State?
- (5) If not, where will these moneys be expended?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1) No specific site has been determined or, more accurately, no specific site has been identified by way of the Government's taking an option on a site. There is a specific reason for that. I should first explain that the locality of the area has been identified by government. It is for the Shire of Chittering to identify to proponents which sites might be available. The reason we have done it in that way is, first, that it allowed a more rapid response when approaching the private sector to gauge its interest in whether it wanted to engage in the process. Had we identified a single site, it would have required taking an option to purchase that site. It may have suited one proponent; it may not have suited another proponent. In order to keep a more level playing field, it was better for us to identify a locality and have the Shire of Chittering identify which areas would be suitable for that particular form of land use. The answer to the first part of the question is therefore no.
- (2) No, although the question should properly be asked of the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, who may well have made plans with which I am not familiar. When the Midland Redevelopment Authority first approached me with its proposal, I took that proposal to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure and she called for a report on the infrastructure requirements for a facility of that kind in that locality. The amount of additional funding that might be required would be minimal, if any. The Shire of Toodyay has expressed concern about the identification of Muchea as the site because it believes that Julimar Road, which is within its shire area, may be used by heavy transport accessing the Muchea facility. In fact, unless the Shire of Toodyay decides otherwise, only as-of-right vehicles can use Julimar Road. My recollection is that the number of vehicles that will be likely to use Julimar Road - that is, as-of-right vehicles - is only about seven a day. I do not think it will be a major issue.
- (3) Environmental Protection Authority approval has not been granted because no site has yet been identified. We have received early advice from the EPA about the suitability of the area, but it will not be able to do any detailed work on even setting the level of assessment for the proposition until a specific site has been identified.
- (4) Money from the sale of the Midland saleyards will be available for the construction of the site, although I do not know how much. The Midland saleyards land should more correctly be called the Midland land because the saleyards occupy only around 17 per cent of the total area of the land. The Midland land runs from the railway through to the Great Eastern Highway bypass at Bushmead Road. Indeed, the land with the greater value on an individual block basis is that which is most distant from the Midland saleyards. From memory, the Valuer General's Office has determined that the total value of land, at kerbside valuation, is \$13.78 million. Undoubtedly, it will be considered for construction of the new facility. However, Cabinet decided that before such a decision was made, it would be necessary to allow the private sector three months in which to consider whether it believes it can play a role in the construction of the new facility. I wholeheartedly support that decision. I was surprised and delighted to hear only today that 15 people have asked for the request-for-information documents. We will make a decision after we have assessed the private sector bids, but there has never been any indication from government that money from the sale of the Midland land would not be available.
- (5) I have already indicated that I am keen for some of the money from the sale of the Midland land to be made available to other saleyards on an equity basis; however, Cabinet has not made a decision.