

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES, RELOCATION TO HILLARYS BOAT HARBOUR

883. Mr JOHNSON to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer the minister to her statement in this House yesterday that no final decision has been made on the relocation of the Department of Fisheries marine and research facility to Hillarys Boat Harbour.

- (1) Is the minister aware that the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Hon Kim Chance, issued a press release in September last year that contained a detailed plan for the project and announced that work was set to begin?
- (2) Is the minister also aware that the chairman of the Hillarys Boat Harbour leaseholders advisory committee received a letter from the Department of Fisheries stating that earthworks were expected to begin next month?
- (3) Will the minister admit that she has misled the House?

Ms MacTIERNAN replied:

- (1)-(3) I thank the member for the question because it saves me taking advantage of Standing Order No 82, which I intended to use to make some further statements on this matter. All the statements I made yesterday were correct. The Government has not made a decision on this matter. On 26 March 2002 I met with my ministerial colleague, Hon Kim Chance MLC, and officers from the Departments of Fisheries and Planning and Infrastructure to discuss the proposed development of research facilities at Hillarys Boat Harbour. I made it clear at that meeting that no final decision would be made or relocation take place until a thorough review of the impact of the proposed development on car parking at Hillarys Boat Harbour was completed. That is the current situation. The car parking review is being conducted by Sinclair Knight Merz Pty Ltd and commenced in the first week of March 2002. It will take about two months to complete. The first month's work involved the collection of data on car parking patterns at different locations and times, and the surveying of visitors to Hillarys Boat Harbour. The analysis of the data will be completed in the first week of May. It was important that the survey was carried out during the peak summer period, which could not be done last year because we had just come to government. The information I provided yesterday was correct. At the same time that the questions were asked yesterday, a member of my office and senior officers from the Department for Planning and Infrastructure met with leaseholders at Hillarys to confirm that information.

In passing, I will comment on the misleading press release that was put out by the Leader of the Opposition. The media release said that we had not responded to the petition that had been received. I had responded to that petition. My first letter of response was sent on 18 February 2002 and a second letter was sent on 27 March 2002. As I said, officers from my department and office yesterday discussed the issues with leaseholders. The Government made an election commitment. Unlike the previous Government, which made this decision, this Government has undertaken to complete that review before any decision is made.