

WOODCHIP MILL, COMMENTS BY MEMBER FOR BUNBURY

277. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

I refer to the comments made by the member for Bunbury on ABC regional news last week about the proposed woodchip mill at the port of Bunbury. Will the minister advise the house of the record of the member when he was the Mayor of Bunbury?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The member has a great interest in ensuring that we have a rational solution to the issue of the processing of plantation timber. I was amazed at the statement by the member for Bunbury that we should be listening to the concerns of residents on this issue. I thought: if that is the case, why did the City of Bunbury approve a woodchip mill at the port of Bunbury in April 2003? The approval of that Hansol Australia Pty Ltd mill is directly responsible for WA Plantation Resources now wanting to put its chip mill there, because it believes, quite understandably, that it should be in the same competitive position as its rival.

Mr D.F. Barron-Sullivan: That is not the case at all.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: We therefore decided to look at the debate that took place when the Hansol mill was being considered by the Bunbury City Council. Guess what! We found that this matter was never actually considered by the councillors of the City of Bunbury. The councillors of the City of Bunbury let the Hansol chip mill be approved under delegated authority. On 15 April 2003 the officers of the City of Bunbury made the decision about the Hansol chip mill. We then thought: the City of Bunbury must have been engaged in some really important things at its council meeting that night that it could not deal with this matter. I will tell members some of the matters the council dealt with at that council meeting. The first item was a sign for a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop. The next item was the construction of an ensuite. The next big item was the construction of a walk-in robe! The woodchip mill did not rate a mention in the council minutes. It went through on the word of the officers. What has changed since then?

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: What has changed since then is that the then Mayor of Bunbury became the Liberal Party candidate for the seat of Bunbury. Therefore, when the member for Bunbury tells us that we should listen to the people -

Mr T.R. Buswell interjected.

Withdrawal of Remark

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct that the member for Vasse withdraw those comments.

Mr T.R. BUSWELL: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I withdraw.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN: What is even more extraordinary is that the City of Bunbury thought it was such an inconsequential matter that it was never even put out for advertisement.