

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 10 May 2000

THE SPEAKER (Mr Strickland) took the Chair at 12.00 pm, and read prayers.

TUART FOREST, LOTS PT 302 AND PT 303 SOUTH BUNBURY STRUCTURE PLAN

Petition

Dr Gallop (Leader of the Opposition) presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 372 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We the undersigned do hereby ask the Minister for Planning to prevent Homeswest and associated agents from clearing the old-growth Tuart forest on Lots Pt 302 & Pt 303 of the South Bunbury Structure Plan (extension of Shearwater)

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 116.]

WESTERN POWER AND ALINTAGAS, PROPOSED SELL OFF

Petition

Dr Gallop (Leader of the Opposition) presented the following petition bearing the signatures of 23 persons -

To the Honourable the Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly of the Parliament of Western Australia in Parliament assembled.

We, the undersigned citizens are opposed to the sell off of Western Power and AlintaGas.

We believe they are people's assets and should continue to be publicly owned and put service to the communities of Western Australia before investors profits.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that you will give this matter earnest consideration and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[See petition No 117.]

8792 DUNCRAIG ROAD, APPLECROSS

Statement by Minister for Planning

MR KIERATH (Riverton - Minister for Planning) [12.05 pm]: This amendment deals with the site at 8792 Duncraig Road, Applecross in the City of Melville. It is a crown reserve vested in the Minister for Works. The western portion contains the decommissioned Heathcote Hospital buildings while the eastern area is vacant. The entire site is reserved for public purposes (hospital) in the metropolitan region scheme.

The Western Australian Planning Commission was requested to amend the MRS reservation of the site to facilitate an agreement between the State Government and the city. This involved the refurbishment of the former hospital buildings by the city to allow for a variety of community-orientated land uses. The State Government initially agreed to reimburse the cost of the refurbishment, through funding generated by selling most of the eastern portion of the site for residential use.

The changes to the MRS were supported by the Western Australian Planning Commission and the amendment was advertised from 30 March to 2 July last year. Twelve submissions were received - seven supported the amendment or raised no objections and five objected. The primary source of objection concerned the urban zone for the eastern portion and the desire that it be reserved for parks and recreation. On advice, the Western Australian Planning Commission resolved to dismiss the objecting submissions. However, some time later the State Government and the city came to a new set of arrangements over the site involving the proposed eastern portion of the urban zone and avenues for funding the former hospital buildings' refurbishment costs. The new funding measures included the sale of Duncraig House, the creation and sale of two residential lots, the transfer of a portion of the scout hall site to be sold as residential and the sale of unrelated city properties.

The modifications involved deleting the proposed eastern portion of the urban zone and the portion of the proposed parks and recreation reserve adjoining the south east boundary of the scout hall site so that both areas remain public purpose (hospital) in the MRS. It was not considered necessary to readvertise for the modifications. However, a second amendment will be required to rationalise the MRS classifications to further reflect the new agreement which will be subject to a separate submission.

In conclusion, the WAPC has recommended the amendment proceed in the modified form to reflect the new agreement between the State Government and the City of Melville. I table two copies of the documents and one map. I commend this amendment to the House.

[See papers Nos 878A-878D]

AUSTRALIAN ENCEPHALITIS - PUBLIC HEALTH ALERT

Statement by Minister for Health

MR DAY (Darling Range - Minister for Health) [12.08 pm]: I take this opportunity to inform the House of an important current public health alert concerning Australian Encephalitis. Eight cases of mosquito-borne Australian encephalitis have now been diagnosed this year, the second highest total in Western Australia since 1993.

Australian encephalitis is a rare but potentially fatal mosquito-borne disease that can affect all age groups, but children and infants and anyone living in areas where the virus is seldom active are most at risk during outbreaks. Only about 1 in 500 to 1 000 people infected by the bite of an infected mosquito will develop symptoms, which include severe headache, neck stiffness, fever and delirium. In severe cases, this can progress to coma and death. On average about a quarter of people who develop symptoms will die and many others will be left with permanent brain damage and paraplegia.

High levels of activity of this virus are associated with heavy rains and flooding which enable overt breeding of the mosquitoes that transmit the virus, and also proliferation of water birds, which are the natural host of the virus. Record high rainfall between October last year and March this year has been reported from many areas in the north of the State, creating ideal conditions for transmission of this virus. This year one case has occurred in the Kimberley region, two in the Pilbara, one in the Murchison, and three in the mid west, including the Mullewa-Dongara and Kalbarri areas. Another case has a travel history throughout the affected regions and the place of exposure is therefore uncertain. The Health Department of WA is particularly concerned about activity of the virus south of the Murchison River catchment in the mid west region. This is unprecedented and means that the virus is active in a region where few people will have immunity to the virus.

The high level of activity this year was predicted in January because of heavy rains and widespread flooding forecast for the north of Western Australia. The Health Department has already issued three media warnings about the increased risk this year, with another warning issued today. Recent monitoring in the mid west region around Dongara has revealed continuing presence of the virus and the types of mosquito that transmit it. This means that people living in or travelling to this region as well as further north in the State must take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure to biting mosquitoes.

The Health Department has a sentinel chicken program in place to monitor and warn of continuing activity of the virus that causes Australian encephalitis. This has recently been expanded with the assistance of local government authorities and additional warnings will be issued if necessary. It is important for people to realise that mosquito eradication is not an option as breeding is occurring over vast areas throughout many parts of the north. People must therefore assume responsibility for protecting themselves from biting mosquitoes by avoiding being outside at times when mosquitoes are most active, from just before sunset until mid-evening; covering up as much as possible with loose, long clothing, preferably of a light colour; and, keeping a bottle of repellent handy to put on exposed areas of skin whenever biting mosquitoes are noticed. The most effective repellents for mosquitoes contain 5 per cent - 20 per cent diethyl toluamide, or DEET, and are most effective and long-lasting in lotion form. Infant-strength repellents should be used for young children. People should ensure that fly screens in houses or caravans are in good repair, and, if camping out, they should sleep either in a mosquito proof tent or under a mosquito net. It is important to appreciate that repellants protect against mosquito bites for only up to four hours, not all night. The Health Department will continue to closely monitor the situation and provide advice as appropriate.

STATE IMAGES COMMUNITY ART COMPETITION

Statement by Minister for the Arts

MR BOARD (Murdoch - Minister for the Arts) [12.12 pm]: Last October I informed the House of the State Images Community Art Competition. It is my pleasure today to announce the 10 winners. Each winner has produced artwork which represents their region at the change of the millennium and will be interpreted into a tile mosaic to be laid at the Barrack Square redevelopment. These 10 artworks will become a spectacular part of the Perth landscape situated in what will be one of the most significant drawcards for tourism in Western Australia. Launched in October last year, State Images has provided people throughout Western Australia with the chance to create a visual image of their region's culture, community and lifestyle. As each region has its own judging panel, the resulting mosaic will be a true reflection of those communities. The support that was received for this project has been outstanding. Service organisations and regional development commissions throughout the State have worked hard to ensure that the competition was well publicised and organised. The fact that more than 400 entries were received, many of them from community groups, demonstrates the success of the competition.

I would like to acknowledge the Community Services Steering Committee which oversaw State Images. The organisations involved are Apex, the Country Women's Association of WA, Zonta, Lions, Rotary and Soroptimists International. Without the coordination of those groups State Images would not have come to fruition. The mosaics are scheduled to be installed at the Barrack Square site in September.

The 10 winners are: Markham Boston of Carnarvon for the Gascoyne region; Lauren Burke of Carnarvon for the goldfields