

ARALUEN BOTANIC PARK — MANAGEMENT

**578. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the minister representing the Minister for Environment:**

I refer to Araluen Botanic Park.

- (1) Is the minister aware of the community outrage about the failure of his department to resolve parking and access issues connected with the hugely popular Araluen spring festival?
- (2) Is it true that the Department of Environment and Conservation has refused to allow the publicising of the spring festival and has blocked moves to raise entry fees to match those charged at other DEC facilities?
- (3) How does the department's failure to support the spring festival support the minister's Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority first objective, which is to "provide, improve and promote recreational and tourism services and facilities on the designated land"?
- (4) Does the minister have confidence in DEC's management of Araluen; and, if so, why?

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:**

I deliver this answer on behalf of the minister representing the Minister for Environment, and on behalf of the Minister for Environment I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1) The minister is aware of community concern regarding parking on Croyden Road and disturbance to local residents resulting from traffic congestion on local roads over six to eight weeks in spring. The Department of Environment and Conservation has been working with the City of Armadale on the preparation of a traffic management plan to resolve parking and traffic issues resulting from peak visitation.
- (2) The Araluen Botanic Park Foundation delivers management services via a contract with DEC. The foundation sought approval to double the entrance fee over the five-week peak tulip flowering period to recoup additional costs associated with the purchase of tulips and traffic management for spring 2012. In 2010 and 2011, the foundation was able to absorb the costs associated with traffic management. Given that DEC requested similar arrangements be implemented this spring, the department considered it inappropriate to support the premium-price request.
- (3) There has not been a spring festival since 2009 because the City of Armadale and the Western Australian Planning Commission withdrew support for traffic management that allowed parking on Croyden Road, due to safety concerns and traffic congestion issues. Since commencing management of the park in 2010, DEC has been working with the foundation and the City of Armadale to establish appropriate management arrangements during spring. DEC and the City of Armadale will continue monitoring events to help achieve this, including the trial of new traffic arrangements at Araluen Botanic Park in 2012.
- (4) Yes. DEC has implemented procedures focusing on improved operational efficiency, nature conservation and the provision of visitor services including capital improvements.