SENIORS — LEGISLATIVE REFORM

1425.   Hon MARTIN PRITCHARD to the Minister for Commerce:

I ask this question on behalf of Hon Samantha Rowe, who is out of the chamber on urgent parliamentary business. I refer to the pressing need for legislative reform in areas directly impacting seniors.

What is the current status of —

(a)   the second tranche of the Retirement Villages Amendment Act, foreshadowed in 2012;

(b)   the residential park laws review, to which submissions closed in 2014; and

(c)   a code of practice under the Fair Trading Act 2010 to regulate the prepaid funeral sector and to provide certainty for the treatment and investment of prepaid consumer funds?

Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. It is just a shame, being a scheduled sitting day, that there was urgent parliamentary business that made the member unavailable to ask her own question.

(a)   The Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Commerce has commenced work on the second tranche. The department is working through policy issues and will consult with stakeholders.

(b)   The department has provided me with the statutory review report, setting out a number of recommendations for consideration by government, based on the findings of the review. I intend to table the report in Parliament before the summer recess. Stakeholders will have an opportunity to comment on those recommendations.

(c)   There is currently insufficient evidence to support the need for a mandatory code. Most prepaid funeral providers are Australian Funeral Directors Association members who already abide by a code of practice, and the department receives few complaints about the funeral industry. In July and October this year the department undertook education campaigns for the general community and Aboriginal communities to inform consumers about options for organising and paying for a funeral.