

PORT HEDLAND INNER HARBOUR — ENHANCEMENTS

1172. Hon HELEN BULLOCK to the Minister for Transport:

I refer to the state government's submission for funding for enhancements to the Port Hedland port inner harbour.

- (1) Can the minister advise the proposed additional channel width, the proposed additional depth and the proposed increased ship size contemplated?
- (2) Can the minister explain why it is intended to recoup only part of the cost of charges to private operators?
- (3) Is there a business case for this project; and, if so, will the minister table it?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) The proposed channel width and depth have yet to be determined as part of the business case investigations. The enhancements required at the Port Hedland inner harbour are not for the purpose of servicing larger vessels, but to address the restriction on the number of fully loaded iron ore capesize vessels that can depart with tidal assistance. Higher tides are required for these capesize vessels to depart when fully loaded with iron ore. Any deepening and/or widening of the channel will provide a longer window for when vessels can depart with tidal assistance.
- (2) The intent will be to recoup all the costs, but this may not be achievable in the short term, as it may impose excessive costs on foundation customers who benefit from the infrastructure. It may, therefore, be necessary to recoup the costs progressively over time once the infrastructure has been more fully utilised. However, this will be determined as part of the business case process.
- (3) The business case is yet to be developed as there are several solutions that need to be more fully investigated to determine the optimal solution.