

ARMY JETTY — ROTTNEST ISLAND

Statement by Minister for Tourism

MR P. PAPALIA (Warnbro — Minister for Tourism) [9.03 am]: On 24 October 2018, three visitors to Rottneest Island were seriously injured when a section of the Army jetty gave way. I would first like to acknowledge all the people who assisted the injured visitors. I commend them on their quick and selfless response. Immediately following the incident, the Rottneest Island Authority commissioned KPMG to undertake an inquiry to identify the cause, recommend remedial actions, and assess the authority’s maintenance processes and systems. The KPMG inquiry was informed by two reports by maritime engineers Wallbridge Gilbert Aztec, which found that the likely causes of the jetty deck collapse arose from “tensile failure of the corroded reinforcement” and/or “widespread loss of bond between the corroded primary tensile reinforcement and the concrete”. As a result, the almost 50-year-old deck and piles have now been demolished and a solid rock armoured groyne remains.

KPMG’s investigation determined the following facts. In 2010, acting on Department of Transport advice, the RIA engaged marine engineers to inspect the Army jetty, which had been out of service for some years. The engineers recommended that the jetty be closed to vehicles and boats, but could remain open to pedestrians. The report also finds that up to 2014, when responsibility for jetty maintenance was outsourced to a contractor, and post-2014, when the RIA was directly responsible, the jetty’s inspection record was not good and not well documented. Much has been made of a proposed marina, as if it were the answer to the island’s infrastructure maintenance challenges and would somehow have prevented this near tragedy. It is clear that despite being under consideration for five years, there was no action on a marina—no preferred proponent, no approvals and no budget allocation. It remained at best an option that was never progressed. In 2017, the new RIA executive and the largely new board shifted focus to address the needs of critical assets and, importantly, to resolve ownership of island infrastructure and the monitoring and assessment processes. In the weeks before the Army jetty incident, the RIA board had approved the allocation of \$400 000 for the first stage of this work.

In its report, KPMG finds that post-2010, the management of the Army jetty left a lot to be desired. I see no value, however, in pursuing previous ministers, board members or officials to blame for something that happened in the past. I also want to emphasise that we have a new team at the RIA, which has accepted and is acting on KPMG’s nine recommendations, and the McGowan government is very focused on the future of the island. Here today, I table the KPMG report, the engineers’ reports and a table of inspections, assessments and reports on key island infrastructure commissioned by RIA since 24 October 2018.

[See papers 2216 to 2218.]