

Mid West Ports Authority —

Mr D.A.E. Scaife, Chair.

Ms R. Saffioti, Minister for Ports.

Mr D. Tully, Chief Executive Officer.

Ms S. Pigdon, General Manager, Trade and Corporate Services.

Mr P. Laing, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. Questions must relate to the operations and budget of the off-budget authority. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon on Friday, 2 June 2023. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

I give the call to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Hello and welcome. I thank you for your attendance. I understand the port has a significant amount of work on at the moment so I will not keep the advisers very long because they have to go back and do that.

Can the minister give a brief update on the capital expenditure for this year, mainly on the eastern breakwater port maximisation and the firefighting system, which are underway and have significant allocations in the budget this year?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The port has a significant capital budget with a number of different components that are being worked through in the time frame of delivery. The maritime precinct is one of the first projects. We talked about the relocation of Dongara Marine and some of the commercial activities that are happening there. We are seeing a significant explosion of activity there. One of the first projects in the port maximisation is to improve the port's interface to the road network and the community. The construction of a significant roundabout at the entrance is now underway. I will defer to Mr Tully.

Mr D. Tully: The port maximisation project is well underway. We are currently in the detailed design phase of that project and moving forward we will be making valuations. We have started those early works such as the road network leading in and out of the port and we will see some aspects of construction start this coming financial year. We are going to submit part 4 and 5 environmental applications in June this calendar year. The member referred to the eastern breakwater jetty. There was a commitment from government to help activate the Abrolhos Islands and we will see construction on a jetty at the eastern breakwater begin in June this year. We expect completion later this year in around October. The final project that was discussed is the port-wide firefighting project. We are currently working through a tender process with two tenderers at the moment before proceeding to award the contract, hopefully, in the near future.

Mr R.S. LOVE: What will be the status for public access or use of the eastern breakwater jetty?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will refer that to Mr Tully.

Mr D. Tully: The eastern breakwater jetty will be a commercial jetty to help activate the Abrolhos Islands as a tourism prospect. At this stage, we are planning to limit it to commercial operators.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to the outcomes and key performance indicators and the outcome to be a sustainable port. The number of reportable environmental incidents was seven, which is less than the budget number of 10, I guess. What type of environmental incidents are typically experienced at the port? Bearing in mind it is in the middle of the town, it would be interesting to know that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Just to clarify, the estimated for 2022–23 was none.

Mr R.S. LOVE: None was estimated but seven were experienced in 2021–22 and none have been recorded since. I am wondering what those particular ones were.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In 2021–22?

Mr R.S. LOVE: Yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That was last financial year not this budget. Mr Tully will answer.

Mr D. Tully: We have an environmental licence, which the port takes very seriously. We actively report any exceedences. Those previous exceedences the member referred to were accumulations of dust. We have an active program at the moment to reduce the impact of dust on the community and the fishing boat harbour on a wide range of projects across the port.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Is that done mainly through the use of the dust-taming fence? I think that is what it is called.

Mr D. Tully: That is one part of a large number of projects across the port.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Has the port received ongoing complaints about dust since those measures were taken?

Mr D. Tully: We actively work with the fishing boat harbour and we have had discussions about the amenity of dust in the fishing boat harbour. We continue to do that on an ongoing basis.

Ms M. BEARD: It is a short question. I refer to page 640 and paragraph 2 under significant issues impacting the government trading enterprise, which states —

The Authority is seeing continued approaches from potential new customers on projects within the Mid West region, including mining projects and break-bulk cargoes, particularly wind turbines.

I am interested to know whether the Mid West Ports Authority, given it has had numerous approaches for projects, has been approached for a deep-water port in or around or north of Geraldton, taking in Carnarvon and Exmouth as well? Has there been any interest in those areas?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: To be honest, I think we have approaches every day from a new proponent who wants to either import wind turbines or export hydrogen. There is massive demand currently. I would say there is a lot of frenetic activity. I recently met with the ports minister—sorry; not the ports minister; I am the Minister for Ports. It was the Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. JTTSI, the port authorities and the Department of Transport are all being approached by different proponents about their projects. We are going to work together across the port authorities, the Department of Transport and JTTSI to map out—it is already half done—all the different proponents, their demands and their prospects of going ahead and try to manage that because it is a significant issue.

The ports themselves get approached and they look after entire areas, but, from a state perspective, particularly for things like facilitating the import of wind turbines, we are not only trying to get the space in the berths but also the transport logistics to move them. We need to have a consolidated approach across the state because they are big things and require a lot of space both to land them and then to move them. We even need to consider things like intersection treatments, because they could probably wipe out all the associated infrastructure alongside the road. We are working on that because there is a lot of demand just for the importation of wind turbines alone. There is significant demand for renewables and for the export of hydrogen in whichever form it is in. We are trying to work to have a consolidated view about how we manage this across the state.

[2.50 pm]

The CHAIR: That completes the examination of the Mid West Ports Authority.