

Division 25: Planning, Lands and Heritage — Services 1 to 6, Planning; Lands, \$166 582 000 —

Ms S.E. Winton, Chair.

Ms R. Saffioti, Minister for Planning.

Ms G. McGowan, Director General.

Mr J. Deery, Chief Finance Officer.

Ms N. Lucas-Smith, Director, Strategy.

Mr A. Hawkins, Manager, Acquisitions, Management, Disposals.

Mr M.W. Darcey, Executive Director, Regional and Metropolitan Services.

Mr E. Lumsden, Chairman Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr D. McFerran, Principal Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information she agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number.

If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 29 September 2017. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Moore.

[5.00 pm]

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to the heading "Land Asset Management" on page 425 of budget paper No 2. I note the department's commitment to unlock the land potential for the state. What is the current position on developing land tenure pathways for irrigated agriculture; and, if there is any action on this, has the government released any land tracks through this program?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will refer this to Gail McGowan.

Ms G. McGowan: The water for agricultural work is primarily being conducted with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. We are continuing to work with the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation on looking at what we might do with the pathways for the agriculture project.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I also asked whether any land had been released under that program at this point.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Member, can we provide that by way of supplementary information?

Mr R.S. LOVE: If the minister is going to provide supplementary information, would she be able to give me a list, if land has been released, of where that land is and for what purpose it has been released?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, we can provide by way of supplementary information a list of land released under the water for agriculture program.

[*Supplementary Information No B35.*]

Mr R.S. LOVE: On the same point about unlocking the land potential for the state, what is the minister's position on progressing rangeland reform; and, if she is supportive, what is she doing in the current year to progress that reform?

[Mr I.C. Blayney took the chair.]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know the project was started by the previous government. I watched it progress and not progress throughout the year, so I am not quite sure why it could not be finalised, but we have picked it up. I met

with the chair of the Pastoral Lands Board on this issue and he has been undertaking some consultation in the community more generally and has also been working with the Minister for Regional Development because of the significant impact it will have on agriculture development in the regions in particular. We are very keen to progress reform. Consultation is underway and we are working out what role the Minister for Regional Development, given her role also as the Minister for Agriculture and Food, will play in finalising that process.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the major spending changes outlined on page 147 of budget paper No 3. My first question is about the internal reallocation to fund election commitments. What projects within the agency have had money withdrawn or reduced to help fund those election commitments?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are no specific projects. It was just about looking at the current expenditure of the agency and finding savings through the normal savings process. As I understand it, no particular project was defunded.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: It is just a normal efficiency measure.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Will those operational efficiencies be measured or the like?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: One of the things that the department has done well over time—maybe too well—is work within budget. The director general has been known to facilitate outcomes within very tight financial circumstances. We are continually looking at how we can do things better. The workload of the department, together with the Western Australian Planning Commission, is significant and the time frames are tight. We try to do what we can to deliver our statutory obligations. Together with that, we are implementing significant strategic projects and, of course, we also have the Metronet project, which the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage is playing a key role in supporting. New governments have new priorities, so it is really about looking at what agencies are doing and then refocusing. It is not about zero-based budgeting; it is about looking at our priorities and making sure that the resources are allocated to meet those priorities.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Also on the major spending changes, is the \$200 000 over three years for the Swan Valley development package associated with the direct cost of the review?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are a couple of things. First of all, it was a decision made at the time of the election to allocate that to the package. We expect the review will be funded from existing resources, so there is a zero additional spend in 2017–18. We do not see that this will be costly. The most costly aspect will be communicating with everybody. We want to try to communicate with everyone in the valley and hold particular meetings. That is where some of those administration costs will go. The \$200 000 is notionally for the implementation of some of the recommendations of the review, so we may need to make some other allocations of funds to deliver on the review outcomes. It is an allocation against the package, but that package will really be developed by the review process.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Page 422 of budget paper No 2 refers to the percentage of development assessment panel applications that are determined within the statutory time frame. I note that there has been a change in the key performance indicator. The target has been dropped from 80 per cent to 70 per cent. Can the minister explain why there has been a change in the expectation for determining DAP applications within the statutory time frame from a target of 80 per cent to 70 per cent?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is probably because we are reducing expectations so that we can surpass them next year. This is a target that is consistent with the target for other development applications. I suspect that we want to surpass that. It is a target that has been set but we would like to surpass that target.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: If the minister would like to surpass the target, why would she not leave it at 80 per cent as a stretch goal?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are keen to get past that target. The target of 70 per cent is consistent with the target for other development applications. These targets are set, but it really is about what can be delivered. We are keen to always do as well as we can according to our statutory time frames, but there are a number of issues out there and we do our best.

[5.10 pm]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In lowering the expectations for the determination of development assessment panel applications within the statutory time frames, did the minister consider putting pressure on agencies for their approvals to reach the target for DAP applications at 80 per cent?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are a number of aspects to some planning outcomes. We look at the roles of councils, the interaction of councils with constituents, the role of the WA Planning Commission and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the role of state planning policies, the State Administrative Tribunal and DAPs. There are a number of key elements. I want us to always do better. We are always looking at improvement. I think we have the right structures, but we should always look at how we can improve what we do. I am always looking at how we can

improve outcomes. I want to make sure that we facilitate development in this state, create jobs and create opportunities. Can we always do better? Yes, I think we can. It is always about trying to strive for improvement and doing what we can.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: The minister has mentioned tweaking the DAPs. Will she conduct a review of the development assessment panel scheme, and would that be likely to be an internal or external review?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are looking at that process at the moment to see what we can do. The department has started to look at measures to improve accountability and transparency. We will keep doing that. This government made specific commitments to improve transparency and accountability so the department is looking at that. The DAP process has a number of issues, such as the ability for the community to be properly consulted, time frames and the method of consultation. There have been issues with accountability and how we can make the process more transparent, not only the outcomes, but also the process leading to those outcomes. An issue that I think is very interesting is the potential conflicts of DAP board members and how we can deal with them. All those issues are in front of us and we are doing what we can to make things better. We are under no illusions; this is a very difficult policy area but we are keen to make improvements.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: I refer to page 422 of budget paper No 2 and to the minister's approvals of scheme amendments. Can the minister outline the number of scheme amendments that she has dealt with since taking office and the progress she has made on the backlog of scheme amendments that I understand, from personal experience, she has inherited?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Since being sworn in, we have dealt with 131 scheme amendments, which is a significant number. We had a significant backlog of about 80 or 90. It has been a big process to which we have dedicated a lot of time to give councils certainty. Of course, that cannot always be the case. There are some very tricky ones that we are taking a bit more time to consider—some significant ones, in particular—but we are doing what we can to work with councils to provide certainty. Of course, not everyone will be happy with the outcome. Planning is the space in which we see the most divided opinions. What one person sees as attractive infill, another sees entirely differently, and people in different communities value different things. The planning portfolio is not an easy portfolio but it can facilitate significant change. I have met with a lot of councils, and my experience so far is that they are very keen to work with the state government to facilitate better planning outcomes. I mentioned the City of Stirling. We are trying to deliver better outcomes with the City of Joondalup and across the northern suburbs. We are continually looking at improving. I am very keen to see how we can achieve better outcomes for the community.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: When making a determination on an amendment to a metropolitan region scheme, how does the commission determine the difference between a minor amendment and a major amendment.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will refer that to the chair of the Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr E. Lumsden: A number of aspects are to be considered, such as the scope of the amendment, the likely impacts of the amendment, infrastructure issues and amenity issues. When the commission receives a report from the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, it often asks for those aspects to be highlighted. If there is some doubt about the impacts and whether it is a minor or a major amendment, we ask the department to indicate to us, in a part of its report, why it should be either a minor or a major amendment. A lot of it depends on the merits but also the scope. If an amendment had a very large area of land that impacted on infrastructure et cetera, the commission would normally consider that to be a major amendment and it would go through that process under the act.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In looking at whether it is a major amendment or a minor amendment, is that linked to the size or use of the land under consideration? Are criteria or policy guidelines available to clarify that?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to the WAPC chair.

Mr E. Lumsden: This matter has been discussed in the commission in the last couple of months. We are asking the department to prepare more finite policy guidelines on this issue so there are clearer directions for not only applicants, but also staff. The commission would have to exercise its discretion less often than it does at the moment.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I am interested in this because of the old City Beach High School site, which is adjacent to my electorate. The Town of Cambridge has been debating whether it would be a minor or major scheme amendment. I cannot ask the commission for an opinion on that but it is a project that potentially has a collection of caveats on it and is formerly government-owned land. Does land ownership have any weight in determining whether a scheme is considered major or minor?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer that through to Mr Lumsden.

Mr E. Lumsden: Not necessarily, is the answer. I am not aware of that debate within the city. I would appreciate the town seeking some advice from the commission before making its own determination.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I would appreciate it seeking some consultation with the community as well. Thank you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the significant issues affecting the agency on page 419 of budget paper No 2. Under the heading “Urban Development” it states that the department monitors the coordination of supply and the delivery of residential, commercial and industrial land. I have a couple of questions about urban development. Has the agency undertaken any assessments of land available for development within the rail corridors in Perth?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: A couple of processes are being undertaken. The Planning Commission has been preparing frameworks for a number of years. Together with those, we have Metronet and what is possible to allow for urban development along the current and future rail lines. A mapping and scoping exercise is being undertaken with Metronet and the planning department. When we have new projects such as the Yanchep extension and the Ellenbrook rail line, those projects bring with them the potential for urban development. We are identifying the current zoning and ownership patterns and then will look at environmental constraints or other constraints. We are doing that scoping exercise as part of our plan to deliver land use outcomes with our stations. A lot of councils along the existing rail lines are very excited about our Metronet proposal, particularly the reinvestment into the heritage lines. That work is not as advanced; it is a matter of seeing what we can deliver. We inherited the WAPC strategic framework process, on which the Western Australian Planning Commission has undertaken a lot of work. We also have our infrastructure program. We are trying to marry those programs to see how we can facilitate significant urban development driven by infrastructure. We are really trying to have infrastructure-led development. I know I am a bit of a policy nerd sometimes—but conceptually it is very exciting to see how we can energise areas and create whole new communities linked in with first-class public transport. It is something that I enjoy a lot, and I try to spend as much time as I can sitting in front of maps with all my agencies. They probably hate it, but I love sitting in front of a lot of maps. That is what we are doing to try to facilitate great transport, but, primarily, excellent land use outcomes.

[5.20 pm]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: To clarify, no report has been prepared yet in relation to those heritage lines?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Some initial studies have been undertaken. To be honest, different work has been undertaken in different areas. Some councils are being really proactive—particularly the ones on the Armadale line, a bit on the Midland line, but Fremantle not so much. Councils along the Fremantle line are not so active in the infill pursuit. The Midland and Armadale councils are very active and a lot have created alliances. Councils along the Armadale line have created an alliance, including Victoria Park, Cannington, Gosnells and Armadale. Different formations of groups are advocating for what can be done. That is something we are doing. Of course, as part of the \$2.3 billion boosting jobs, busting congestion package, we have allocated \$70 million to the Denny Avenue rail crossing removal project. As part of that project, we are turning our attention to what we can do with government land in conjunction with other private land in the vicinity to create great urban outcomes in an area where local business need support and where we can create some very good urban housing—urban redevelopment—in close proximity to very good services.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In relation to urban development and the supply of land, is the minister in a position to advise us where the south metropolitan subregional planning framework is at?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Currently, all the frameworks are with me, and we are working with WAPC to finalise them. I am very conscious that we have our Metronet plan and we have the frameworks. I do not want to have competing documents out there. We are trying to marry our plan with all the work that has been done by the WAPC and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage, and the significant consultation that has occurred with landowners and developers, to see how we can facilitate Metronet as part of the framework. We want one plan for the public so that people have confidence and certainty going forward. It has not been an easy exercise, but I am aware that we do not want to have competing documents or visions, because I do not think it does a lot for certainty. Planning is about certainty and making sure that people’s expectations are real and that they can be delivered. A number of times in the past we have seen governments make decisions that create expectations that cannot be delivered and there are significant long-lasting consequences that flow from that. This is not a political comment. It is not one government’s issue; it has been an issue for both governments in the past. We are trying to do what we can.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have only one or two more follow-up questions, if I can?

The CHAIR: I think one would be a good idea.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: One will be a good idea—I will tidy that up then.

I have written to the minister previously about a constituent of mine who has a holding on Armadale Road in Piara Waters. I understand that the advice from the commission is that the site is environmentally constrained and could not be transferred from rural to urban. I visited the site and there is absolutely no environmental constraint; the block has been cleared. Is there a process that the owners of that property could undertake to have that decision revisited by the commission?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will take that on board and I will incorporate that into our thinking in relation to finalisation. I know the lady the member is talking about.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate that; thank you.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to page 147 of budget paper No 3, major spending changes and the line item “Resolution of Native Title in the South West of Western Australia (Settlement)”. What is the department’s role in finalising that settlement? The assembly of land for the Aboriginal land estate—I think that is what it is called—is at what stage? I understand that a range of crown land assets throughout the south west of the state have been examined and will be developed into a single estate. Where is that at? Is the department in charge of that process? How far down the track is the process?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I understand that the Department of the Premier and Cabinet through the office of native title—whatever the office is now called—has been leading policy development. I will take further advice. The claim has not been fully registered yet. The department of lands’ role is to identify the land that is subject to consideration. We are in the process of compiling that list. We are working with the other agencies to get an agreed list that will go forward. That is where it is at.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Is the department in charge of negotiating, discussing or consulting with local communities, such as local governments, about what lands will be included on that list?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes, it is.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Has that consultation extended to all local governments affected by the land listing question?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Not yet, because that process has not been finalised. I think they are going through identifying all the parcels of land. Once that has happened, the full consultation will be undertaken.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Does the department have any role in finalising the future status or tenure of what was known as the Moore River mission at Mogumber?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I will have to provide that by way of supplementary information.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I refer to the former Moore River mission at Mogumber. It is a setting at the start of the film *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, if the minister follows what I am saying. I would like to know what the status of that site will be in the future and where it is at in terms of negotiations.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. I will provide supplementary information on the status of the former Moore River mission at Mogumber.

[*Supplementary Information No B36.*]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I refer to page 418 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, and the “Wittenoom Asbestos Management Area”. A fair bit of work has been undertaken to try to get to the point at which we can close the Wittenoom town site. There is a budget of \$4.1 million across 2017–18 to 2018–19. Is it anticipated that the finalisation of all those settlements will occur and the town will close, as formerly anticipated, in 2019?

[5.30 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is what the budget is predicated on. A couple of things need to happen. Specific legislation needs to be drafted, and we are looking at that. I note the history of Wittenoom, especially the more recent history, which is quite interesting. A process for Wittenoom’s closure started a number of years ago, including the purchase of properties and other aspects. That is before us at the moment and will require legislation to be drafted. The budget is predicated on those activities, including its full closure.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I understand that there is a legislative delay to the formal closure of the town. Are residents still anticipated to be moved out by 2019?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We are working through that. I think it poses some challenges; the people who are there seem to want to stay there, which is quite incredible. As of July 2017, there are 17 remaining properties held by five proprietors.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: How many residents are in those 17 properties?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: There are only three residents or families.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: So we are slowly whittling them down?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes. I think the last people will be the toughest. I have a quick story; my father and his friend went past a recruitment office for Wittenoom when they arrived from Italy. My father’s friend went in and signed up but my dad had a very bad feeling and never walked into that office, thank God, because my dad is still alive and that man died a number of years ago. Wittenoom has an incredible history and, from a government perspective, we want to try to make it safe, make sure that we protect public health, and also make sure that tourists do not go in there for some sort of thrillseeking activity.

Ms S.E. WINTON: I refer to the Swan Valley development package on page 419 of budget paper No 2. Could the minister outline what initiatives the new state government has undertaken for this significant precinct?

Chair; Mr Shane Love; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mrs Jessica Stojkovski; Ms Sabine Winton

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. I thank the member for Wanneroo; I know she is very keen on agricultural precincts!

Ms S.E. WINTON: I am.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I know the member's work in the northern suburbs on what we can do to preserve and encourage agricultural precincts.

The history of the Swan Valley is amazing from both its Indigenous past with Yagan's story and activities in that area to settlement when the Croatians and Italians moved in. It is a spectacular place. Did I miss someone else?

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: The Macedonians.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Macedonians. I thought I might have missed the Macedonians; never miss the Macedonians! Its history is significant. Debate about the future of the valley started in the 1990s. The Swan Valley protection act was specifically brought in. The previous government sought to reaffirm that act, but it wanted to change it to be more of a framework with specific guidelines underpinning it. The feedback I got from the community when I worked in opposition—with both my planning and local member hats on—was that the retention of viticulture, in particular, and some agriculture in the area is paramount. The view was that the existing proposal did not facilitate that. We are looking at a number of ways to retain the viticulture and agriculture of the precinct. As the member would be aware, I grew up on an orchard. The matter of how we can maintain agricultural precincts close to where people live is close to my heart. The governance of the valley is another aspect. The proposal was to abolish the Swan Valley planning committee and set up the area as a local planning scheme. I think there was some concern about that so we are looking at what type of governance arrangements are possible—whether it is management or particular planning powers. We are also looking at succession planning. As the older people move on or retire, we are looking at how we can retain population. We are encouraging leasehold for short-term operators and making sure that tourism really works well with agricultural activities. There are also right-to-farm aspects and, of course, water resources. Water allocation is a big issue in all these precincts. Do agricultural precincts take precedence? How does the act relate to other acts? All these issues are in front of us. If I could broker a way forward for the valley, I would achieve world peace! I am very keen to try to find a really good way forward and facilitate the development of agriculture and tourism, and a sustainable future for the valley. I think that protecting it is essential to Western Australia, not only from a pure agrifood business perspective, but also from a tourism perspective and to give people agricultural experiences within 20 minutes' drive from the city.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Given that the Swan Valley development plan has now been in progress for four years and we are looking at another three years of planning, has the previous work been utilised or has the process completely restarted?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The previous work is being utilised. We are building on the work that was undertaken and the legislation that was brought in, together with the guidelines. Much of our analysis is based on that work. I read an interesting study on the agricultural capability of the valley, which I got a copy of when I was in opposition. It provided a very good analysis. It provided an assessment of the fertility of the land and the current ownership and structure of land sizes. I found a very significant note when I was reading it that stated a percentage of the land currently in the valley is below the minimum lot sizes. It really gave a good description of what is currently happening and what has happened since 1995. It included the areas that are most conducive to agriculture. I also read a document from 1994 about the north-east regional planning frameworks, which looked at the valley and its history. For example, as I understand it, it started off being viticulture, citrus, and raisins and currants. They were the key products. I think for things like citrus, for example, there is no reason that type of development cannot be fostered in the valley. Of course, the tourism potential will also be built in.

The CHAIR: Minister, what it really needs is an open-plan zoo!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: An open-plan zoo?

The CHAIR: Yes; up the end of it! Member for Dawesville.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I again refer to page 419 and the supply of land under the heading "Urban Development".

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is a broad heading!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: That is right; I am very happy it is included!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We might have to get rid of that heading next year.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In future estimates, yes. I discussed with the Premier today where the Mandogalup proposal is at. He said it was presently with the minister and that she was making a decision. I am keen to understand that. Could the minister advise the house where the project is at?

Chair; Mr Shane Love; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mrs Liza Harvey; Mrs Jessica Stojkovski; Ms Sabine Winton

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes; of course, the Environmental Protection Authority's section 16(e) decision has come down. We are looking at how it will impact the frameworks, what is currently zoned, what is in the area, and all those aspects. We are working to deliver certainty for industry and developers in the area.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Further to that question, and further to my previous question about the subregional frameworks, might the frameworks be readjusted to take into account this EPA decision?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, the frameworks are currently live documents. We are looking at all the things that are currently before government, whether they are Metronet plans or decisions that have happened since 11 March that could impact on the future of particular landholdings. They are all the things that are currently before us.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Given that the issue at hand here is the special control area, with regard to the dust task force in Port Hedland, have any development plans started with respect to the special control area around the town of Port Hedland?

[5.40 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The dust task force report is out for comment and consultation. Last Saturday, the Minister for Regional Development undertook a public forum on a number of issues, including this issue. Again, that is something that is before us. There is some consultation and community discussion about the implications and the potential for the special control area. We will consider the submissions on this at the end of the year, potentially, but this is a project that has been coordinated mainly by the Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Further to that, going back to my previous question on Mandogalup, has the minister or any members of the commission met with any proponents of the Mandogalup proposal or the buffer zone withdrawal?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said, I meet with a lot of people, so I suspect I would have met with the developers over the past six months; I think I definitely would have done that.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Any commission members, minister?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I do not know about that.

Mr E. Lumsden: Certainly not whilst the Environmental Protection Authority was carrying out this assessment. There were obviously meetings beforehand in terms of submissions about the frameworks, and there has been correspondence to the commission since the determination of the EPA under section 16(e) for consideration, but that is part of the process of our review of the frameworks, subject to consultation with the minister's office.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you, chair. In relation to the public consultation that happened in Port Hedland—I realise it is not dealt with through the minister, but the minister's agency is part of the process—is the minister aware of whether citizens were paid to get to that meeting?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am not aware.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Just for clarity before going further, are we doing both the Western Australian Planning Commission and the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage at the moment? No? Because if we were, I can probably save a bit of time and ask the question of both.

The CHAIR: We are working on division 25—Planning, Lands and Heritage.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Are we skipping between Planning and WAPC?

The CHAIR: The boundaries seem a bit blurred.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I do not want to waste any time; do not worry about that.

I want to quickly talk about the section under the heading “Integrated Land and Infrastructure Policy Development” in budget paper No 2 on page 424. I note that it contributes to the government's goal, “Better Places”. There is also a bit of explanation on “Better Places” on page 420, which states —

A quality environment with liveable and affordable communities and vibrant regions.

In regard to this particular item number, first off I ask about planning for waste from the metropolitan area: has any assistance the department has given or is planning to give to regional communities and shires been affected by demand for waste developments within their areas to deal with waste from the metropolitan area?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I ask the director general to answer that.

Ms G. McGowan: Between the WAPC—the Chair may want to add something—and us, we meet with the Waste Authority as well. Equally, we regularly assist local governments with a range of things, particularly local governments that do not necessarily have a large capacity to do things. Obviously, the question of putrescible waste and some of those decisions primarily fit within the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Equally, we are always ready to assist local governments if they need to identify areas.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Of course the proposals cannot go forward unless the planning schemes and other planning documents allow them to happen. I am wondering if any assistance is being given to ensure that there is a proper planning environment for trying to rationalise some of the proposals that come forward, especially in the Perth hills area.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the member talking about trying to work with multiple councils simultaneously so there are not so many different proposals? That is a good issue; we will follow it up with the Waste Authority. One of the particular issues for smaller councils—I see this when I am dealing with planning scheme amendments—is that the department helps many smaller councils with assistance in planning. I have been approached by a couple of shires in relation to assistance in developing proposals, particularly when we are looking at significant proposals for industrial land and other big projects. Many smaller shires do not have that capability, so we look at what we can do to help facilitate more regional outcomes, particularly for waste. It is a good issue that the member has raised, and we will follow it up with the Waste Authority.

Mr R.S. LOVE: I have a further question on integrated land and infrastructure policy development. I do not mind if the Western Australian Planning Commission representatives also want to contribute to the answer because that will save time; I foreshadow that I am going to ask a similar question of them. I refer to the “Better Places” goal. To what extent do transient worker accommodation camps, located in or in close proximity to establish regional centres, align with that particular goal?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is a good question. There is no doubt that the ongoing challenge of how we deal with camps and how local councils deal with them is right before us now in relation to a couple of proposals, particularly the Karratha proposal. I met with the City of Karratha this morning, for example—not Kwinana, as I have been calling it! There is a challenge in trying to really understand the commercial imperatives and realities on one hand, and the impacts on the community on the other. We have not had many of them put before us; this is probably the first key one. I met with the City of Karratha and it put forward some points. I will be working with the Premier on this, of course, in his capacity as Minister for State Development, Jobs and Trade. With regard to how we implement the concept of better cities or better communities, our ability to influence changes according to the proposals in front of us. For example, the current proposal before us in relation to Karratha is unique in respect of the underlining ownership structures and what is or is not relevant to a state agreement. All those are quite particular, so I think it is very hard to have a blanket view that we can deliver. I could sit here and say whatever, but the ability to deliver it is what we actually have to assess. With regard to many of these proposals, it really is about the current lease ownership arrangements and the commercial realities. The problem with government is that sometimes we are forced to make judgements because we have two very different opposing views about what people think either is or is not commercially correct. Ultimately, especially in a place like Karratha where a lot of money has been invested, we want to facilitate very good community outcomes. As I said before, some of the work that has been done by the Shire of Busselton in the Dunsborough local scheme changes has been great for fostering the scale of urban activity to really support local businesses and tourism, residential and then rural residential activity—that scale of work. With regard to transport and the workers’ accommodation, of course we want to support local businesses and local communities. Our ability to effect that is driven by a number of different factors that are unique to every proposal.

[5.50 pm]

Mr R.S. LOVE: The minister mentioned Karratha. When dealing with an issue like that, would it be reasonable for consultation to take place with the local government, which I understand in this case has a particular view? When sitting down to make such a decision, how much weight would the minister give that local community’s view? Would it be reasonable to ask for or to undertake some modelling on the ongoing effect on the community from a decision to set up a camp of that size and that type, or allow it to continue, whatever the decision might be in each circumstance? Should some modelling be done on those proposals to really understand the effect it will have on the local community and the local economy, and with that on some of the investments that the government itself has made in trying to make those better places to live?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: As I said in relation to Karratha, I have had ongoing discussions with the local member, the member for Pilbara, who has been very engaged in this process. His small business background in particular and his experience in working with camps and delivering services to camps in the past gives him a very good insight into this process. It has been great to have him really driving the consultation and the policy discussion. We met with the City of Karratha today, for example, so of course before I would make this type of decision I was keen to engage. I will meet with the company in the next week or so. It is really about balancing all of that.

In relation to the economic and social impacts, I suspect that part of it was really what was in their local schemes too. In a sense, a lot of the discussion is around whether this is the place for this outcome. Most of that work should have been done already as part of the local schemes, while of course we will refer to that as part of our decision-making. Ideally, we would have the time and the resources for specific analysis for every project, but that

may not be the case here. I must say that the timing for some of the ideas that are being put forward is quite tight. We will work through all of that. From a general planning point of view—council brought some ideas to the table today and gave its views on what impacts a particular proposal might or might not have. I am always very keen to analyse the impact on small businesses when considering planning outcomes. In all these proposals, do we take business from existing businesses? What are the key implications? They can all be part of the consideration, but as for a specific analysis, the city has provided some information and that is the type of information we will use in making our final decision.

Mr R.S. LOVE: The Queensland government is moving to do some sort of legislative work around that type of scenario. Is there any thought of doing that in this state?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Not at this stage. The other key thing is that it is the process, but moreover the outcome. What people are really driving for, especially in this day and age, is what local benefits can be delivered through our mining and oil projects. Something that I am very keen to address as part of my portfolios is how we can deliver local benefits by these projects. However, it really is a matter of how we structure the processes. Whether we permit something, for example, and what local outcomes will that drive? That is across all government, whether it be dealing with this situation or all situations before us. In this day and age of tight finances and significant employment issues around the state, we want to milk the dollar of government expenditure in so many ways, including providing local jobs and sourcing local content, and that is something we are trying to do when we can.

Mrs J.M.C. STOJKOVSKI: I refer to “Land Accessibility Planning and Policy Development” on page 424. Can the minister provide an update on the status of the planning of the Ocean Reef marina as well as the funding contributed towards this project?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Thank you, member for Kingsley. It is an exciting project in the northern suburbs. One of the key decisions of this budget was to allocate funding for the Ocean Reef marina. There is \$35 million over the forward estimates, a \$125 million new government allocation and, on top of that, the LandCorp investment. Over time LandCorp will be the lead agency in delivering that project, but in the meantime we are working with the City of Joondalup. I acknowledge the work done by the City of Joondalup that has prepared a lot of the information and undertaken a lot of work on the environmental assessments and made sure that when a government was keen to commit, the city was ready.

The government sees this as an exciting proposal, and not only because of the boating facilities. I do not go boating much, but I know that Western Australians love boating and fishing and they love the ocean. There is a distinct lack of facilities in the northern suburbs. People live near the ocean to access the ocean, and having those types of facilities is a key part of their lifestyle choice. Over 500 pens and facilities will be developed as part of the project. We are also looking at the new marina and other developments, including commercial retail and residential as part of the overall package.

The Swan Valley package is one example of tourism that we are looking at for WA. However, from my perspective it is about not only encouraging regional tourism, but also day trips and noting that when we bring tourists to this state, they look to have some diverse and exciting day trips. Hillarys is really popular and Ocean Reef is a key destination and also a key employment generator for the northern suburbs so that young people can work near to where they live. They are all the benefits. It is another of the exciting projects. We are going through all the environmental and other processes, including the metropolitan region scheme process. They are things that we are keen to progress so that we can undertake the project as soon as possible.

The appropriation was recommended.