

ESPERANCE PORT — UPGRADE

1375. Hon Ken Travers to the Minister for Transport

I refer to the upgrade of the Esperance Port, announced by the Premier on 3 December 2008, and ask –

- (1) Has stage one been completed and what was the final cost of the redevelopment?
- (2) Has stage two of the upgrade commenced?
- (3) Will stage two be completed by 6 January 2011?
- (4) If no to (3), why not?
- (5) Does the Esperance Port Authority (EPA) intend to seek a variation to its environmental license?
- (6) If yes to (5), what variation to the license will the EPA seek?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) Those elements of Stage 1 concerning prescribed dust emission reduction works as required by the environmental licence were completed before the nominated license deadline of 31 August.

Further ancillary works are continuing to complete the Stage 1 project.

The expenditure committed to date for the Stage 1 upgrade including outstanding works, is \$23 million.

- (2)-(6) A comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of the Stage 1 infrastructure improvements is currently being conducted. This assessment includes the environmental performance of the upgraded system. Air quality monitoring conducted to date shows continual improvement in nickel emissions, with no emissions exceeding the daily guideline for nickel as recommended by the Department of Health and incorporated into the Esperance Port Authority licence.

In addition, there have been significant developments within the West Australian nickel industry since the decision to upgrade the infrastructure was announced, such as a reduction in nickel prices internationally, changes within the WA nickel export industry with consequent impact on current and future tonnages of bulk nickel sulphide exports. Further, there are other priorities for expenditure within government at this time.

For these reasons it is proposed to postpone the decision whether Stage 2 of the upgrade will proceed, until some time after June 2010. The Esperance Port Authority will seek a variation to the environmental licence accordingly.