

**Division 1: Parliament, \$60 368 000 —**

Ms W.M. Duncan, Chairman.

Mr M.W. Sutherland, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr P.J. McHugh, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr R. Bremner, Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services.

Mr R. Hunter, Deputy Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services.

Ms E. Ozich, Chief Financial Officer, Parliamentary Services and Legislative Assembly.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good morning everybody and welcome to the 2015 Assembly Estimates Committee A. This morning we are dealing with Parliament with Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, would you like to introduce your advisers, please.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** 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 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. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The Speaker 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 Speaker to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the Speaker's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 19 June 2015. I caution members that if the Speaker asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

Are there any questions? Member for Victoria Park.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer to page 46 of the *Budget Statements*, "Outcome: Legislative Assembly Members' requirements are met". There was a reproach to the Speaker by the member for Kimberley about flying the Aboriginal flag out the front of Parliament. I was wondering whether the Speaker had made a decision about flying the Aboriginal flag or whether that is still being considered.

**The SPEAKER:** What line item is this?

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** It is on page 46 under the heading "Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators".

**The SPEAKER:** The policy of the Parliament is that we fly the state flag and the national flag, and we fly the Aboriginal flag when there are special events such as NAIDOC Week or Sorry Day. There has been no decision to change that policy.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Who decides that policy?

**The SPEAKER:** The President and I.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Does the Speaker not see any need to change that policy to accommodate the flying of the flag?

**The SPEAKER:** At this stage, no, because we do fly the flag on special occasions.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** What response was given to the member for Kimberley about that request?

**The SPEAKER:** We had a meeting with the member for Kimberley and Hon Sally Talbot and we discussed the whole thing. We explained to her what we explained to the member today.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Does the Speaker know whether other state Parliaments permanently fly the Aboriginal flag?

**The SPEAKER:** It could be that they do fly it permanently; I do not know.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Did the Speaker not check that?

**The SPEAKER:** I can check that out.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I refer to the dot point at the bottom of page 39 under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" about the Joint Standing Committee on Audit continuing a performance review of the Auditor General.

**The SPEAKER:** That is the Legislative Council.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Sorry. Can I ask the other question I have here?

**The SPEAKER:** I do not know that much.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** On page 37, under “Capital”, there is \$1 million for “Parliamentary Services Item 117 Capital Appropriation”. Can the Speaker explain what that \$1 million will be used for, to give us an idea how that will be utilised?

**The SPEAKER:** As the member knows, we do work from time to time. This \$1 million is far short of what we would have liked to receive. It will be used for an IT storage area network upgrade, the ground floor south east air conditioning and downstairs members’ office upgrades, the remaining western stonework and windows restoration and courtyard sealing to prevent lower level water leaks. We have had a big problem in the courtyard. It is starting to leak badly; some water came in last week and there was a big bubble on the wall. This money will go towards those things.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I refer to the asset investment program on page 53. I assume the \$1 million there for 2015–16 is the \$1 million line item for capital appropriation. The estimated total cost is nearly \$14.5 million and the estimated expenditure to 30 June this year is \$5.5 million. Is that all the work that the Speaker listed or does that encompass larger work taking place?

**The SPEAKER:** I ask Mr Bremner to talk on that point.

**Mr R. Bremner:** The \$5.5 million is the sum total of work over a number of years. The 2014 estimated expenditure figure next to that of \$1.738 million comprises the \$1 million tranche of capital funding that we receive every year plus \$738 000 of funding rolled over from the preceding year.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** In 2013–14, there was \$738 000 left, which was rolled over?

**Mr R. Bremner:** Yes. The winter recess is one of our big opportunities to do work and because of the timing of that and the end of the financial year, we traditionally tend to roll over unexpended funds into the following financial year.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I am assuming the \$14.498 million total cost is a suite of works that the Parliament is hoping to do over a set period.

**The SPEAKER:** Mr Bremner.

**Mr R. Bremner:** That is work that we hope to do based on the maintenance of the \$1 million tranche in out years through until the 2023–24 financial year.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is it basically assumed that Parliament will get \$1 million a year, and it will take 14 years to do it?

**Mr R. Bremner:** Yes. As the Speaker said, that is less than we actually require.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Is the Speaker able to give us a breakdown of the \$1.7 million for 2014–15 expenditure?

**The SPEAKER:** What line item is that?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Under the heading “Asset Investment Program” on page 53.

**The SPEAKER:** The breakdown is as follows. There is \$700 000 for stonework repairs; \$295 000 for works and alterations; \$280 000 for furniture and flooring repairs and replacement; \$225 000 for air conditioning; \$78 000 for a security upgrade; \$75 000 for universal access toilets; \$50 000 for reporting, broadcasting and other system replacements; \$27 000 for office equipment and software; and \$8 000 for lighting. That is a total of \$1.738 million.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I refer to page 51. Under the heading “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”, there are percentages listed for member ratings. We fill out the members’ surveys quite regularly. I want to know whether the Speaker thinks he is getting a good response to those surveys and how valuable they prove. Do they provide a good guide for what the Speaker should be doing?

[9.10 am]

**The SPEAKER:** Mr Bremner will answer.

**Mr R. Bremner:** In respect to the Parliamentary Services Department members’ surveys that we send out in conjunction with both the chamber departments’ members’ surveys, our response tends to be numerically much

the same. As far as response rates go, we send out electronic and paper surveys and, from memory, the response rate is around 44 per cent. That is adequate, but obviously we would like 100 per cent. Realistically, 44 per cent is what we have traditionally received.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** How valuable are those surveys to the department's planning et cetera?

**Mr R. Bremner:** They are exceedingly valuable from two aspects. They provide our auditable performance indicators on our performance and give us immediate feedback on performance. Perhaps of as much importance, if not more, is that we also allow free-form answers for each of the questions. Quite often the suggestions and improvements put forward by members are taken on board. We get back to the members concerned and explain to them what we propose to do or why cannot do it.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I refer to line item 1 "Support the Operations of the Legislative Assembly" on page 46. Last year I asked a question about functions held by the Speaker. Could the Speaker provide a list or summary of the functions he has held as Speaker over the past financial year? How many functions were held and, in particular, which members of Parliament were invited to those functions?

**The SPEAKER:** We did it last year, and we will do it again this year. I will have to take that as a supplementary. I will provide a list of the functions held and the MPs who attended the functions, if any, other than me.

[*Supplementary Information No A1.*]

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** The Premier has spoken about the 500 Club or other fundraising bodies using Parliament House for functions. Can the Speaker confirm whether the 500 Club used Parliament House over the past year for any activities?

**The SPEAKER:** From what I remember the 500 Club event was held in the Premier's office on the hill. It was not held in Parliament House, but I can check up whether there have been any other 500 Club events. To my knowledge I do not believe there were, but I will take that on notice as well and inform the member whether there was one.

[*Supplementary Information No A2.*]

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** The Speaker or one of his advisers might have to guide me on where the appropriations for the payment of leases for outbuildings, specifically the committee rooms, are in the budget papers. I note there are two divisions.

**The SPEAKER:** I am informed that two payments occur. One is via the Legislative Assembly and the other is through the Parliamentary Services Department. I cannot speak for the Legislative Council because there is another arrangement there. I ask Mr Bremner to speak on the Parliamentary Services Department.

**Mr R. Bremner:** In respect to Level 2, 11 Harvest Terrace, where finance and information technology are located, the annual lease costs for 2014–15 is estimated at \$305 000.

**Mr P.J. McHugh:** The Legislative Assembly is on level 1 of the same building. I do not have the lease figures in front of me, but it is a little in advance of what is paid by the Parliamentary Services Department because the space is larger.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I have the \$305 000. Can I have the actual number for the Legislative Assembly please as supplementary information?

**The SPEAKER:** We will provide the rent paid by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Services Department for outside office accommodation.

[*Supplementary Information No A3.*]

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** That is the lease costs. What is the total value of the outgoings for occupation of those buildings?

**Mr R. Bremner:** The figure of \$305 000 is the rental and utilities cost for the Parliamentary Services Department.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Would the Legislative Assembly be the same figure?

**The SPEAKER:** We will provide that proper breakdown to the member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will amend supplementary information A3 to include outgoings.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** What is the term of the lease?

**The SPEAKER:** This question will stretch out. We will also give the term of the lease to the member for Willagee.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** And any options.

**The CHAIRMAN:** All that will be A3.

**The SPEAKER:** The supplementary information in A3 will provide the cost of rent outgoings and outgoings paid by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Services Department together with the term of the lease plus any options.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** I refer to “Cashflows From Operating Activities” on page 49, and the line item “Other payments”, which is under “Accommodation”. Can the Speaker detail the kind of costs that would be pooled under “Other payments”?

**The SPEAKER:** “Other payments” with the appropriation of \$209 000 for last year?

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Yes, \$209 000 for last year and \$195 000 budgeted for 2015–16. It seems to be a catch-all. What would be caught under “Other payments”?

**The SPEAKER:** Ms Ozich will answer.

**Ms E. Ozich:** It includes GST paid on purchases, operating lease payments on motor vehicles and the payment of audit fees.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Was that GST payments or receipts? Are GST receipts listed as a separate line item?

**Ms E. Ozich:** Yes, we do. The majority of that appropriation was GST payments on purchases.

**The SPEAKER:** The receipts are listed below that line item.

**Ms E. Ozich:** The receipts are listed separately.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I am happy to take this answer by way of supplementary information. Can I have a list of the Speaker’s trips in the last 12 months?

[9.20 am]

**The SPEAKER:** During the past 12 months, there was a Presiding Officers and Clerks Conference in Samoa in July 2014. The Deputy Speaker went to that, together with the Clerk. In April this year, together with Margaret Quirk, Ian Blayney and the Clerk, I went to the Middle East. Andrea Mitchell came with us but that was funded via imprest. Those are the two Speaker’s trips for this year.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** What was the cost of both trips?

**The SPEAKER:** The trip to Samoa cost \$11 816. The cost of the Middle East trip was \$54 500. The total was \$66 316.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** My question relates to the line items “Support the Operations of the Legislative Assembly” and “Other Services” on page 46 of the *Budget Statements*. I wish to ask a question about Hansard. There were some rumours around the place that Hansard was to be moved out of the parliamentary building. Can the Speaker confirm that that will not be the case and that Hansard will continue to stay in the parliamentary building and continue to offer its current services?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Willagee asked a very pertinent question about the amount of rent that we pay outside the building. We were hoping to get some type of purpose-built building across the road. The dosshouse was for sale. It has now been sold to private people. Because the government owns the other three buildings, we were hoping that we would be able to get a custom-made building and that it would free up a lot of space.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is that custom-made for Hansard?

**The SPEAKER:** No—for Parliament generally. Maybe we could have shared some of the space with the executive arm of government and freed up a lot of space in this building. As we know, members complain about their office accommodation and things being crushed. It is very difficult to expand the footprint here. Unfortunately, the building across the road—the dosshouse—was sold to private developers. There does not seem to be an appetite to build a custom-made building. At this stage Hansard will stay in the building and things are as is.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** The Speaker said that Parliament owns the building on the corner. Did Parliament make a bid for the next one down, whatever the address is, that the Speaker referred to?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, it made a bid and we never got it. It was not Parliament that made the bid; the government made a bid and it was not successful. The two buildings further down are also owned by the government, up to where the double-storey house is. Members of the Legislative Council are in those offices.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Are they government owned?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Who supervised and promoted the unsuccessful bids on that building?

**The SPEAKER:** It was the government accommodation office.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Did the government just express a desire to own the building?

**The SPEAKER:** It did. It put in a bid and it was unsuccessful. We are back to square one again. Our preferred option—I think this is everybody’s preferred option—is to have a building where the car park is, so that it is on this side of the road. We thought if that came up for sale, it was a reasonable price and we could get something built there—the member asked a question about the rentals that are paid across the road—it would have been a good option to try to wean ourselves off leased premises and have something that we owned.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** It was the Premier’s preferred option before Hale House was upgraded. It seems to have stopped in terms of priorities. I will just make that point.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not know about that. That is the position.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** The Speaker made a very good point. I think he said that the government wants to wean itself off leases. Knowing the buildings across the road, is it still the policy of the Parliament and the view of the Speaker and the President, I guess, that as those sorts of private premises close to Parliament come up—I guess we are limited because most of them are large buildings—they are generally looked at to be purchased?

**The SPEAKER:** Only this one was looked at to be purchased because of the ownership of the three buildings next to it. We thought that it would have been a great idea to at least get ourselves a purpose-made building, even if certain floors were used by government and certain floors were used by us with separate entries and that type of thing. Unfortunately, it did not come to fruition. I do not have to tell the member that there have been more master plans for this precinct than we can poke a stick at. They cover the whole of the President’s table. We thought that this would have been a good starting point to get our foot in the door, but unfortunately it did not happen.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** From memory, there used to be a parliamentary precincts act. Has the repeal of that act inhibited or assisted the government?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no act, and we are busy dealing with that at the moment. There is a parks and reserves situation which takes us right down to the Barracks Arch. Originally, it covered the area over the freeway and down to Hay Street, Havelock Street and Kings Park Road. This is the footprint. We are trying to get a parliamentary precincts act passed. We are working on it at the moment. The other side of the road is the executive and we are on this side of the road.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** I refer to “Item 3 Net amount appropriated to deliver services” on page 37 of the *Budget Statements*. I wanted to ask about security. I know that there have been security increases and that there is an increase in appropriation generally. What improvements in security have taken place and are there any plans for further upgrades and security to Parliament House?

**The SPEAKER:** We are very aware of security matters here. The member for Wagin has been here for longer than I have and I am sure he has seen improvements over the years. We have a whole lot of matters planned but we do not like to shout things from the rooftops. We meet with police from time to time. We are doing things on an ongoing basis. The member may want to see me privately.

**Mr T.K. WALDRON:** Would the Speaker say that security for members is a fairly high priority?

**The SPEAKER:** It is a high priority. We can only do what we can do. This is an old building. I talk to my friend on the other side of the chamber about security from time to time and ask him what he thinks. We are very alive to this matter. We are certainly not sitting on our hands. The member will notice certain things changing over the next number of months.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** My question relates to the asset investment program on page 53. Initially, I want to go through the estimated expenditure of \$1.738 million for 2014–15—the source of funding. I see that \$1 million is for capital appropriation and \$250 000 was the carryover. Can the Speaker describe what the \$488 000 for “Other” is?

**The SPEAKER:** I will ask Mr Bremner to answer.

**Mr R. Bremner:** They were carryover funds from the previous year.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Is that the \$488 000 as well as the \$250 000?

**Mr R. Bremner:** Yes.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Why were those numbers separated?

**Mr R. Bremner:** The first figure of \$250 000 was capital. The second figure of \$488 000 is recurrent. That is why we separated them.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Some of the recurrent underspend was used in the capital spend.

**Mr R. Bremner:** Yes, we used some of the recurrent underspend into our capital.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I wish to go through that \$1.738 million. We had a breakdown before. There was some expenditure for office upgrades. Can the Speaker provide a breakdown of that expenditure for office upgrades?

[9.30 am]

**The SPEAKER:** We will take that one on notice and provide that information.

[*Supplementary Information No A4.*]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Mr Speaker, can you define what you are going to provide?

**The SPEAKER:** We are going to provide a breakdown on office upgrades—happy with that?

**Mr R. Bremner:** Office equipment and software.

**The SPEAKER:** It was equipment and software—or did the member want office upgrades?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** I would like office upgrades. When you went through the \$1.73 million, Mr Speaker, I thought there was a sub-item called “office upgrades”.

**Mr R. Bremner:** No, there was an item “office equipment and software” of \$27 000.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Okay; I will have that one.

**Mr R. Bremner:** I think it was a couple of photocopiers and some office equipment.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Okay. I think there was another item that got my interest. Can you go through that \$1.738 million again?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are you asking for that now, member for West Swan?

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Yes, they just gave it, and we are having a discussion about what that \$1.738 million encompasses.

**Mr R. Bremner:** It is stonework repairs of \$700 000 and works and alterations of \$295 000.

**Ms R. SAFFIOTI:** Can we have a breakdown of the works and alterations?

**The SPEAKER:** We will take that question on notice. The \$295 000 is a breakdown on our notes, so we will provide that to you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** For clarification, is this supplementary information A4? Thank you.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes. Mr Bremner, can you advise what you will be providing?

**Mr R. Bremner:** We will be providing a breakdown of the \$295 000 of the \$1.738 million that relates to works and alterations for the financial year 2014–15.

**Mr J. NORBERGER:** Mr Speaker, I refer to page 49 of the *Budget Statements*. This is possibly a clarifying question because I know that the member for Willagee asked in relation to leasing costs. Under “Cashflows from Operating Activities” are payments for accommodation of roughly three quarters of a million dollars. I assume accommodation means office accommodation or leased office space. If that is the case, is that the Brand Agency building to which we referred earlier that contains the Legislative Assembly committee rooms on level 1 and Parliamentary Services on level 2?

**The SPEAKER:** It relates to the Legislative Assembly portion only of the rentals for the office space across the road.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Mr Speaker, I refer to “Delivery of Services” on page 45. This is a question to which Mr Bremner may know the answer. Is a general figure used internally for the difference between the cost of running Parliament on a daily rate when Parliament is sitting versus non-sitting?

**The SPEAKER:** We have canvassed this before. We do not have a figure for sitting and non-sitting days, but we know that it costs about \$10 000 a day more on a sitting day.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** But you do not know that base daily rate.

**The SPEAKER:** Parliament has to increase security and staffing and all the rest of it—power, costs and overtime.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I refer to “Total Cost of Service” on page 46. Many functions are held in Parliament for various interests groups; the Tourism Council Western Australia and Royal Agricultural Society of Western Australia are two that come to mind. Do we subsidise the cost of those events at all?

**The SPEAKER:** It is full cost recovery, member for Willagee.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Good. I refer to “Equity” on page 48 of the *Budget Statements*. This might just be accounting treatment, but why does Parliament run an accumulated surplus and a reserve? Can the Speaker define the purposes for each of those? I refer to \$918 000 and \$104 000.

**The SPEAKER:** Artwork and other ceremonial assets are considered to have a very long and indefinite useful life and are not subject to depreciation. For accounting purposes, these assets are recorded at fair value and are revalued by independent professional valuers. The increased asset value represents an increase in the equity by the department. However, this equity is not available for use unless the asset is sold; hence, the term “reserves”.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Surely under asset recycling you would want to flog off some of that art.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Willagee, if you can get a price for the art, please come and see me, because we would happily sell some of it.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Why does it flatline in the out years? Last year it was \$708 000, and we have had a significant increase in the accumulated surplus as part of equity, and then it flatlines in the out years. Is it unpredictable?

**The SPEAKER:** We would have to do a revaluation, but, as I said, I do not think it would move because of the policy that has been adopted.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** It obviously had a revaluation, because in 2014–15, it was \$708 000.

**The SPEAKER:** Elma Ozich, what do you say about that?

**Ms E. Ozich:** Most of the balance sheet or the statement of financial position is flatlined. When Treasury populates out years, it copies the previous out year, and that is why the balance is carried forward.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** But I am talking about the 2013–14 and 2014–15 budget years. The figure went from \$918 000 in 2013–14 to \$708 000 in 2014–15, and the estimated actual is \$918 000. How did it go from \$918 000 to \$708 000 and to \$918 000 again? Is it a typo?

**Ms E. Ozich:** No, it is not a typo. The 2014–15 budget is completed before we actually close off the 2013–14 year. When the current year is closed off by Treasury, it takes the closing balances of the balance sheet and it flatlines it outwards.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Sure, but that still does not explain to me the \$708 000.

**Ms E. Ozich:** The \$708 000 was the previously flatlined position. That number was set before we did the 2013–14 actual. Previously, the 2013–14 budget would have probably been the \$708 000 figure.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** So in the 2014–15 budget column, the figure of \$708 000 is the budget figure, but you are saying that the estimated actual will be some \$200 000 more?

**Ms E. Ozich:** The estimated actual for this year is the same as last year’s 2013–14 figure is.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Got it; I think. Mr Speaker, you did not define the difference between accumulated surplus and reserves for me—and their purposes.

**The SPEAKER:** Elma Ozich.

**Ms E. Ozich:** The accumulated surplus is prior year contributions.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** And the reserves?

[9.40 am]

**Ms E. Ozich:** The reserves are artwork and ceremonial assets in this instance.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remind members that we have two divisions to deal with this morning; the other is the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administrative Investigations. It is entirely up to members how they deal with that.

**The SPEAKER:** I just say to the Member for Willagee that we have a dearth of artworks in this place, so if he wants a picture of a windmill or a dam on a farm, we can arrange that for his office, but apart from that —

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** You are not having a crack at the regions, are you, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** Sorry; can I just finish. With the assistance of the Sergeant-at-Arms and the President, we have a committee that has partnered with Edith Cowan University. Members will have noticed great improvement in the Aboriginal People's Gallery with the Aboriginal art collection and borrowing of works. We also try to support Aboriginal artists, and we are currently trying to commission two works that will go somewhere to lift the tone of the building. We are trying—I am certainly—to move one or two rooms into the twenty-first century. We are trying, but it is not easy.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** I have to take a supplementary question on that, Mr Speaker. I am quite excited by the opportunity to potentially have some of the art here in my office. If the Speaker wants to hang in my office any of the art that is currently in the Aboriginal People's Room and outside in the foyer, he can. I understand there is a small budget to purchase art, not just commissioning bits and pieces. Has any art been purchased in the past 12 months?

**The SPEAKER:** Not in this past 12 months. We met recently with an Aboriginal artist called Peter Farmer, who has done some really interesting things. As I said, we are looking at getting two pieces to try to supplement that. The Parliament has entered into an arrangement with ECU, and I think it will expand and we will be able to obtain more artwork from the university. It has a very extensive collection.

**Mr B.S. WYATT:** Is the arrangement with ECU an art-sharing arrangement?

**The SPEAKER:** No, they loan us some of their artwork because they have an extensive collection. They will send their curator here, and hang the works for us. They have done a lot of work for us, so we are very grateful to ECU—and mindful that we need to upgrade what is here with other artworks.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Returning to the "Asset Refurbishment and Replacement Program", there was an intention to expand the Aboriginal People's Room. What are the intentions in the next financial year?

**The SPEAKER:** There are no intentions to do that now. That has been put on the backburner. The reason that was done is that, as the member for Willagee knows, Parliament House does not have any function space. We have only the dining room. We use the landing, but that is not air conditioned. People faint from time to time in there. The idea was to extend the Aboriginal People's Room because it has air conditioning, and when it was not being used as a function room, to have bi-fold doors and use it as a meeting room. I thought it was a good idea but at this stage it has been put on hold.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Why was it dropped from the program?

**The SPEAKER:** There were a whole lot of things that went on, such as the moving of offices and also financial matters. There was a lot of screaming, wailing and gnashing of teeth by a few people, so we have put it on the backburner. Sooner or later we will have to find some function space here. There are now big works occurring and scaffolding around the building, and every time we have to put a tent up in the courtyard, we need to bring in scaffolding, and it goes down the Speaker's corridor into the courtyard. We were looking for a reasonably big room that would be used as a multipurpose room. Hopefully, it will not be lost in the mist; we might be able to come back and revisit it.

**The appropriation was recommended.**