

FREMANTLE MARITIME MUSEUM PROJECT

107. Mr O'GORMAN to the Deputy Premier:

I refer the Deputy Premier to the Fremantle maritime museum project. Can he inform members whether the project is running on budget?

Mr RIPPER replied:

This project is certainly impressive, but that is not the case when it comes to its budget. It is a bit like the belltower, where not one cent is provided in the forward estimates for the \$24.5 million second stage, and the costs of the first stage blew out by about \$2 million. I regret to inform the House that a similar problem exists in relation to the maritime museum, where the capital cost overrun is expected to be in the order of \$1.5 million. The former Government might have been expected to provide for the running costs. People are expected to visit the museum once it is opened, and it might be expected that the forward estimates would contain a provision for the running costs of the museum. I regret to advise the House that the former Government did not do that. The former Government dealt with each agency in the first round of the budget process, and it failed to provide funding in the forward estimates for the running of the museum, and the funding shortfall amounts to about \$2 million per annum. Some of these amounts are not large. They do not compare with the \$80 million wasted on information technology in the Education Department when it was the responsibility of the present Leader of the Opposition. However, these amounts all add up. The coalition Government was good at announcing projects and programs, but not nearly so good at providing the funding for them, and this has resulted in a \$485 million problem in the forward estimates, brought to us by the Leader of the Opposition and his mates. That is the amount of the under-funding for all of the coalition projects and programs. The Leader of the Opposition and his friends - colleagues, I should say - are denying that there is a problem, but the Government will be back in here day after day with more examples of how the previous Government announced programs and did not provide the funding for them, leaving a budget legacy which is very difficult for the Government to overcome.

Mr Barnett: When are you just going to turn up to work and do your job?

Mr RIPPER: The Government turns up to work, and goes to the expenditure review committee, and agency after agency comes in and describes a project to which the coalition Government has agreed, but for which it has not put enough money in the forward estimates. The Government is faced with the choice of blowing the investment that has already been made, or providing the money that the coalition failed to include in the forward estimates.