

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

Division 3: Premier and Cabinet, \$87 682 000 -

Hon Jon Ford, Deputy Chairman.

Hon Kim Chance, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Mr M. Wauchope, Director General.

Mr G. Stokes, Acting Executive Director, Policy.

Mr G. Hay, Assistant Director General, Public Sector Management.

Ms J. Sales, Acting Assistant Director General, Corporate and Business Services.

Mr J. Thurtell, Acting Director, Native Title Unit.

Ms B. Robbins, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates Committee, I welcome you to today's hearing. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty to assist Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance. Members are asked to sit towards the front of the Chamber where practicable so that witnesses will not have to turn their head when answering questions.

It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated fund estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount, and so on in preface to their questions.

If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask for your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee's clerk within five working days of receipt of the questions. An example of the required Hansard style for the documents has been provided to your advisers.

May I remind those members of the public in attendance that only accredited media representatives may take notes. However, full Hansard transcripts will be available to the public within a week of the close of these hearings.

The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. At this time, I ask each of the witnesses whether they have read, understood and completed the Information for Witnesses form.

WITNESSES: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Do all the witnesses fully understand the meaning and effect of the provisions of that document?

WITNESSES: Yes.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Does the minister wish to make an opening statement?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not have an opening statement.

Hon N.F. MOORE: I refer to major policy decisions listed at page 76 of the *Budget Statements*. With reference to decisions made since the state election, how has the department managed to save \$3.2 million for its priority assurance dividend? It proposes to save the same amount in the out years. If I cannot be given details now, I ask that my questions be taken on notice.

A line item for ministerial air charter shows an allocation of \$740 000. Is that extra funding for ministerial air charter? If it is, what is the reason for the additional funds?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I will tackle the second half of the question as best I can. I ask the director general to take the first part. It is my understanding that the contract for the air charter contained a provision for renegotiation, based on a number of factors. It is a contractual matter with which the Government had to deal. An additional factor in the increase in costs related to a provision in the contract that reflected the increased price of fuel. It was an escalating factor. I ask the director general to answer the other question.

[4.40 pm]

Hon PETER FOSS: Could we have the detail of that?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Most certainly.

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

Mr WAUCHOPE: I can confirm the minister's response; the contract provided for a cost escalation for the consumer price index and fuel prices. As members would appreciate, over the past year or so fuel prices have increased considerably. An automatic clause requires application to the Department of Industry and Technology to have the actual increase approved; it is in the contract.

The composition of the priority and assurance dividends is made up of a lot of different items. I can provide members with that list later; however, the key items include some of those that have been publicly announced, including the abolishment of the communications unit, which will save \$300 000 per year. We have reduced the number of motor vehicles in ministerial offices, which will save \$300 000 per year. We have also taken \$300 000 out of the constitutional centre. As a consequence of the machinery of government changes, we no longer support corporate services for Treasury; therefore, we have been able to reduce the application of funding to that function. That will provide a saving of about \$140 000. The abolition of some positions in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet will save a couple of hundred thousand dollars. The rest of the savings are made up of fairly small sums. The total savings are listed on about three pages of items, which equate to \$3.2 million.

Hon N.F. MOORE: You mentioned one of the savings involved removing some positions. The significant issues and trends on page 75 states -

The Department has a pivotal role in assisting departments and agencies to implement changes in accordance with the endorsed recommendations that will involve significant restructuring and consequent staffing reductions.

Were there any staffing reductions in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet? Bearing in mind the department's role in the context of the overall government sector, presumably these consequent staff reductions will also apply to other agencies. Will the minister provide me with the number of people involved?

Mr WAUCHOPE: It is difficult to determine the numbers of people involved in the department and across the sector because considerable change is occurring at this time. Many of the restructures and amalgamations with agencies are taking place, and we expect that to continue for some time. Until we have gone through that process, we will not have a firm idea of the number of positions involved. It has been an unusual year for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet because an election was held and many people have moved in and out of the department. People have been on contracts and we have had a reduction in the number of people in ministerial offices, which has led to an overall reduction. At the same time, we have included different units; for example, the Office of Citizenship and Multicultural Interests has been brought into the department. The Drug Abuse Strategy Office has been taken out of the office and was placed with the Department of Health. Other changes have occurred that I cannot recall off the top of my head, and these have resulted in net changes. However, the main change in numbers resulted in fewer staff working in the ministerial offices.

Hon N.F. MOORE: Has any individual been given the sack?

Mr WAUCHOPE: No. Nobody has been terminated other than by way of their contract.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: I refer to page 82 of the *Budget Statements*. The third dot point states that following the state election, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet managed a peak workload in supporting Executive Government processes and it administered entitlements for members of Parliament. A major initiative for 2001-02 is a program of relocation and establishment of parliamentary electorate offices. Some members have experienced significant delays in being accommodated in suitable offices so they can service their electorates as per their entitlements. What is the time line being considered for the conclusion of that process?

Mr WAUCHOPE: We had to face a larger than expected changeover in the number of members of Parliament. We calculated initially that we might end up with 20 or 25 new members; however, as it turned out, there were 36 new members.

Hon N.F. MOORE: That will not last for long.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am still smirking.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, members! We were going very well until then.

Mr WAUCHOPE: That created some resource difficulties. The department applied additional resources to that function when it realised the difficulties. However, we must remember that the department is required to observe certain processes for accountability purposes, which involve the Valuer General and the Department of Housing and Works. We have had to obtain costs from the Department of Housing and Works for fit outs of buildings. In some cases, we have had difficulty identifying suitable locations. Other locations might have been

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljana Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

suitable, but were not available at the time. At the outset, when we discuss possible options we tell members of Parliament that it could take up to six months to relocate them. Our priority after the election was to deal with members of the other House as they came on stream earlier - from February - than did members of this House. We tried to deal with that as best we could.

A number of proposals are under way, and we expect to have that backlog dealt with as soon as we can. However, as I said, there are resource difficulties, and we must observe certain processes. We have had difficulty getting people from the Valuer General's Office to assess the valuations quickly. We have had difficulties dealing with some of the property owners about the fit outs that we expected them to fund and the fit outs that we will fund. We have undertaken a lot of negotiations, and we will continue to do that in as timely a way as possible.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: My question also relates to the unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that deals with electorate offices. I forget whether it was late last year or early this year; however, I recall filling out a survey, which I presume went to all members of Parliament, about that unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. What happened to that survey? Was it received? Have the findings been collated and released, and have they been acted on?

Mr WAUCHOPE: The surveys were received. Not every member completed the survey, but we received a considerable number back. That information was used to provide performance measures information that appears in the budget output statements. I refer to page 80 of the *Budget Statements*. Under output 2, members will see the headings "Quality" and "Timeliness". They show the measure of satisfaction among members of Parliament; it measures the quality of service provided to them. Members will notice that there is a figure for the 2000-01 budget, the 2000-01 estimates, and a target for 2001-02.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Is it possible to get a copy of the findings of that survey, or is that an internal document?

Mr WAUCHOPE: There is no problem in summarising the information for the member. However, I do not wish to release the individual responses from members and identify the members. I see no problem in aggregating the information and the comments that were returned.

Hon PETER FOSS: You will probably find that one area would consistently get rated with a one and another area would consistently rate a five; therefore, the average might be three. One area would show considerable dissatisfaction and another would show considerable satisfaction. That is what we would like to know about.

[4.50 pm]

Mr WAUCHOPE: I will identify what I can for the members.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am happy to take the matter on notice, but I cannot indicate whether the Premier will be able to release the information as such. It is his decision, not mine.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: It may seem a bit harsh, but I am tempted to ask whether instructions have been given to that unit to cease all expenditure, and indeed all action, on some electorate offices. By way of example, I have had some issues relating to my electorate office that go back to April and May this year. Not only have I had no action, but I have not even had an acknowledgment. That is not very professional. The policy question that is often asked is why that unit is within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Why is it not transferred to the Parliament? Many other members believe that that administrative function should be performed through the Parliament, not the Executive Government.

Hon KIM CHANCE: All kinds of things are going through my mind in terms of the way I could answer that question, but I must discipline myself! I will share my view on that with the member outside. It is a reasonable question, however. I sometimes wonder about the scope of activity undertaken by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The issue of servicing members' electorate interests seems to me to be one that relates more closely to their parliamentary role than it does to an executive function in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. This question has probably been asked before, and Hon Barry House and I may even share a common viewpoint on it, but it is very much a policy question, and one which may well be productive for the House to discuss in the context of the Parliament and the Parliament's own committees. I have an open mind about doing that, and I am sure the Premier would as well.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: My question is along the same lines. My office has had a great deal of difficulty getting equipment serviced. Can that function be carried out in country areas? The time involved in sending the equipment to Perth and getting it back is just not satisfactory. Is there a letter of instruction that the services to country areas should not be as members require them to be? If so, will the minister table that letter?

Extract from Hansard
[COUNCIL - Tuesday, 16 October 2001]
p636b-643a

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy
Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon
Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am sure there is no such letter. I am happy to ask the Premier, but I am sure no letter of that kind would have been issued. If there are problems with servicing electorate offices - and invariably problems do arise; it is a significant job with the number of electorate offices members have - the Government would like to hear about them, and to try to resolve them. It is a longstanding issue, but it would surprise me if a letter such as that referred to by Hon Murray Criddle did exist.

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: I am more than keen to see the opportunity for those offices to be serviced by people in country areas, and I leave that thought with the minister and hope he will pass it on.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Does that apply to equipment in those offices?

Hon M.J. CRIDDLE: That is what I am talking about.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to one of the major policy decisions identified on page 76 of the *Budget Statements*, in relation to multicultural activities. In particular, an allocation of \$159 000 has been made to "Online WA Multicultural communities". Can the minister or his advisers explain what this project is all about?

Ms ROBBINS: The Online WA multicultural communities project was launched in May last year, and it is an Australian first. It is a facility that provides an Internet presence to community organisations, both in the multicultural and service provider sectors. The organisations have access to their own web pages, a chat facility, a calendar and a bulletin board. Fifty organisations are presently online, and tenders have been called to extend the program to allow up to another 450 organisations to get on line. The department provides the training, and it is such an easy-to-use technique that no HTML training is necessary. Anyone who can use a word processor is able to make a web page. One of the communities has had a 76-year-old grandmother set up its online project. It has been a great initiative, in partnership with the Ethnic Communities Council.

Hon ALAN CADBY: If I wanted to examine the budget for the science portfolio, in terms of salaries, administration costs, grants for projects and annual expenditure over the four years, where do I find it in this budget? If it is not in the budget, could I have a detailed supplementary budget?

Hon KIM CHANCE: While the Premier is the Minister for Science, there is nothing in this budget relating specifically to that portfolio. To the extent that government expenditure is made within the science portfolio, those sums are handled through the Department of Industry and Technology. The short answer to the member's question is that those amounts will be found in the budget of the Department of Industry and Technology.

Hon ALAN CADBY: Can I be furnished with a copy of those accounts? Surely the Premier has ministerial responsibility for that budget allocation of \$50 million. The minister has responsibility for that amount, does he not?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am not sure about the \$50 million. Which amount is the member referring to?

Hon ALAN CADBY: The allocation for the Premier's science council.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I thought the member was referring to the science portfolio. I may have to take that question on notice, for certainty's sake. I believe the money resides within the accounts of the Department of Industry and Technology; however, I do not have a brief to deal with that portfolio at this stage. Rather than risk misinforming the member, I will take the matter on notice.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer to output 1 on page 78 of the *Budget Statements*, which deals with support for the Premier, as head of the Government. The first paragraph reads -

The Department provides administrative support and advice responsive to the Premier's requirement as Head of Government.

The total cost of the output has been reduced from the 2000-01 estimated actual of \$11.87 million to \$9.89 million. The number of full-time equivalents over that same period has also been reduced, from 72 to 60. Why have those reductions taken place? Is this Premier more capable of doing more for less, is he simply brighter than the previous Premier, or is there some other explanation for these reductions?

[5.00 pm]

Hon KIM CHANCE: I am sure that the director general would prefer me to address that question since it relates to a pointed policy issue and may involve one or two value judgments. I thank Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich for the question. As far as I am aware, the question on the reduction in staff was addressed earlier by the director general in an answer to a previous question, so I will not try to second-guess that. Efficiencies have been

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

addressed through the Premier's establishment. The answers to the two direct questions the member asked are yes and yes.

Hon N.F. MOORE: There is some dispute about the answers.

Hon KIM CHANCE: The questions were: is the Premier smarter and is he doing more with less? The answers are yes and yes.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Hon Norman Moore knows the Premier is doing more with less, because that was a part of our Government's policy.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Order, members! We were doing very well. We will move on.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I refer to pages 76 and 77 of the *Budget Statements*. I hope a matter can be clarified for me. In line four of the table on page 77, the net cost of outputs is estimated at \$83.093 million for 2001-02. However, under the heading of adjustments, there is a credit of \$7.455 million, which apparently means that the amount appropriated is \$75.638 million. That occurs also on the pages that follow - for each output there is a lesser figure showing the net cost, the amount of the adjustments and the actual appropriation. In each case it acts as a way of crediting moneys. I refer to page 78 of the *Budget Statements* by way of example. I do not know what sort of operating revenue is accrued, but the net cost of output 1 is \$9.835 million and the appropriation is \$9.413 million. In this case, there is an adjustment of \$422 000. How much will the output cost and what makes up the figure of \$422 000?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Hon Simon O'Brien is having difficulty with an issue that relates to a change of system, which is something that we have all had to endure over the past few years. There is an upside and a downside to this. The downside is that this is yet another complication arising from the roll-out of the adoption of accrual accounting techniques, with which we have become familiar over the past few years. It has been extremely difficult in any division to compare one set of accounts with those of the previous year.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is almost impossible.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes. The upside is that I believe this is the last year of the adoption of the accrual accounting roll-out. I provided the same answer to an earlier question; that is, the adjustments are related to the movements in cash balances and other accrual items such as receivables, payables and superannuation. They are dealt with in a different way. The bottom line figures indicate some stability and are reasonably indicative of the situation, but the way of arriving at them has been altered somewhat vis-a-vis the previous year. It is annoying and it has been so for years, but we have hopefully now got to the point at which we will see some stability in the future, because we have now reached the end of that particular track. In future years we will hopefully have a better ability to compare one year's accounts with those of earlier years. The director general can fill in any detail that I have missed.

Mr WAUCHOPE: The minister's explanation is correct; it is a consequence of the move to accrual budgeting. The adjustments to be made by Treasury reflect a number of things including carryover expenditure and other accrual costs such as prepayments, creditors, receivables and superannuation liability. The other change that has occurred this year is that the Treasurer previously treated superannuation as a liability issue. The department is now funded for all superannuation entitlements other than the old pension scheme. From this year, agencies will be funded for superannuation and will make fortnightly payments to the superannuation board. As the member indicated, some significant changes have occurred that make it difficult to move from one year to the next, because this is the first year that treatment has been applied.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I ask a supplementary question. I thank the minister and the director general for their helpful explanations. Is it possible to get a breakdown of superannuation, leave liabilities and the like for the adjustment figure of \$7.455 million on page 77 of the *Budget Statements*?

Hon KIM CHANCE: We will take that question on notice. It should be possible but again, it is a matter of seeing how that number is constructed. I was a little hazy about whether it can be done because that figure is put together by Treasury from a number of sources and is not something that is a direct product of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

The DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Six members have indicated that they wish to ask questions and we have about 12 minutes left in which to deal with this division. I ask members to keep their questions and answers brief.

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: I refer to the 2001-02 allocation of \$128 000 for parity and wages policy adjustments, which is listed under major policy decisions on page 76 of the *Budget Statements*. Can you elaborate on how the parity and wages policy adjustments will work?

Mr WAUCHOPE: My understanding is that adjustments have been made to our out-year budget allocations to reflect the new wages framework. This will be applied across all government departments. As a consequence of that policy, some agencies will receive additional funding for wage increases in the out years and others will receive less. It is essentially a transfer within Government from one agency to another to accommodate the new wages policy.

Hon E.R.J. DERMER: Thank you.

[5.10 pm]

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: The Premier has indicated by press release that some of the forgone earnings resulting from the decision to not proceed with the luxury tax on properties valued at more than \$1 million will be absorbed by the Government's native title program. What will be the impact on such things as applications for mining tenements, land title applications and reviews of the status of land claims?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I would be delighted to take that question on notice.

Hon DERRICK TOMLINSON: I would be delighted to have the answer on notice.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I refer to the sustainability unit. Is this unit involved in measures to develop genuine indicators of the progress of sustainability, which were promised on page 5 of the Government's pre-election environment policy? If not, through which department or agency is this work being pursued? Is this project reflected in any specific budget allocation? Is it expected to include some public formulation of those measures; and, if so, what models for the investigation of the sustainability indicators are being pursued?

Hon KIM CHANCE: The answer to the first question is that the sustainability unit relates to the election promise. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet will take the lead role on this. I understand that the Premier intends to take a personal interest in the development and execution of the policy. The budget allocation for the lead agency role will be through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, but the budget allocation for the execution of the policy will be a matter for each agency and its budget. I will take on notice the question about the model that will be used. If the member thinks that any of the answers I have provided need further development, she should raise that now so it can be included with the question on notice.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I also want to know the kind of information that might be given to the community during the formulation of that policy. Will there be any public involvement in the formulation of indicators of the progress of sustainability?

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is important that this process be reported to the public regularly; however, that is a policy matter for the Premier to advise on. I am sure he will be happy to include a response to that in his answers on notice.

Hon PETER FOSS: My questions relate to administration of members' entitlements. The director general may be able to answer these. How many returned members have changed offices? How many new members have not taken over the offices of retiring members? What has been the maximum, minimum and mean cost of setting up those new offices? How does that relate to the figure of \$75 000, which the director general wrote to me about? How was that figure of \$75 000 calculated? Why has the director general not been prepared to look at the actual cost of shifting offices, as opposed to the mean cost? Why did his office twice write to me asking if I wished to move and then, when I said yes, tell me that it was against policy to allow me to do so? Do the department's policy guidelines recognise that Legislative Council members often play a supportive role to Legislative Assembly members and that this can change from election to election? What is the policy on the release of the travel details of members of Parliament? What information has already been released this year, and has there been any difference between the treatment of information relating to government members and that relating to opposition members? I ask for the factual answer rather than the policy.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I take it they are questions on notice.

Hon PETER FOSS: To the extent that they need to be. The director general may be able to answer them. I am interested to know what he can answer off the top of his head.

Mr WAUCHOPE: Many questions were asked. I do not have the detailed information in front of me. The department treats all members in the same way. It does not distinguish between different sides of politics.

Hon PETER FOSS: I understand that. I want to know what has happened in practice.

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy
Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon
Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

Hon KIM CHANCE: We would be delighted to take those questions on notice.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: Page 84 lists the major initiatives for 2001-02. Dot point five refers to the development and implementation of strategies to retain experienced mature-aged workers and increase the representation of young people in the public sector. What are those strategies and what do they involve?

Mr WAUCHOPE: One of the problems in the public sector is the increasing percentage of employees over the age of 45 - from 21 per cent in 1988 to 48 per cent in 2001. This is an issue for us and the Government Employees Superannuation Board. We worked with the superannuation board last year to conduct a major survey of the public sector to identify the retirement intentions of people in both the senior executive service and the public sector generally. As a consequence, we learnt some valuable information about the profile of the public sector and the likely retirement patterns of senior people during the next five to 10 years. We are looking at ways to develop strategies to retain the people we need to retain. We hope to develop a phased retirement program so that much of our expertise does not walk out the door in a short period.

The other side of that is what we are doing to recruit people for the public sector. We are keen to focus on youth, particularly in the graduate programs. A number of departments are now involved in graduate programs. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet last year launched its first graduate program, and it received 400 applications for four positions. There is much interest among graduates in joining the public sector. We are keen to develop mechanisms to increase the number of public sector trainees. We are working with the Department of Training and other agencies to develop those strategies. We are also looking at ways of increasing the representation of indigenous people in the public sector, at both entry and management levels.

Hon LOUISE PRATT: The definition of youth would include both school leavers and graduates, who are generally in their mid 20s. That is a diverse range of people. Do you mean both categories when you refer to youth?

[5.20 pm]

Mr WAUCHOPE: That is a good point. We are finding that the average age of graduates is rising. Some graduates are in their late 20s, but I had one last year who was in her early 30s and she also had a doctorate. When we look at the youth end of the sector, we are principally looking at the entry level end of the market and at traineeships specifically geared to people coming out of school. We also have an arrangement that allows students to spend time in government departments while they are completing their education.

Hon GEORGE CASH: I refer to page 92 of the *Budget Statements* and in particular to the major initiatives for 2001-02. Dot point one states that the department will develop and apply new principles for the settlement of native title claims that focus on mediation rather than litigation. First, what are the new principles that are referred to? Secondly, apart from the claimants, who is consulted when negotiating the settlement of native title claims? Thirdly, what support is available to claimants and other parties to ensure that all parties are adequately represented during the negotiation period? Finally, will the Government table the various agreements that are stated on page 92, such as the Yamatji Cooperative Planning agreement? The Nganawongka Wadjari Ngarla and Spinifex native title claims were apparently coordinated, and in the end they amounted to an agreement. However, I am unsure whether that agreement went through the court or whether it was negotiated through the native title unit of the department.

Hon KIM CHANCE: We have great confidence in the ability of the Government and the traditional owners to create significant advances through the agreements process. There may have been reasonable justification for some of the litigation that has taken place on the question of native title, but the time for that to end has long passed. It is now time to move on in a spirit of goodwill and negotiation. Indeed, that was the spirit of the report of the select committee of this House which looked at this matter.

Mr THURTELL: The Spinifex agreements mentioned by the member were negotiated by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet - some were negotiated under the previous Government - and since the change of Government there have been ongoing negotiations over other determinations. The Spinifex and Nganawongka Wadjari Ngarla agreements were ratified by the Federal Court, so the documents are available through the Federal Court as well as through the department. I am happy to provide those documents to members through the minister.

The Government has commissioned a review of the new principles to determine how it should handle native title claims throughout the State. The consultant's report is now being printed and it will be considered by the Cabinet Standing Committee on Native Title. Essentially, the review elaborates upon the principles and

Hon Norman Moore; Hon Peter Foss; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Louise Pratt; Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich; Deputy
Chairman; Hon Barry House; Hon Murray Criddle; Hon Sue Ellery; Hon Alan Cadby; Hon Simon O'Brien; Hon
Ed Dermer; Hon Derrick Tomlinson; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon George Cash

processes that the Government should implement so that there is more of a focus on the mediation of native title claims and less focus on litigation.

With regard to who is consulted in the development of a determination, the State is required by the Native Title Act 1993 to be the first respondent. Therefore, the State is always involved and in the first instance government agencies are consulted. Invariably, the Commonwealth Government is involved so it must also be consulted. We are obliged to talk to whoever is party to a claim, and inevitably we talk to their representative bodies. For example, during negotiations on a determination involving a number of pastoralists, we either talk directly with the pastoralists or with the Pastoralists and Graziers Association as their representative organisation. Similarly, if we are dealing with mining interests, we must talk to the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies and the chamber as well. We are doing that as a matter of course.

With regard to support for claimants and other parties, the Commonwealth Government, through the Attorney General's department, provides funding for organisations such as the PGA, the Fishing Industry Council and some of the mining interests. That is one source of funding. It also funds the native title representative bodies. Inevitably, native title representative bodies do not have sufficient funds to do all the things that they are required to do. Therefore, the Government is looking to provide some minor assistance to representative bodies in the main, to help them with the handling of claims. The member referred to the Yamatji Cooperative Planning agreement. Funds were provided by the previous Government to the Yamatji Land and Sea Council to help with the development of its claims and with the handling of future matters.

Hon BARRY HOUSE: Prior to the change in Government, a lot of work had been done to establish a physical activity task force that would be housed within what was the Ministry of the Premier and Cabinet. After the election, I remember seeing a press article which stated that the new Government had embraced that idea and would carry on the work. What has happened to that task force? Where is it, and how is it funded? From where is it operating, and what is it doing?

Mr WAUCHOPE: The physical activity task force still exists. It was originally established under the previous administration and relaunched under the new Government. The funding is principally provided through the Department of Health, but it also comes through the Department of Sport and Recreation. I am the chairman of the committee and Ron Alexander, the head of the Department of Sport and Recreation, is the deputy chair. The secretariat - the people providing the support - are drawn from the Department of Sport and Recreation. The committee has been working through the past few months and it is close to finalising its initial report.

[5.30 pm]