

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS - CONSIDERATION

Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon Louise Pratt) in the chair.

*Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission - Eighth Report - Public Hearing with the
Corruption and Crime Commission on 3 May 2006 - Motion*

Resumed from 22 November on the following motion moved by Hon Ray Halligan -

That the report be noted.

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I have already spoken about this report to some extent. I will reiterate for the government the issue associated with the word “audit”. I will read some of the transcript of the committee hearing as it appears on page 19 of the report. I said -

May I refer you to the act and to the functions of the parliamentary inspector? As you are on the receiving end of this, or part thereof, I am just wondering how you feel about the situation. Section 195 talks about the parliamentary inspector having the following functions. I will be selective because I am alluding to one word and one word alone, and that is “audit”. The section reads -

(a) to audit the operations of the Commission . . .

. . .

(cc) to audit any operation carried out . . .

I have not been able to find a definition of “audit”.

The commissioner, Mr Kevin Hammond, said, “It is not in the act.” I then said, “That is right. I am just wondering, because of that, whether that causes you some concern?” Mr Hammond then responded -

No, it does not cause the commission any concern. I repeat that whatever functions the parliamentary inspector chooses to exercise, he is more than welcome to do so. I have looked at “audit” before. I do not know that “audit” means actually getting into the accounts section and checking the vouchers, but if he wanted to do that, that is fine. I do not know what is meant by “audit” there. I have just assumed that it means to generally oversee, to check or to investigate the operation.

I want to bring to the government’s attention the need for a definition of “audit” for the purposes of the Parliamentary Inspector of the Corruption and Crime Commission or the acting parliamentary inspector. In a previous report the acting parliamentary inspector was asked to go to the commission to ascertain the correctness or otherwise of certain information. To my mind that was an “audit” of that particular circumstance. The difficulty the committee had was in explaining, admittedly after the event, what it believed was meant by the word “audit”. The fact that it is not defined in the act creates a problem. I would like the Attorney General to advise when the Corruption and Crime Commission Act 2003 will be revised. I understand that certain issues are being contemplated with the concurrence of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission. This matter should also be taken into account. Given its resources, the government is in a far better position to undertake the necessary research to find out what has been done in other jurisdictions and how the definition of “audit” might be best described in the act or in a regulation. If we want members of this and the other chamber to be comfortable with the veracity of information that the committee brings to their attention, it is important that the committee feel comfortable that the parliamentary inspector or the acting parliamentary inspector understands the definition of the word “audit”. In that way we will avoid a long dissertation about what it is we want the parliamentary inspector’s office to undertake. I put that to the government and hope that when amendments to the act are proposed, they will include an amendment to insert the definition of the word “audit”.

Question put and passed.

Legislative Council Members - Additional Electorate Staff - Statement by Leader of the House

Resumed from 14 March.

Motion

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: I move -

That the statement be noted.

I am very pleased that Legislative Council members have been allocated an extra research officer or a full-time research officer, thereby giving us two full-time staff. There was some talk about those staff representing

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members from time to time, particularly when Parliament is sitting. This week most schools are holding their end-of-year functions and, as the Leader of the House would be well aware, we are not able to attend those functions because we are required to be at Parliament. It would be useful, particularly for those upper house members whose electorates stretch from Geraldton and Murchison River to Esperance and beyond, if electorate office staff could represent us at those functions. The staffers would then become known in the community. The population appreciates face-to-face contact by members' staff when they visit the regions and communicate with the people. I am not saying that I would like to see that occur all the time, but in exceptional circumstances such as this it would be appropriate to reimburse them for some of the expense of that travel.

A couple of other issues need to be touched on now. Members must apply to the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal to be reimbursed for the days they spend in Perth, which is another burden of paperwork. Those of us who work on committees spend more time in Perth, whereas members who stay in Perth only to attend Parliament spend less time in the city. A couple of issues may need to be discussed from that point of view. As I said, I am very grateful for the additional staff allocation and for some of the moves that have been made in that area.

Hon BRUCE DONALDSON: I, too, appreciate the fact that additional staff have been provided. It was not very palatable when the number of staff was increased for members of the other house and not for members of this house. I am probably right in saying that the Leader of the House had a fair bit to do with ensuring that the number of staff was increased, which I appreciate. Because of the time he sat in the house as a member of the opposition, he knows what the situation is like. We needed the additional staff.

I agree with Hon Murray Criddle that there are times when an electorate officer can represent a member on certain matters, although that should not occur too frequently. I wonder whether electorate officers can be provided with an allowance to pay for two trips within the member's electorate during each calendar year, including airfare and overnight accommodation or whatever it might be. The allowance might never be used. A similar arrangement to the current provision for the drawdown for members' partners could apply; that is, if a member's partner does not use the allocated four flights during a calendar year, the member cannot accumulate those flights over four years and then take the partner on 16 trips after a four-year session of Parliament. My staff have talked about their travel entitlements, and their comments were very much along the lines of those of Hon Murray Criddle. The arrangement for electorate officers could be capped at two trips. This week my electorate officers could have travelled to Geraldton or Esperance and visited two or three schools. Two trips a year would not break the bank and would be of some assistance to members.

Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE: Another issue that particularly affects me and my family is that my wife is allowed only four trips. Other members have the opportunity to be with their families regularly but my wife lives on the farm and cannot visit Perth often because she must maintain the farming business in the country. It becomes a large expense to regularly fly my family to Perth or to travel to Esperance, which we do once or twice each year. We must take the money used for that from other areas. We want to keep families together so that they do not break up. This matter is about families. We see more problems with families in our profession - if that is what it is - than in many other professions. That issue could be addressed by allowing partners to travel with members. That would address the issue of families.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I thank Hon Murray Criddle for moving that the statement be noted and also for the contributions that he and Hon Bruce Donaldson have made. Both members raised issues that have been raised before, and those issues must be taken very seriously. It is a reminder of the important role played by electorate officers. I rely heavily on my electorate officer in Geraldton, simply because I cannot be in Geraldton anywhere nearly as much as I would like to be. She is very much my representative, and I know that her role is greatly appreciated by the people who seek to do business with me in my electorate office. The same can be said of the two research officers who job-share the now full-time position in my office. One of those people, incidentally, is engaged on virtually no other work than the pressing issue of infrastructure requirement for the mid-west mining development; that is that person's whole role. As a result of that role, that person has to maintain contact with people not only throughout the mid-west but also in Perth. I certainly understand the need that has been expressed for research and electorate officers to have some capacity to travel. This is an issue that must be addressed in the future. I believe all members would acknowledge how heavily they rely on their electorate officers or electorate staff and the high-quality people they are uniformly. They are a remarkable group of people. They are very much our front line. I think in time there will be a greater realisation and recognition of the role that they play.

Clearly the issue raised by Hon Murray Criddle about spouses is an area that must be investigated. Many country members have found that maintaining the desire to live in their electorates, particularly when that electorate is somewhat far-flung, becomes a very difficult thing. It certainly got too hard for me, and has done for many other members who represent country electorates. I believe that we must recognise the difficulties that

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are presented to what amounts to a few members who, like Hon Murray Criddle, continue to live in the country. One minister in fact still lives in a country area. I could not do it. I found that I travelled home to Merredin for six weekends in one year; it was very difficult to do. However, John Bowler, Minister for Resources and Assisting the Minister for State Development, maintains his full-time home in Kalgoorlie. That must be a very difficult thing for him to do. It is the same for any member. We must examine and encourage the capacity for wives and other members of our close family to accompany us as we move between our electorates and the city, and also between one part of the electorate and the other when we are dealing with electorates as large as the Agricultural Region; even more so the Mining and Pastoral Region. I therefore note the comments that have been made; they were important and needed to be said. They also gave me an opportunity of scoring some brownie points with my own electorate staff just prior to Christmas, so I do thank Hon Murray Criddle!

Question put and passed.

Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission - Ninth Report - Inquiry into the Future Operation of Witness Protection Programs in Western Australia

Resumed from 15 June.

Motion

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I move -

That the report be noted.

I bring to the attention of members the ninth report of the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, entitled "Inquiry into the Future Operation of Witness Protection Programmes in Western Australia". As members will see, it is quite a small report. It provides information that was sought after the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission resolved on 29 May 2006 to conduct an inquiry into the future operation of witness protection programs in Western Australia. The body of the report states -

The Committee resolved to conduct a separate inquiry in relation to witness protection. Section 226 of the Act provides that the Minister is to carry out a review of the operation and effectiveness of the Act as soon as practicable after the expiration of three years after its commencement. The provision goes on to list a number of specific matters the Minister is required to consider, including whether the Act should be amended to include the Corruption and Crime Commission performing a witness protection function.

The Committee understands that the Attorney General will conduct the statutory review in early 2007. However, it is also one of the Committee's functions to monitor and report to Parliament on the exercise of the functions of the CCC and the Parliamentary Inspector, which includes monitoring the governing legislation.

The issue of witness protection is becoming increasingly important and complex as demonstrated in the Petrelis case. The Committee will consider whether the current arrangements for witness protection are satisfactory, and ways to improve liaison between states.

Under the heading "Inquiry Terms of Reference" the report states -

That the Committee inquire into the future operation of witness protection programmes in Western Australia, with particular reference to whether the *Corruption and Crime Commission Act, 2003* should be amended to include the Corruption and Crime Commission performing a witness protection function, and other associated matters.

Part of that investigation has taken place. Members of the committee have been to Brisbane and spoken to the CCC's counterpart. We have also inquired of the CCC, the Commissioner of Police and a number of justices regarding witness protection and where it might be best placed. The results of that inquiry, as one might expect, will be reported to Parliament in the new year when further information has been gathered.

Question put and passed.

Forest Products Act - Statutory Review - Statement by Minister for Forestry

Resumed from 4 April.

Motion

Hon NIGEL HALLETT: I move -

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That the statement be noted.

I will make a few brief comments on the review of the Forest Products Act 2000. The act came into being just over five years ago when the state was experiencing a period of tremendous growth in the forestry industry. We have seen major changes within the past five years. Within the past 15 years forests have certainly consumed a lot of the prime farmland in the south west region. In recent times we have been seeing a major push into lower rainfall areas. As land prices increase in the south west, the boundaries keep going out into the wheatbelt.

On 4 April 2006 the Minister for Forestry announced the need to review the Forest Products Act. The review committee would be chaired by Hon Adele Farina. Mr Grahame Searle, chief executive officer of the Department of Land Information, took on the role of the independent reviewer of the act on a part-time basis. This review was to be completed by mid-November 2006 to comply with the act. We need to ask whether the Forest Products Commission has completed the review so that budgetary planning for the 2007-08 financial year can be taken into consideration.

Hon KIM CHANCE: I was asked a question and I want to respond to it. I reported to the chamber on or about 16 November that the report of the statutory review headed by Hon Adele Farina was completed and handed to me on exactly the due date. I think it was given to me on 16 November 2006. The date of assent to the Forest Products Act was 16 November 2000, so on precisely the sixth birthday of the Forest Products Commission, the statutory review report was handed to me. It is a report that will ultimately be presented to Parliament and to the public. It was presented to me on time, which is a requirement of the act. I will now go through a process of discussing that report within government and ultimately, depending on the government's decision, releasing it to the public. In terms of what will happen to the report now, the main issue is that on the release of the report, the chamber would have, and I certainly would have, an expectation that we will also release the government's response to the recommendations within the report, because some of the recommendations, as honourable members might imagine, are quite fundamental.

The Forest Products Act resulted in the division of the Department of Conservation and Land Management into two parts, and that part that led to the creation of the Forest Products Commission deals entirely with the utilisation of forest products. It would be unsurprising to anybody to expect that there would be some issues. I do not want to be critical of the construction of the act in the first instance, because I believe the Forest Products Act 2000 is a very good act, but I recognise that some fundamental changes have occurred in the forest industry over those six years that may well demand some strategic redirection of the Forest Products Commission. However, I am now forecasting a report that is not before us. I hope that I am able to deliver the report and the government's reaction to the recommendations in the report in the early part of the new year.

Question put and passed.

Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation - Seventeenth Report - City of Subiaco Eating-House Local Law 2005

Resumed from 20 June.

Motion

Hon RAY HALLIGAN: I move -

That the report be noted.

I bring to the attention of members report 17 of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation, entitled "City of Subiaco Eating-House Local Law 2005". The committee had an issue with two subclauses of this local law - not the whole local law - which was published in the *Government Gazette* on 24 January 2006. The two subclauses with which we had an issue were subclauses (3) and (4) of clause 4. According to the report, subclause (3) reads -

To the extent that clause 2(4) of The City of Subiaco Health Laws 1999 (published in the Government Gazette on 1 June 1999) repealed Part 8 of The City of Subiaco Health By-Laws 1994 (published in the Government Gazette on 11 November 1994) that repeal is repealed and Part 8 is revived with effect from 1 June 1999 until the day prior to the commencement of this Local Law, and on the date of commencement of this Local Law is repealed.

I am sure that makes a great deal of sense to the majority of members! It certainly did not to me. Subclause (4) of that clause states -

The reference in clause 4(3) to Part 8 of The City of Subiaco Health Laws 1994 includes any schedules of The City of Subiaco Health By-Laws referred to in that Part, but does not include any reference to Part 8 or those schedules to meat premises or itinerant vendors.

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Again, it did not make a great deal of sense to me. I left it to committee staff, who were able to advise committee members, including me, on the problems associated with the two subclauses. It appears that since 1999 the City of Subiaco had been operating without a local law applying to its eating houses. It decided to not only implement a local law to include those eating houses, but also backdate it so that it could never be said that at one time the local government authority did not have a local law relating to eating houses. Retrospectivity was attached to the two subclauses, and although that may have caused the staff and councillors of the City of Subiaco to feel comfortable, it certainly did not make members of the committee feel comfortable at all.

Page 4 of the seventeenth report of the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation refers to committee scrutiny. It states -

- 2.1 The Committee scrutinised the Local Law at its meeting on Wednesday, 5 April 2006, when it noted that subclauses 4(3) and (4) appeared to offend the presumption against retrospectivity.
- 2.2 The Committee considered these clauses to be unusual provisions, particularly in the length of retrospectivity - being some 7 years - and in the fact that the revival of the 1994 By-laws was to have no prospective effect.
- ...
- 2.4 The Committee resolved to write to the City of Subiaco seeking an explanation of the purpose and effect of, and justification for, subclauses 4(3) and (4) of the Local Law and advising of its resolution to place a protective Notice of Motion of Disallowance on the Local Law pending the City's response.

The committee's letter was sent by facsimile transmission on 6 April 2006 and it received a response from the City of Subiaco on 20 April 2006, which stated -

Please be advised that clauses 4(3) and 4(4) are an attempt to retrospectively cure a prior 'defect', which is described below:

- *In 1985 the City gazetted By Law No 5 relating to Eating Houses;*
- *In 1994 the City gazetted a Health by-Law that contained provisions (namely, Part 8) dealing with Food Premises. Our recent legal advice is that **arguably** this enactment had the effect of **impliedly** repealing the 1985 By Law, **something the City was not previously aware of;** and*
- *In 1999 a further Health Local Law was enacted that expressly repealed the 1994 By-Law, but which did not, at the same time, make any new provision for Eating Houses- simply **because the City thought that the 1985 By Law was still valid.***

*As you can see, **it is arguable** that from 1999 until the gazettal of this recent Local Law, the City **may** have been in the position where its Eating House powers were without foundation.*

For the sake of good order and governance, the City therefore wishes as far as is possible to ensure, retrospectively, that this deficiency is cured. For those reasons clauses 4(3) and 4(4) were inserted.

In considering that response to its letter the committee went to the Interpretation Act 1984, which provides -

Where a written law confers power to make subsidiary legislation, all subsidiary legislation made under that power shall

- (a) *be published in the Gazette;*
- (b) *subject to section 42, come into operation on the day of publication, or where another day is specified or provided for in the subsidiary legislation, on that day.*

Again, we have a situation where the matter may come down to interpretation. The report goes on to state -

- 3.2 The Committee is of the general view that the words "another day" in section 41(1) of the *Interpretation Act 1984* do not include a day 'prior to' the day of publication. However, in the circumstances, it was not necessary for the Committee to reach a conclusion on that question.
- 3.3 The Committee noted that the rule at common law is that a statute ought not be given a retrospective operation, where to do so would affect an existing right or obligation, unless the language of the statute expressly or by necessary implication required such construction.
- 3.4 The same principles apply to a question as to the retrospective operation of delegated legislation as apply to Acts. The legislative intention to permit retrospectivity needs to be gathered by considering both the enabling Act and the instrument made under it. If

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retrospectivity is beyond the power conferred by the enabling Act, the instrument is not authorised by the enabling Act.

- 3.5 A general local law-making power for all things necessary or convenient to give effect to an Act does not permit the making of retrospective local laws as being in the public interest.

That was the conclusion of the committee. By way of conclusion, the report went on to state -

- 3.11 The Committee is of the view that the proposed retrospective application of the 1994 By-Law is likely to have an adverse effect on existing rights and obligations (Committee Term of Reference 3.6(b), Schedule 1, Legislative Council Standing Orders).
- 3.12 Its concern in this respect is heightened by, but not completely based on, the fact that the local law that is sought to be revived is not the local law allegedly believed to apply during the relevant period.
- 3.13 The Committee concludes, in accordance with the Committee's Term of Reference 3.6(a), Schedule 1, Legislative Council Standing Orders, that subclauses 4(3) and 4(4) of the Local Law were not contemplated or authorised by the Act.

The recommendation to the house was therefore that subclause 4(3) and (4) be disallowed.

This is not the first time that this has happened, although it is relatively rare. In most instances the local government authority is prepared to hear what it is that the Joint Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation has to say and make the necessary amendments to its local law. That was not so in this case.

It is obvious that the City of Subiaco believed that it was doing the right thing, but it was purely a cosmetic exercise. I believe the city wanted to bring in a new local law, but we will never know whether it would have been able to institute any proceedings against any eating house had the previous local law remained in place. Had the City of Subiaco suggested that it needed to proceed with issues associated with an eating house but found that it was unable to, I am sure it would have been able to provide a completely different scenario to the committee. From the letter the committee received from the city, that does not appear to have been the case and, as I have said, it appears that all that the city was trying to do was provide some cosmetic correction to its local laws so that it could say that it had always operated with a local law on eating houses in its jurisdiction. I have not checked, but the house may very well have agreed with the recommendations of the committee; I sincerely hope it did. The purpose of the report was to provide members with not just a conclusion and a recommendation, but also an explanation of how the committee operated and the information presented to the committee, and to draw to the attention of members things that they may not have been aware of previously but should be aware of in the future.

Question put and passed.

Reform of Western Australia's Apprenticeship System - Statement by Minister for Education and Training

Resumed from 4 April.

Motion

Hon PETER COLLIER: I move -

That the statement be noted.

There is not much that I disagree with in this statement, and not much that the opposition would disagree with. I have said on a number of occasions that the opposition is very supportive of competency-based apprenticeships and we are delighted that the government has come on board with us on this one. The opposition went into the last election with a policy supporting competency-based apprenticeships. I note with slight amusement the last paragraph of the statement. It states that the minister would like to thank Dale Alcock and Kevin Reynolds - the latter name is crossed out and the change initialled by the minister - and the industrial partners for all their hard work in recommending the reforms to the building trades.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Why not thank Kevin Reynolds?

Hon PETER COLLIER: There is also a handwritten note, initialled by the minister, to the effect that the minister extends her appreciation to the industrial partners for their support. Obviously, Mr Reynolds was out of favour and the industrial partners were in favour on that day. That aside, the ministerial statement deals fundamentally with the move to two-year competency-based apprenticeships, and the opposition supports that idea.

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I will make a couple of other points about the reform of the apprenticeship system. I acknowledge the tremendous work done by the Skills Formation Taskforce. The establishment of the task force was a positive step on the part of the government, bringing together industry sectors from across the state to discuss this very pertinent and pressing issue in the building industry. I acknowledge that the government has adhered to the task force's recommendations on apprenticeship terms, but it has ignored a number of other recommendations. I have brought these recommendations up on at least a half dozen occasions in this place and in the community. It is all well and good to take credit for initiatives in one aspect of policy - in this instance, apprenticeships - but it must also be acknowledged that there is a real need for further reform.

For all intents and purposes, the government has taken up one aspect of the recommendations of the Skills Formation Taskforce but ignored a number of the others. There is broad industry support for competency-based apprenticeships, as I have acknowledged, and I have applauded the government for that initiative. That was our policy going into the last election. However, the government has ignored a number of other recommendations from the task force; in particular, incentives for employers. There must be an environment that is conducive to the employment of apprentices if industry is to expand. If the environment is not attractive to an employer, he will not take on apprentices.

Hon Murray Criddle: That is one of the big problems now. There are far too many drawbacks.

Hon PETER COLLIER: There are no incentives. I would like to think the part-time apprenticeships may overcome the problem of mature age apprentices. As far as business is concerned, it also needs a helping hand to attract and maintain apprentices. We have a buoyant economy and the government is flush with money so there is no reason whatsoever that the government cannot provide financial incentives to employers to take on and maintain apprentices. This desperately needs to be done by way of tax concessions from the state government or perhaps by the government picking up the workers' compensation costs for apprentices. As I mentioned before, the Victorian government does this. The demand on the state coffers is minimal, but it has a significant impact as far as employers are concerned.

The government should move forward in this way and listen to employers. That message is coming through loud and clear from industry and it also came through in the task force recommendations. I would like to think the government will take that on board. Direct dollar incentives or tax concessions upon apprenticeship completion are worthy of consideration as well. The problem with many apprentices is that they will be in one door and out the other within six, eight or 12 months and essentially there is no benefit to the employer. It costs employers money so they are reluctant to take on apprentices. They need some incentives such as tax concessions to ensure they can attract apprentices and maintain them. I have mentioned that on a number of occasions, and I am not alone in doing so; I am not just a voice in the wilderness. That is the voice that is coming through loud and clear right across industry sectors and it has been expressed through the task force's meetings.

The image of apprenticeships is another issue the government needs to look at. Having said that, I acknowledge that there has recently been a marketing campaign to try to encourage the youth of the state to take up apprenticeships. That is good, but it needs to go further. The campaign needs to move into the workplace and more extensively into schools to ensure that as 14 and 15-year-old students, in particular, get to a point at which they are looking at the senior secondary years, they view apprenticeships as a very viable alternative career path. For far too long a career in the trades has been seen as an unattractive option for a lot of students. In today's society and with our buoyant economy, tradesmen are earning two, three, four or five times as much as their counterparts in the professions. We need to ensure that our students are made aware of, and are familiar with, the attractiveness of an apprenticeship, particularly with the reforms to the apprenticeship system and the competency-based approach. I am extremely confident that if this incentive is portrayed to the youth of the state, it will ensure an increase in the number taking up apprenticeships. The image of apprenticeships has improved and continues to improve. As I said, there has been a considerable amount of marketing over the past couple of months, but it needs to go further. It certainly needs to infiltrate the school system.

We also need to promote Western Australia as a state of opportunity for apprenticeships and employment in the trades. I have been advocating since I entered this Parliament that Western Australia set up one-stop shops in the eastern states to promote Western Australia. I acknowledge that the Western Australian government has established an office in Canberra to promote the attributes of Western Australia. I am not talking about that. The one-stop shops that I am advocating should not be just in the hub of bureaucracy in Canberra. They should be in all the major capital cities and regional areas of the eastern states. Those shops would be very beneficial in promoting Western Australia as a viable alternative for apprenticeships and employment in the trades. These centres could promote the resources areas in the north west and the south west, and the central wheatbelt and the Perth metropolitan area as an attractive option. Queensland did this very successfully two decades ago. Queensland is now flourishing from a population and industry perspective. I am not saying for one moment that

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Western Australia is not flourishing. However, Western Australia is experiencing a massive skills shortage. A lot of students and tradespeople in the eastern states do not deem Western Australia a viable alternative.

Hon Kate Doust: We already have the Go West Now campaign.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, but that does not deal specifically with apprenticeships and the trades. The parliamentary secretary should take note of the comments of the chair of the Skills Formation Taskforce, Dale Alcock. He has been calling out for this for two years. This also came up loud and clear in the forums that were held. These one-stop shops could provide specific information about apprenticeships, industry demands and real estate availability. Queensland did this very successfully. We can certainly do it in Western Australia.

Another issue that came up consistently in the forums was that access to TAFEs and registered training organisations in Western Australia is extremely problematic. I raised this issue with the minister yesterday when I was talking about school-based apprenticeships. This is particularly the case in rural and remote Western Australia. I am sure those members who represent rural and remote areas are familiar with this. The Australian Technical College that has been established in the Pilbara will help to alleviate the problem in that area. However, wherever I go this message is coming through loud and clear. During the debate yesterday the minister alluded to the fact that many registered training organisations do not deem it productive and feasible to operate in a number of these areas. What is available? There are TAFE facilities, but access to them in rural and remote areas is quite limited. Many of them lack resources and there is a huge shortage of assessors. Adequate resources and staffing of TAFE colleges will ensure that students in rural and remote areas will not be disadvantaged any more than they are now.

I acknowledge the work that the government has done on reforms for the training industry, particularly the apprenticeship system. I am very conscious of the support for competency-based apprenticeships. As I said, I would like to think that the government will not be totally selective in its reforms and that it will acknowledge the other recommendations from the task force, particularly for tax incentives for employers, for TAFEs to be adequately resourced, for incentives to be in place so that registered training organisations can move into rural and remote areas, and for adequate funding to be provided for marketing both within Western Australia and interstate.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported, pursuant to sessional orders.

Sitting suspended from 6.00 to 7.30 pm