

Division 31: Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, \$2 066 000 -

Ms Guise, Chairman.

Mr McGinty, Attorney General; Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs; Electoral Affairs; Peel and the South West.

Ms H.K. Versey, Assistant Commissioner for Equal Opportunity.

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that in respect to division 31 appropriation be recommended.

Mrs EDWARDES: Page 545, the fourth dot point, "The proportion of public sector complaints has increased significantly from 25% to 36%." That would still be of major concern and I wonder what strategies are being put in place, obviously together with the public sector, Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, in order to address that.

Mr McGINTY: I will get Helen Versey to answer that, thank you.

Ms VERSEY: I am not sure that it is actually of concern that we have an increase in public sector complaints. It may be due to increased awareness raising on the part of the commissioner. We are continuing with our community education fee for service training which does target both the private and public sectors. We have been putting a lot of resources into our awareness raising and it may be simply that the awareness raising has led to an increased level of reporting.

Mr DEAN: My question is similar. It is a 44 per cent increase which is of concern to us, or should be, but my question relates to page 546, the second line of the paragraph there, "Reimbursement of cutback in Commonwealth funding." What does that relate to?

Ms VERSEY: We had cooperative arrangements with the Commonwealth whereby the Commissioner for Equal Opportunity acted as agent for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and for that we received an allocation from the Commonwealth. The federal Government withdrew the cooperative arrangements several years ago. That caused a significant decrease in our budget in the order for \$260 000. We were reallocated \$130 000. It caused us significant concern because although we were receiving Commonwealth funding, it in fact in effect partially funded a lot of the commission's activities and the Government agreed to reinstate the other 50 per cent of that funding and that is what that relates to.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, the question is that in respect to division 31 appropriate be recommended. All those in favour by show of hands? To the contrary? That is carried. The question is that in respect to division 32 appropriate be recommended.