

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS — SUPPORT DOG CONTRACT

97. Hon NICK GOIRAN to the parliamentary secretary representing the Attorney General:

I refer to the parliamentary secretary's answer on 5 May 2021 to question without notice 35. When asked to table the expert advice received by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to validate that a support dog was the best way of dealing with staff stress, the parliamentary secretary instead tabled a study published in an international journal in 2017.

- (1) Is the parliamentary secretary aware of a report having been commissioned by the ODPP at a cost of \$162 805?
- (2) Why was that report commissioned?
- (3) When was that report commissioned?
- (4) Why did the parliamentary secretary not table that report in response to my question?
- (5) How many recommendations were made in the report?
- (6) Did the report recommend a support dog?
- (7) Will the parliamentary secretary now table the report?

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The Director of Public Prosecutions advises that the 2015–16 to 2016–17 public sector workforce renewal policy of the Barnett government to harvest 40 per cent of salaries of departing staff meant the ODPP could only replace prosecutors at a significantly lower level of salary and legal skill. This reduced the expertise and number of available prosecutors at the same time the ODPP was experiencing a rapid increase in the complexity and volume of evidentiary material relied upon in prosecutions. The report by the Phoenix Australia Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health was commissioned in response to concerns about the mental wellbeing of ODPP staff due to workload pressures and exposure to graphic material.
- (3) The report was commissioned on 19 February 2019 and was delivered on 29 July 2019.
- (4) Legislative Council question without notice 35 sought advice validating a support dog in relation to staff stress. The Phoenix Australia report did not have a support dog among its recommendations; however, it cited as further reading on the topic “Dogs in the Workplace: A Review of the Benefits and Potential Challenges” published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. The Director of Public Prosecutions advised that this was one study that the ODPP considered in detail, and it was duly tabled.
- (5) Eleven recommendations were made.
- (6) Please see the answer to (4).
- (7) Given the limited number of staff at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and personal disclosures in the report in relation to mental health, it is plausible that staff may be identifiable. I ask that the member put the question on notice so that these privacy matters can be properly considered.