

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**2023–24 BUDGET ESTIMATES**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE  
TAKEN AT PERTH  
TUESDAY, 27 JUNE 2023**

**SESSION FOUR**

**DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET**

**Members**

**Hon Peter Collier (Chair)  
Hon Samantha Rowe (Deputy Chair)  
Hon Dan Caddy  
Hon Nick Goiran  
Hon Dr Brad Pettitt**

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**Hearing commenced at 4.15 pm**

**Hon SUE ELLERY**

**Minister for Commerce representing the Premier, examined:**

**Ms AMANDA PICKRELL**

**Deputy Director General, Intergovernmental Relations and Strategic Priorities, examined:**

**Ms FIONA HUNT**

**Deputy Director General, Community Policy and Aboriginal Engagement, examined:**

**Mr CHRIS CLARK**

**Deputy Director General, Infrastructure, Economy and Recovery, examined:**

**Mr DAMIEN STEWART**

**Assistant Director General, State Services, examined:**

**Ms SUE MEAGHAN**

**Assistant Director, Aboriginal Engagement, examined:**

**Mr ANDRÉ BRENDER-A-BRANDIS**

**Chief Finance Officer, examined:**

**Mr GREG ITALIANO**

**Government Chief Information Officer, Office of Digital Government, examined:**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the minister and witnesses. Thanks for being with us today. The committee acknowledges and honours the traditional owners of the ancestral lands upon which we meet today, the Whadjuk Noongar people, and pays its respects to their elders, both past and present.

If you could just nod to indicate that you have read, understood and signed the document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Collective nodding is noted.

Your testimony before the committee must be complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and broadcast live on Parliament's website. The committee will place the uncorrected transcript of your evidence on the internet a few days after the hearing. When the transcript is finalised, the uncorrected version will be replaced by the final version.

This is a public hearing, but the committee can elect to hear evidence in private. If, for some reason, you wish to make a confidential statement, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question.

Members, before asking your question, please provide the relevant page and paragraph numbers, wherever possible. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, I am fine thank you, chair.

**The CHAIR:** We will go to the committee first and Hon Samantha Rowe.

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**Hon SAMANTHA ROWE:** Thank you, chair. Minister, if I can take you to budget paper No 2, page 63, under the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, paragraph 4 titled “Commonwealth–State Engagement and Reforms”. Are you able to outline how the intergovernmental relations directorate supports the state’s engagement with the commonwealth?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** This is the state government’s key adviser on commonwealth–state matters. That includes leading advice to support our participation in national cabinet and other intergovernmental forums. The directorate works across WA government departments and agencies to develop state positions on policy and funding opportunities arising from the commonwealth government’s reform agenda, so they work closely with Treasury and others. For example, negotiations are currently underway for housing and homelessness, national skills reform, schools reform and the NDIS. The directorate also manages state engagement on royal commissions and matters of state security and emergency management. This also includes coordinating state agencies and GTEs’ engagement with the commonwealth on security of critical infrastructure reforms and working with all jurisdiction to ensure our counterterrorism strategy and national counterterrorism plan are fit for purpose and reflect the contemporary threat environment.

**Hon DAN CADDY:** Minister, I will take you to volume 1, page 62. There is a table there on spending changes. I refer to the line item a fair way down, “Climate Action Fund—Collie Delivery Unit”. I understand that the delivery unit plays a key role in facilitating the economic diversification in Collie as Collie transitions to new industries. Can you explain how the unit is supporting Collie’s Just Transition plan?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Members would be aware in 2022 a decision was made to retire the state-owned coal power stations by 2030. To support that transition we have committed more than \$662 million to drive economic diversification and create jobs in the Collie region. I think it is useful to point out that this has been seen as leading the way for other jurisdictions in how to achieve something like this. It is helping the region to transition to a more sustainable economy with employment across a greater range of industries and a reduced reliance on any one sector. Investments to date have included: International Graphite’s new graphite processing facility in Collie; construction of Cannaponics’ pharmaceutical medicinal facility; the WesTrac technology autonomous training facility; Frontline’s emergency vehicle manufacturing facility; Magnium Australia’s pilot magnesium refinery; a \$25.9 million investment in new training investment initiatives; \$10 million into the Collie Adventure Trails initiative to establish the town as a premier trail and adventure destination—if you have not seen the mural, you should go and see the mural; \$5.7 million to establish a water-based recreation facility at Lake Kepwari; and there is also \$2.3 billion in this budget for two new battery storage systems, and one of those will be in Collie.

The government has brought together industry, community, unions and government agencies to work on maximising opportunities for Collie to develop a Just Transition plan as part of what will be recognised as being a 10 to 15-year transition process for Collie. ABS stats show that the number of jobs in Collie rose from about 4 500 in 2016 to nearly 5 000 in 2021, which was an increase of some six per cent.

[4.20 pm]

**Hon DAN CADDY:** Minister, this time I take you to volume 3, page 95, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, “Department Resourcing”. Can you provide more details on how the department is supporting the implementation of the resources community investment initiative?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes. This initiative was launched in November 2022, facilitating investment from the resources industry for iconic infrastructure projects and community initiatives across WA. The foundation partners have already committed a total of \$750 million, which is made up of

contributions from Rio Tinto, \$250 million; BHP, \$252 million; Hancock Prospecting, Roy Hill and Atlas Iron, \$100 million; Woodside Energy, \$50 million; Chevron Australia, \$50 million; and Mineral Resources, \$50 million. It provides a mechanism for industry to partner with the state, as I said, to provide contributions to iconic infrastructure projects and community and social initiatives. There is an initial pipeline of work that has already been identified, including the Aboriginal Cultural Centre, the Perth Zoo master plan, the remote Aboriginal communities fund, the Perth Concert Hall redevelopment, and additional contributions to Telethon. An advisory committee has been established, which includes an independent chair, the CEO of CME, and senior representatives from government agencies. Reg Howard-Smith, who would be known to many in the chamber today, the former chief executive of CME, has been appointed to be the inaugural independent chair of that advisory committee. They will oversee the expressions-of-interest process and be responsible for matching contributions to projects in consultation with companies and the government. The advisory committee will provide advice to the Premier for endorsement by cabinet.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, it would be useful if you could turn to page 63 of the budget papers. There, under the heading “Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information” and the subheading “Relationship to Government Goals”, you will see that there are three desired outcomes. The second of those are the ones that I draw to your attention. It says, “The Premier and Ministers receive high quality, rigorous and timely policy advice”. When was advice provided about the proposed referendum on the Voice?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not going to be in a position, through you, chair, to provide information about when specific policy advice was provided on any particular matter, not just the Voice but any. You can imagine, as these files are prepared and the staff come prepared to answer questions about the budget, I am just not in a position to answer that.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** So you are not in a position to provide information about that today, but it can be taken on notice?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It can.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** When was advice provided about the proposed federal referendum on the Voice?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You can, honourable member. I note that you have asked a number of PQs, and you might like to reflect on the answers to those, but I am happy to take the question on notice.  
[*Supplementary Information No C1.*]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The answers that have been provided in respect to those questions, which you are familiar with because of course you represent the Premier, included seeking that briefing notes be provided with regards to the proposed Voice. The Premier—that is, both the former Premier, Mr McGowan, and now the current replacement Premier, Mr Cook—have declined to do so. That is not the question that I am asking today. I am not asking for things to be tabled; I am asking: when was the advice provided? As I say, this desired outcome indicates that the Premier and ministers receive high quality, rigorous and timely policy advice from the department.

**The CHAIR:** I think the minister has indicated that she is prepared to put that on notice. We will see what response we get.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, in respect of that, you will see that there are three services with regards to that desired outcome: “Government Policy Management—Whole-of-Government”, “Aboriginal Affairs” and “Digital Economy”. Which of those three service providers would have provided the advice on the federal referendum on the Voice? It seems to me unlikely to be service 5, but it could easily be 3 or 4.

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It could be any of them, honourable member. That information is not here now, so I am happy to put it on notice again. I draw your attention to the way that similar questions have been asked when you have asked parliamentary questions.

**The CHAIR:** We might incorporate that into C1.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, when was advice provided about the revelations surrounding the Perth Mint?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Again, chair, I do think it is unreasonable to think that I would come to an estimates hearing on the budget —

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** To receive answers.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, honourable member. I heard that interjection; I think that is unfair. I do try to assist the committee, but I think it is unreasonable to expect me or any of the officers here to come with a list of dates upon which any matter of policy has been provided to the Premier. I think that is unreasonable.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I will rephrase the question, minister. Rather than being “when was advice provided”, was any advice provided about the revelations surrounding the Perth Mint?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not have that information here. It is not pertinent to the budget, but I am happy to take that on notice and the Premier can provide an answer.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, when you say it is not pertinent to the budget, there is a line item here at page 63, “Government Policy Management—Whole-of-Government” and it is estimated that some \$66 million of taxpayers’ money has been spent in the current financial year for “Government Policy Management—Whole-of- Government”. The desired outcome that your government has in this budget paper at page 63 says that your Premier and ministers will “receive high quality, rigorous and timely policy advice”. The question is whether any of that policy advice relates to the Perth Mint.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I take the point of the \$66 million. That is the point I am trying to make. Advice is provided to the Premier —

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** On the Perth Mint?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Do you want me to answer the question or do you want to keep interrupting me?

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** On the Perth Mint?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Advice is provided to the Premier on all manner of things. You cannot ask a question in a budget estimates hearing about which element of government provided advice on a specific highly granular matter and expect us to be able to answer that here. Far be it for me to judge how you use your time at estimates, but that not a reasonable, or I would say sensible, way to ask questions at estimates.

**The CHAIR:** The minister has said that she is prepared to put that on notice, so we will put that question on notice.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And is that question with respect to whether any advice has been provided or when the advice was provided?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You put what you want on notice, honourable member.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I am just checking with you so there is no confusion.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There is no confusion in my mind.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** So what is the question that you are going to be answering?

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[4.30 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The question, as recorded by Hansard, that you just asked before. I am happy to take that on notice.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Right. That is going to be on whether any advice has been provided in respect to the Perth Mint.

[*Supplementary Information No C2.*]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, you will see there that there is also a service entitled “Administration of Parliamentary Support” on page 63. Some \$37 million has been spent on that in this current financial year. It says there that “Executive Government and Members of Parliament receive appropriate support.” What support was provided to the member for Kwinana following the decision of the Public Service Appeal Board on 5 January 2023?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Again, honourable member, I will make a couple of points, I guess. The matter was dismissed. I do not come to a budget estimates hearing with that level of granularity available to provide to you. I note again that you have asked parliamentary questions on this theme in the house before. If you want to put this on notice, you may, but I do not think it is reasonable to expect that I am able to provide that answer in an estimates hearing.

[*Supplementary Information No C3.*]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** In that decision, it says that the minister—of course they are talking about Mr Cook here—ought to have exercised greater diligence with regard to the leave entitlements of his staff in the electorate office. You will also see that there is a service for the administration of executive government services. Has any audit been conducted to ensure that the abuse of entitlements in his electorate office have not then flowed on to his ministerial office?

**The CHAIR:** I think the minister has probably indicated the fact that she does not have that information. We might include that in C3.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is fine by me.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** What was the cost of defending this Public Service Appeal Board matter?

**The CHAIR:** Is that the same issue?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I assume it is a line item as part of the estimated actuals. The total cost of services is \$225 million.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not have that level of granularity here. You can put that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** That is all part of C3.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I do have some questions around that whole-of-government piece of work that is in the service summary there on page 63. Hopefully this is not asking for granularity. It is more at a higher level. The first of those was noting that SAPPR was originally held within there, which is the strategic assessment of the Perth and Peel region.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** SAPPR?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Yes. It was originally a whole-of-government project that the DPC took charge of. I note now that was moved to be the government native vegetation policy. Will that also be led through DPC?

**The CHAIR:** Just for the benefit of members, can we get an indication of the exact title of SAPPR?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** It is the strategic assessment of the Perth and Peel region.

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**The CHAIR:** That is fine for the benefit of other members.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am going to check if we have information about that here. I suspect we do not, but I will check. It is not being led by DPC.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I have a follow-up that you might be able to answer. It will probably be a supplementary question to another agency, but I will quickly see. I guess where I was going with was that I was wondering if the scope was going to be the same as SAPPR or if it had a more confined scope.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, I missed that.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** It is just around the scope.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think your questions might be better targeted at the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Are they now the lead agency?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is the advice that I have got, yes.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I can do a follow-up question to them, thank you. I will move on to —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Sorry, just on the native vegetation —

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I guess I was trying to understand whether SAPPR, which DPC previously led, and the native vegetation policy were largely the same with a different name or whether they had a totally different scope. It is a bit hard to know. I suspect they will come back to me and say “We don’t know what was in SAPPR”, because DWER has taken it over as a fresh project. It is a bit hard to know where to ask the question.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Start with DWER, honourable member. If you get stuck, I am happy for you to come back to me behind the chair or something and I will see if I can get you some further information.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I have a question on a similar whole-of-government note. What role is DPC playing in the sectoral emissions reduction strategies. Are you the lead agency on those?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** In the?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** On the SERS, which are the sectoral emissions reduction strategies.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Again, it is DWER.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Okay, interesting. I am getting a theme here. I am going to jump onto a different one. It is actually much more granular. It is on page 65 and is about the expenditure related to the administration of parliamentary support, including support to members of Parliament. There are some questions on behalf of my crossbench colleagues here. As you know, the crossbench and opposition get two FTE per office. I think it is fair to say that most of us feel that that makes our job extremely challenging. I note that the federal government has just recently allocated an additional one FTE for each electoral office for every member of Parliament in their 2023–24 budget. Has there ever been a review into that FTE? I am wondering how long two has been the standard for.

**The CHAIR:** Before I ask the minister to respond, I will say that when I first started in this place it was 1.5. The previous Labor government increased it to two. That was about 15 years ago.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Over my lifetime here, it has changed a couple of times. There has been no recent review of the allocation across the board. I mean, there is a fundamental difference in the scale between the size of the electorates that members of the Western Australian Parliament serve, as opposed to those of the federal Parliament

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**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Not for long.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Then it might need to change in the future, but there has been no recent review and there are no plans to conduct a review, that I am aware of.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I have a last question on this one. There might not be in answer to this, but you might be able to take it on notice. It would be interesting to know how much it would cost to provide one or even half an additional FTE to the crossbench and opposition members.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am sure that it is possible to do the mathematics. You are just asking about crossbenchers?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Crossbenchers and opposition.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The way that things have evolved is that allocations have been provided to all MPs, whether they are in government or not. At the start of a few, maybe two or more, particular Parliaments, negotiations were entered into by government and the crossbench about additional facilities for the crossbench. It has not necessarily been that an allocation is made for the opposition and the crossbench.

The opposition have a Leader of the Opposition's office, which is staffed like a ministerial office. They have more resources than the crossbench does. Nevertheless, there are no plans to increase the staffing levels. However, if you want to know the answer to the mathematical question, I am sure that we could take that on notice and somebody could work out what it would cost to provide members with a half or full FTE. I am sure the mathematics could be done but I do not want to raise expectations either, honourable member. There is no intention to increase the number of staff.

*[Supplementary Information No C4.]*

**The CHAIR:** I am glad the member pointed out that issue. I remember in the last term of government that the government did not provide additional resources to crossbench.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** I have one more question on a different matter. This one is on Closing the Gap, and I refer to page 62 paragraph 1, where it discusses the department's coordination with the state's Aboriginal affairs, including —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Which page number again sorry, member?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** It is page 62, paragraph 1. There are three outcomes under that national agreement. I am particularly interested in outcome 9, that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people can secure appropriate and affordable housing. The target there is to increase the percentage of people in appropriately sized housing by 88 per cent by 2031. I am also interested in outcomes 10 and 11 as well, which are that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not over-represented in the criminal justice system. Those targets are to reduce adult incarceration rates by 15 per cent and youth detention rates by 30 per cent, respectively.

I am just wondering if you could tell us about how WA is measuring against those Closing the Gap targets in 9, 10 and 11?

[4.40 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** All right. I am sorry if I missed that before. What page number are you looking at?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Paragraph 62.1 is where it—sorry, I am looking at notes here.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, and I will ask Ms Hunt to provide you with some information about that.

**Ms HUNT:** Thank you, minister. Thank you, chair. Thank you for the question, member. Just confirming you were asking about how the state is responding to the target 9?



**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Yes. So, the Closing the Gap outcomes 9, 10 and 11. I was particularly interested in how we are tracking against those. I appreciate that you might not have exact figures, but I am just kind of interested around if you have some updates on those, please.

**Ms HUNT:** Okay, thank you. Thanks for the clarification. Target 9 is the new target that was added after the signing of the original agreements. The state spent some time negotiating that, and we are just working through now target 9a and b, as you referenced, around appropriately sized housing. So work will continue. That is a new target for the state. I understand that in 2021 the state recorded in the last update on Closing the Gap from the Productivity Commission that 78.8 per cent of Aboriginal people were living in appropriately sized dwellings, which was slightly below the national average of 81.4 per cent. That is an increase in WA from 75.2 per cent in 2016. So that would have been part of the Productivity Commission's latest release.

You asked about target 10?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Yes.

**Ms HUNT:** Target 10 is the target on adult incarcerations. So, the target is by 2031 to reduce the rate of incarceration for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by at least 15 per cent. The data was recently updated in June, just last week. In WA, the rate of incarceration decreased slightly from 3 449.3 per 100 000. So the rate in 2022 was 3 213.6 persons per 100 000 people, so that continues a downward trajectory since around —

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** And 11 as well, while you are there—if you do not mind—which is the young people incarcerated.

**Ms HUNT:** Target 11 and 12?

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you.

**Ms HUNT:** Certainly. So, target 11 is the rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people aged 10 to 17 that are held in detention. Again, the target is to reduce that by 30 per cent. Again, that was updated in June of 2023. So, we have seen a slight increase in the latest data, moving away from a recent downward trajectory. So in 2019–20 to 2020–21, there was a downward trajectory from 42.6 per 10 000 young people to 40.8 per 10 000 young people. The newest data release has shown a slight increase to 44.6 per 10 000 young people, so that represents a slight increase from the last data collection.

**Hon Dr BRAD PETTITT:** Thank you.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Chair, I got quite excited to hear Hon Dan Caddy ask about the climate action fund Collie delivery unit. I nearly pumped that up to my first question, but I decided to stick to my current plan. But, hopefully, I will get another chance to come back to it.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Thank you for sharing!

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, page 73 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, has the details of administered transactions. In both income and expenses, you have got the Griffin Coal financial assistance agreement of \$19.5 million. Now, can I just check, because obviously, according to the answers of questions in the house, we have already exceeded that \$19.5 million, and at the last set by mid-June we were at \$23.2 million. Let us start with this: Which account is it coming from? Is it coming from the consolidated account? Is it going into a holding account in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and then being sent out from there? Is that how it is operating?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get the relevant officer to answer that in a minute. But I guess I do not want to raise your expectations too high. Because it is a commercial arrangement, I am not going to be able to give you information about dollars, beyond what is in the budget papers. So, I am not sure I

am going to be able to satisfy your next line of questioning. In terms of accounts, where it is held, I will ask the chief financial officer to give you some information about accounts.

**Mr BRENDER-A-BRANDIS:** Thank you, minister. And through the chair, thank you for the question, member. The funding for this particular line item is actually administered, so it is not part of the department's consolidated funding. It is received as administered transactions, and does not form part of our service allocations, so it is disclosed as such. That is the amount that was included for the estimated actual for the current year. There is a note with regard to confidentiality around any further amounts that are actually disclosed in that table, and that is unfortunately all we are able to disclose. Thank you, member.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes, so, I did wonder whether we would go down this path, and I will save my moral outrage for another time.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not mind if you do it now; I am used to it.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Yes, okay. We will see where we get to!

Are you able to explain at all any of the expenditure, because the government has explained some of the expenditure to date? Certainly, the first \$7.3 million, which went to keep mostly an excavator running and I suspect some drainage. Are you able to explain anything about the money that has been expended so far?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, I am sorry. I cannot add to what has already been provided, honourable member.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Okay. Are you able to tell us whether there is a cap on this expenditure? I mean, there is currently a \$19.3 million administered item. So, this is under the administered transactions. Given that you have already exceeded it, obviously you have had to have more money in. Can you tell us whether there is a cap going forward?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Well, that would put us at a commercial disadvantage if I was to answer that one way or the other. I am sure you can appreciate why we would not want the state to be put at a financial disadvantage, so, no, I am sorry; I cannot.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Are you able to tell us—because the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, I understand, conducted the negotiations for the cap, and I can even give you, thanks to assorted questions within the house at some point, the name of those department officers who were partaking in it.

Let us go with this: can you confirm that there have been zero notes or documents taken or recorded as a result of the meetings between the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and related entities, not specifically the Griffin Coal Mining Company because it is under administrators? But it would appear that the government has given a \$19.5 million fund, which it has already gone past, and it will not explain how much it has gone past or how much it will go past in the future.

Is it the case that there is zero notes or documents within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in relation to this fund in terms of discussions with any related party? Because that would be the indication that has been given in questions.

**The CHAIR:** I think I might know the answer that you are going to get, but we will give it a crack.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Well, I am looking for this gold-standard transparency, chair.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** And you get gold-standard transparency, but we are not going to put the commercial standing of the state at a disadvantage, and I think you would do exactly the same thing

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if you were in our position. So, I am not able to disclose whether or not there are notes. I am sorry, honourable member.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, do we call you minister or Leader of the House? I suppose we call you minister in estimates.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Whatever you like.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Okay. Minister, are you able to give us any indication of the role of—because the Department of the Premier and Cabinet put on Ad Astra as a facilitator for this process. Can you give us any indication of the role of Ad Astra?

[4.50 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Treasury has engaged Ad Astra Corporate Advisory to provide commercial services and State Solicitor's has engaged Ashurst to provide legal services.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Thank you for that. According to answers to questions in Parliament, the tender for Ad Astra was released publicly in July 2020, but it was not actually signed up until April 2023. Can you give us an indication of why there is basically a three-year gap? What was the reason for that?

**Mr BRENDER-A-BRANDIS:** Sorry, what was the question?

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** You put Ad Astra on to provide advice to government—well, it was quite a broad contract for lots of things, but it was also to specifically provide advice in relation to Griffin Coal's functions, and I get it, because Griffin Coal has been a basket case. This government did not make it a basket case; this government inherited a basket case from the private sector and a foreign nation; however, you put Ad Astra on as a consultant. The tender contract was put out in the middle of 2020, and the contract was let in early 2023, so there was a three-year gap. Is there a reason why there was a three-year gap? I am happy to take that on notice, chair, if there is a possibility of an answer.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There are actually different contracts. We have just engaged Ad Astra for the purposes of Griffin. You might have been talking about a tender for a different contract in 2020. I do not have the details of what that might be, but Ad Astra, in respect to assistance with Griffin, was signed up in 2023.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I might ask questions through the house differently then.

In relation to this fund, which was announced in December last year, initially it was put by the minister that this fund would be recouped and then it was acknowledged by the Premier, I think, in January of this year that that was highly unlikely, and then went back and forth between a couple of ministers for a couple of months. Is it the case that this fund is intended to be recouped; and, if so, over what time period?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is not expected that the funding will be recovered from Griffin Coal. We will endeavour to recover the funding from the new commercial arrangements that are yet to be resolved and put in place. The government's expectation is that Griffin Coal's customers pay a fair price that reflects the true costs of production, and it is our expectation that when new commercial arrangements are put in place, that would include repaying the funding that government has provided.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** And I do not suppose you are prepared to tell us what a fair price is?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not think I can. Maybe, I can say—no.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** You raised my hopes unfairly, minister!

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Because there were some dot points, but they basically say, “a fair price” without a number.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I nearly got an answer there, chair.

That would suggest, minister, that if you are not expecting to recoup these costs from the Griffin Coal Mining Company, then I presume that our expectation is that the Griffin Coal Mining Company cannot survive. I suspect you are right; I have actually generally said so publicly, so you are not out on a limb on that. So then, as we get to whatever comes next—and I am just trying to phrase the question to see whether I can get one that you might be able to answer. Let us try this: does the state have step-in rights at the Griffin Coal Mining Company if required, and under what circumstances might it use those step-in rights?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am not sure that we could provide an answer, not because it is necessarily not possible to give it because it is commercially sensitive, but the state agreement is held and managed by JTSI. So you might be better off trying a line of questioning with them. I am not in a position, chair, not because I do not want to, but because I do not have that information.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I have had a pretty good run. One last one, maybe, or are you going to move on?

**The CHAIR:** Yes, you can have one more.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** It is a fairly unfruitful exercise, but I understand it is not specifically your fault, as much as —

**The CHAIR:** Okay, quick. Let us go.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Okay. Then in relation to going forward, is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet still in negotiations with the various companies and groups associated with the Griffin Coal Mining Company including ICICI Bank and Oceania Resources; and, if so, is it intended they will meet with them in the future?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can say that we are in discussions with Griffin Coal’s receivers and managers to determine the quantum of funding that may be required to ensure security of coal supply. But I cannot say much more than that.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Minister, earlier you were answering some questions about the resources community investment initiative. I think I recall you mentioning the foundation partners of that initiative. Have any companies since 22 November confirmed their participation in the program?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, honourable member. I am not in a position to say any further have signed up. Others have been invited since 22 November. I think I answered a question in Parliament to you the other day, honourable member, that had some numbers like “28 had been asked and four had said no”, or something like that.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not have further information than that.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** That was the reason I wanted to ask, minister. I just wanted to know whether or not there had been additional companies who have enlisted themselves and others who were giving contemplation.

I have asked also previously whether or not DPC is the lead agency for this program and I have had it confirmed that that is indeed the case. Would you be able to indicate for me please whereabouts within DPC responsibility for the policy administration of this program sits?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It sits within the infrastructure and economy division.

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**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Is that infrastructure and economy division primarily responsible, I suppose, for interaction with the foundation partners and future potential enlistees? Is that done by the department directly, or is that done through an intermediary of some sort?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is twofold. The department does some, but the advisory committee themselves do some of that work as well. Let me see if I can find any more information for you, honourable member. I said that Reg Howard-Smith is chair of the advisory committee. It also includes, as I said, the CEO of Chamber of Minerals and Energy, it includes the Under Treasurer and directors general of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and Department of Finance. Meetings of the advisory committee will be held at least four times a year, with more frequent meetings organised if required. So far they have met once. The advisory committee will oversee the administration of the RCII. That includes an expression of interest process for RCII participants to indicate how much they would like to contribute to each project and that EOI process commenced on 18 May and will close on 31 July. Once the participants have indicated which projects they want to contribute to, the advisory committee will provide recommendations to the Premier and cabinet on the spread of commitments across projects.

Individual project agreements will be negotiated with companies participating in the RCII, with agreed project milestones, and funds will be received in accordance with those milestones. Funds provided by the companies will be held in a special purpose account to ensure that they are used only for the projects that they are committed to.

[5.00 pm]

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Prior to the announcement of the initiative on 22 November last year, how was the communication channel between the government and the six or so foundation partners managed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Initially, it was the Premier and the Premier's office.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** At what stage was DPC given, I suppose, formal responsibility for the management of the process?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** If it is important information, I can take it on notice. We do not know the exact date.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** If you would not mind, that would be helpful.

[*Supplementary Information No C5.*]

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** The answer you previously provided, minister, was that the previous Premier, Hon Mark McGowan, and his office effectively conceived of the initiative and were responsible for establishing the list of partners and, presumably, the list of priority projects. Were any departmental staff privy to those conversations to the best of your knowledge?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Not, as I am advised, in respect to the foundation organisations, but the department was engaged in discussions about how that might be expanded and came up with a list of companies that could be written to to ask if they were interested in participating.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** For confirmation, there were no departmental officers in the conversation between the Premier and whomever the counterpart was at the foundational partner level initially?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** For fullness, though, I would have to say none with DPC. The former Premier was also the Treasurer, so I am not sure what other agencies he might have consulted with.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Would it be an expectation that something this profound, because it is quite profound and, I would say, even an innovative initiative—would it ordinarily be the case for a policy of this magnitude that conversations which secure at least the in-principle contribution of

somewhere up to a quarter of a billion dollars, depending on the company, would be documented at some level?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, and they may well have been, but, as I have said already, the previous Premier was also the Treasurer. I certainly remember conversations at meetings that I attend about such matters.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I suppose that, to a degree, is understandable and it is obviously a line of inquiry that can be followed up with the departmental counterparts at Treasury in the next few days. However, I am attempting to grasp with the sales pitch, I suppose, the argument that was put to these companies at the time before the initiative was announced on 22 November last year. What was it about this policy which elicited these six or so foundation partners to largely simultaneously agree to contribute notionally some significant funds? Was there any understanding between the state government and the counterparties as to what benefits they may accrue from participation?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It really has not changed from the beginning of the concept to what I have read out today. I guess the broader context is that many of these companies make a great deal of money for their shareholders out of the resources that are Western Australian resources and there has long been a community debate that perhaps they could contribute more on top of what they already contribute. It is not a particularly radical notion and it is not particularly complex. The original conversations that I am aware of were about “This is how you can make a greater contribution to the state and it is literally around iconic infrastructure projects.” You have been around government long enough to be aware that, from time to time, resource companies regularly donate to infrastructure projects, be it an addition at a school, a training facility or whatever. There is nothing unusual about that. This is about doing it in a much more coordinated way and, rather than smaller projects, though terribly important to the community, around some of the iconic infrastructure projects in Western Australia. It is not terribly complex and not terribly—I want to say “sophisticated”, but I do not want to suggest it was unsophisticated. But it is really no different from what has been described already. This is an opportunity for those companies to demonstrate their commitment to the state that they are making a lot of money out of.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I was anticipating that line of argument. Obviously, these companies also generate a significant amount of royalty income for the state government, which has benefited from that. I might leave it there for today, chair.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I refer to page 67 and “Government Policy Management—Aboriginal Affairs”. How much has the department allocated and spent on advertising and public awareness for the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act implementation?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** None has been spent, honourable member.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I ask in relation to the template Noongar standard heritage agreements, which I am just noting the website updated on 27 June. I note that provides the uniform and efficient approach to conduct Aboriginal heritage surveys. It still refers to the old legislation. In the question that I put in on 9 May, the government said it is reviewing the template Noongar standard heritage agreements to ensure compliance with the new act and relevant guidelines. Has the department or government decided that that template heritage agreement needs to be changed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes. There may be changes required to the agreements. It is an ongoing process seeking to develop updated standard heritage agreement templates, to which variation is provided for under the agreements. Negotiations are progressing.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Has the department or the Premier provided advice to parties who have those agreements that that is the case?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

[5.10 pm]

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Is the department or the Premier confident that, as of 1 July, the parties relying on those template agreements will be covered by the, for want of a better term, transitional provisions that are built into the various guidelines that are being loaded up at the moment online? In the last couple of days, as you would know, the guidelines have been put out by the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. I assume there is some cover for the people relying on those agreements?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** All departments and proponents that are party to a standard heritage agreement will need to continue to abide by those terms unless the parties mutually agree to amend the agreement. That applies unless they amend it. Discussions and negotiations about whether the template or any of the agreements need to change as a consequence of 1 July are continuing.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Is the department confident that the parties that rely on those agreements will be compliant on 1 July?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is a matter of opinion, so I will answer by saying we are progressing towards 1 July. We expect that the sky is not going to fall down on 1 July. We also anticipate that the way that the act will be applied in the first instance will be in an educative way. No-one is going to get bashed around the head for not dotting an "i" or crossing a "t" as we transition to the new scheme, but everyone is working towards a start date of 1 July.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** I note in relation to page 62 it talks about the significant issues impacting on the agency and that the state's engagement in negotiated and litigated settlements of native title compensation is expected to continue to grow significantly, and that the government is committed to resolving native title matters by agreement wherever possible. I note that, in respect of the Native Title Tribunal, my estimate of looking at the maps when you look at spatial data in relation to registered native title bodies corporate and those native title determinations, it is probably about 20 per cent of the state still not covered, particularly in the goldfields where a lot of concern has been expressed in relation to the implementation of the new act. Is some of the effort here, the additional effort or additional cost, is that being directed towards fast-tracking the resolution of those outstanding native title agreements?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, honourable member, it would not be accurate to characterise it that way.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** So what is the state doing to ensure that there will always be a native title registered body corporate to deal with, given that that is the fallback position where there is no local Aboriginal cultural heritage service? I would have thought that would be a matter for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to resolve.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** In the absence of a body that you described, it falls back to the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Okay. I will go to page 68, which talks about the digital economy. One of those things that is obviously impacting in the news recently is the rise of artificial intelligence and robotics in the world. I am just wondering whether the department has a particular strategy, given its overarching role in government to provide advice to government, particularly around the issues of justice, consumer protection, transport and other related policies that might impact on our legislative burden? Has there been any work and any consideration for the impact of those two technologies that are emerging across the world?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Italiano to make some comments about that.

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**Mr ITALIANO:** It is indeed the case that AI is attracting a great deal of attention at present, mainly driven by the popularity and awareness from the large language models that have been recently publicised, such as ChatGPT, but in fact AI has been used since about the 1950s in one form or another, so it has been with us for some time. But of course, it has grown exponentially more powerful as computing and science and technology has evolved. It is a policy problem that is being grappled with by governments around Australia and, indeed, internationally, with different responses. In the Australian jurisdictions at the present time, the most immediate steps that have been taken are to issue guidance to its use in the public sector, primarily aimed at preventing harm arising from the use of AI at present. I think beyond that, we will take steps to evaluate and propose a policy position for AI use by the Western Australian government sector. What lies beyond that, potentially open for consideration in the future, is whether or not any legislative response may or may not be required. I note that the European Parliament has recently indicated an intention to legislate in this area. I think it is important to note that AI, whilst referred to, is not some defined, black-and-white concept; it refers to a very broad range of technologies and almost certainly, trying to regulate it for what it is today runs the risk that it will be something else in the future and therefore that approach may not work. My suspicion is that we will have to deal with this by way of principles and dealing with the impacts of the use of AI, as opposed to regulating the technology itself. My final comment would be that we ought not to operate from the assumption that all AI is bad; I can see enormous benefit accruing from an appropriate use of AI in the future to assist in a whole range of ways.

**Hon NEIL THOMSON:** Thank you, and I appreciate the comprehensive response. In relation to robotics, I am thinking particularly in relation to issues of privacy. I know that that is probably in the remit of the federal government, but I am wondering whether there has been any assessment by the state with regard to how that might impact on the Western Australian public and how that might be managed within the context of any future regulatory framework?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The government made an announcement in December last year, if I am not mistaken, of the intent to bring forward privacy and responsible sharing of information legislation. That is currently being drafted, but I can indicate that consideration in the drafting process is being given to provisions within the legislation that deal with automated decision-making and what transparency and processes should be followed in a circumstance where a decision is taken about a citizen where automatic decision-making has been used. It is part of those considerations.

**Hon LORNA HARPER:** I refer to budget paper No 2, volume 1, and page 62. At the bottom of the table under “Spending Changes” there is the line “Telethon Donation”. Can you provide more detail about the Telethon donation, and what sorts of initiatives WA’s donation ended up supporting?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, over many decades Telethon has helped Western Australia establish itself as a leader in paediatric care and medical research. It has played a major role in creating a culture of giving and care for some of the most vulnerable children. The state government contributed a one-off additional contribution in 2022–23 of \$5 million. Our total Telethon donation was \$11 million, including a \$4 million recurrent donation and an injection of \$2 million to the WA child health research fund. That enabled Telethon to support 97 grassroots charities across WA, including Camp Quality; Make-A-Wish Foundation; the Perron Institute; Rocky Bay; and various universities and research institutions that are doing work on trying to find cures for childhood illnesses.

We want to continue to be associated with Telethon and continue to make contributions. It sits on top of the work that we are doing in our own right to increase medical research and innovation.

[5.20 pm]

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**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** I refer the minister, first of all, for the overarching discussion, to page 63, the relationship to government and the desired outcomes, which refers to the support for members of Parliament, which is mirrored on page 65, “Administration of Executive Government Services”, item 1, support for the functions of cabinet and Parliament. Can I confirm that the support for the functions of cabinet and Parliament includes the budget for the Parliamentary Counsel’s Office?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That sits with the Attorney General, the Department of Justice, honourable member.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** Okay, so it has nothing at all to do with the supply and support to the drafting; okay. I will ask that question at another time.

In that case, I refer you now to budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 62, the line item “Climate Action Fund—Collie Delivery Unit”. There is an ongoing and escalating commitment there, but on page 73, a few pages further on, the government is also spending in excess of \$19 million as part of your loan and Griffin Coal on the outskirts of Collie. First of all, what I would like to know is why are these payments coming from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet rather than the department of biodiversity or the department of mines?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** They are part of the—well, there is a just transition fund for Collie, and DPC is the lead for that work, because it is broad and it does require coordination across government. So, that climate action fund, the Collie delivery unit, if you want information about what that does, I can ask somebody to provide that for you. The Griffin money that you referred to, I cannot remember if you were in the chamber or not, honourable member, when Hon Dr Steve Thomas was asking me some questions about that. That is separate again. But perhaps I can stop talking and ask somebody else to explain about the climate action fund for Collie. Thanks.

**Ms PICKRELL:** Thank you, chair. There was \$4.4 million of funding from 2022 to 2026 allocated to the Collie delivery unit in DPC. The CDU in DPC leads and coordinates the cross-agency delivery, as the minister mentioned, of the government’s commitments to Collie’s just transition away from coal-fired power generation and leads the just transition working group, which involves government industry, community and union representatives. The CDU work focuses on four streams: diversifying the local economy; ensuring opportunities for impacted workers; celebrating Collie’s history and promoting its future; and committing to a just transition. There are eight positions in the CDU; three are regionally based in Collie and five are based in the metro area.

**Hon Dr BRIAN WALKER:** Thank you. One last addition to that. Looking towards rejuvenation and revitalisation—the minister knows where I am going to go with this—what we are looking at here is: has anyone here considered the hemp plant in offering us opportunities of restoring that area, and has any money been given towards research into that particular topic?

**The CHAIR:** I love your consistency, member; I really do. I will hand over to the minister.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am going to check, but I am fairly confident in saying no.

**The CHAIR:** Is that a no?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is a no.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** My question is related to the *WA government cyber security policy*, I believe it is directed at the Office of Digital Government and the cyber security unit, on budget paper No 2, volume 1, page 63. I was advised, as of February 2023, that all 66 government agencies had submitted an implementation plan under the cyber security policy. I have asked a few questions on this I believe in February and March, around how far along the Office of Digital Government is in

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assessing these 66 plans, so I will ask that question again. Has the assessment of all these plans been completed?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Italiano to make some comments about that.

**Mr ITALIANO:** Yes, the assessment of the responses from agencies reporting against their implementation of the policy has been completed.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Of those 66 implementation plans, how many have been found to be noncompliant?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The implementation plans are directed to the future activities of those agencies, so I could not characterise those as compliant or noncompliant of themselves. They suggest the trajectory that those agencies are on with respect to meeting the requirements of the policy.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Just on that fact, slightly further, so there is not sort of a binary decision of compliance or noncompliance; it is the fact that there are a number of different, I guess, action items that are directed at these agencies that they need to fulfil?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The member is correct. The policy has a number of elements, not all of which are binary in nature.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Just related to this, but taking a bit of a back step, there was a report by the Auditor General back in—actually, I am not sure when it came out, but this year, so it is for 2021–22, into an information systems audit for state government entities, and it found a number of different fairly sort of high-profile, significant examples where agencies were not complying with—well, not directly with this policy, but just they found some glaring weaknesses and deficiencies under the Auditor General’s own audit methodology. There was an example where there was a malicious actor impersonating a government executive officer; there was another one where a highly privileged account of a former employee was accessed for a number of months after they had left the agency. I asked a question on notice earlier this year asking if the Office of Digital Government was notified as part of the cyber-screening policy from the agency that these—they were basically telling them, “Hey, these were breaches that we’ve found”, and I did not receive an adequate answer, so I will ask it here. Is the Office of Digital Government aware of which agencies these fairly significant deficiencies were related to, and has there been any follow-up action as a result?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will ask Mr Italiano to provide an answer.

**Mr ITALIANO:** Thank you, chair. The short answer is that when the Auditor General reports to the department, the agencies are anonymised, and the report that is tabled in Parliament may relate to audits which have occurred up to some 18 months prior to the report being tabled. So, given those two factors, we cannot draw a direct line between a statement in an Auditor General report and directly know whether or not that particular incident has been reported to us. What I can say is the policy would require that it be reported, and my expectation is that it would have been reported. But to actually say that that particular incident has or has not, by virtue of the constraints I have just mentioned, I cannot make that assertion. What I can also say is that we took steps in order to improve the situation by issuing a Premier’s circular requiring that agencies provide us with their management letters, which are provided to agencies upon the exit of an audit by the Auditor General, and that we receive those in a timely manner. The reason I raise that as being relevant is if we receive those management letters in a timely manner, we will be able to be far better placed to ascertain more details of the incident, the actual agency to which it relates, and then I would be better placed to answer a similar question at some future point.

[5.30 pm]

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**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Thank you. Just to clarify, are the management letters backdated, so they will not apply to the Auditor General's report, or is that future facing after that circular has been issued?

**Mr ITALIANO:** I apologise in the sense that I cannot remember the exact date that the Premier's circular came into effect, but it applied to all audits that were to follow after the circular came into effect. The incidents to which the member has referred, to the best of my knowledge, would have preceded the circular being in effect.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** The WA government cybersecurity policy was issued in October 2021 and the Auditor General's report is for 2021–22 and I believe it took basically a snapshot of February to March in 2022, so the cybersecurity policy precedes the Auditor General's report. I can understand that we were talking about de-anonymised or de-identified data and that is for a very compelling reason. Perhaps you are able to take this as a question on notice or as something behind the chair, but I am curious if the Office of Digital Government is taking a proactive approach in—well, if it heard from these agencies in relation to those very high profile and significant incidents, or is it taking a proactive approach in actually reaching out to these agencies and saying the Office of the Auditor General has actually identified some significant breaches and then looking at these 66 agencies and taking a proactive step to identify which ones they are and trying to mitigate them?

**Mr ITALIANO:** For clarification, the Premier's circular was issued separate to the cyber policy from a contemporaneous perspective. The policy applied and circular came after, just for clarity's sake. The purpose of receiving the management letters is so that we know exactly which agencies they refer to and we have detailed findings to work from, and that is a very valuable resource for us. I can absolutely assure that we are using that proactively. In fact, it informs our cyber uplift and maturity program across the sector. Further to that, we are no longer at the mercy of the department reporting to us because we have 68 agencies connected to our cybersecurity operations centre in which we receive alerts in real-time and are able to detect incidents. We have taken a range of steps to correct or improve the situation where we used to receive anonymised historical data to now achieving real-time data looked at by expert cybersecurity analysts. That is how we are being proactive.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** I have no further questions, but thank you for clarification.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, when we look at page 63 of the budget papers at the six services provided by the department, which of those six services is dealing with the delivery of the free RAT program?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Service 3, whole of government.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Is it "Government Policy Management — Whole-of-Government" that is dealing with that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Hon Martin Aldridge is away on urgent parliamentary business. He asked a series of questions prior to the Health hearing and one of them was: how much has it cost so far in the 2022–23 budget year to administer the free RAT program at pop-ups and shopping centre? The answer that came back was: WA Health is unable to respond to this question as the free RAT program is delivered by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. So what was the cost?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** On the pop-ups, \$3.5 million has been spent since March 2022. Those pop-ups have been variously at train stations, shopping centres and other events.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That has been the cost has it?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The cost for the pop-ups since March has been \$3.5 million.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Since March 2022.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes, okay, not 2023. I was thinking that was a lot of money for a few months.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** And it has been very well welcomed. They are going out at about —

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That is the cost. It is not the amount of RATs distributed at the pop-ups.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** As of 27 June 2023, just over 25.5 million RATs have been distributed through those pop-ups.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** So 25.5 million RATs have been distributed at the cost of \$3.5 million at these pop-ups. What about at the shopping centres?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Pop-ups include shopping centres, honourable member. Pop-ups can be at train stations, a big event like a big football game or at shopping centres.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Is this how we are going to disburse the remaining RATs?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is the plan so far, honourable member, unless something was to change.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is not in communication with the Department of Education to seek for them to be distributed through schools?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** How many staff are present at these pop-up centres?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am told it is two to three people at each pop-up. I do not know that we have the actual numbers or that we could get them because it will depend on the nature of the particular pop-up. It is a contracted organisation that provides that service.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Right, so the \$3.5 million is actually the contracted cost.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It includes that, yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** It includes that but is the \$3.5 million the contracted cost?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There are two providers. The \$3.5 million covers the cost of those two services to distribute RATs through pop-ups.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Who are the two providers?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We have to take that on notice. I do not have the names of the contracted companies here.

*[Supplementary Information No C6.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Can the two contracts be tabled?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I would have to take advice on that. I do not know if there is anything commercially sensitive about them.

**The CHAIR:** That will be all part of C6.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That is in respect to RATs, Mr Chairman.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, if I could take you back to the enthusiasm of Hon Dan Caddy on page 62 and the “Climate Action Fund — Collie Delivery Unit”. You gave us some numbers before about job creation in Collie. Again, I have this from a question within the house: job growth between 2016 to 2021 was 4 493 to 4 774. Are they the figures that you were —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, I was using slightly different periods, honourable member. Let me find it for you. ABS jobs data rose in Collie from 4 493 in 2016 to 4 774 in 2021.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** We are using the same figures. That is fine; I will not have to accuse the minister of getting that wrong. That is growth of 1.25 per cent a year, which is actually slightly higher than I think the population growth in Collie, but not a huge number. Can the minister tell us if that includes full-time, part-time and casual employment or is it purely full-time jobs?

[5.40 pm]

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I cannot tell you that from the information that I have here. If the member wants it, we could take it on notice, but I guess it is however ABS captures that data.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** You may not be able to answer, even on notice, but can we put that on notice, chair, and see if we can find out?

[*Supplementary Information No C7.*]

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Can we have it broken down into full time, part time and casual if it is broken down to those numbers? If it is not, it is okay.

**The CHAIR:** Certainly, if possible.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Minister, we talked before about the fact that both jobs have been created. You mentioned the \$660 million transition fund for Collie. Again, in information we have gleaned in the house, \$300 million of that is set for the decommissioning of certain power stations. I am presuming then that given that those power station decommissionings are roughly in 2026–27, that money will not create full-time jobs—that is, the decommissioning of the existing power stations. Would that be fair?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There may well be some jobs created through the decommissioning process itself but that will have an end point, so they will not be decommissioning forever.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Nearly half of the money set aside for the Collie transition is actually not creating full-time jobs.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** With the greatest of respect, honourable member, you cannot transition if you do not actually decommission.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I do not disagree with that either. I am interested in the marketing process. You also mentioned, in relation to the answer to Hon Dan Caddy, the big battery that is going in. There will be a number of construction jobs; I absolutely understand that. I am not sure how many of those will come from Collie but we do not know, so we will have to wait and see. It would be unreasonable to ask. In terms of the permanent full-time jobs and the creation of a 2 000-megawatt-hour battery, according to other ministers, how many full-time jobs does it take to run that 2 000-megawatt-hour unit over time?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We do not have that information, and even if I was to give you a commitment, honourable member, to take it on notice, I do not think we hold it. I think the question would need to go to the power operators or somebody like that. I will take it on notice but I am not sure that this agency can provide the answer.

[*Supplementary Information No C8.*]

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I think you might struggle because the Minister for Energy could not answer it either. It was worth a try.

In terms of the Collie delivery unit, it is only spending \$1.5 million itself; it is an oversight. How many staff are actually working in the Collie delivery unit?

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Eight.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** And how many of those are in Collie?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Three.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** And the others are in Perth?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** Is that somewhere in the department? Is it centralised? Is it in a precinct here?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is in the office.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I might come back to it if there is time.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Minister, on page 62, the spending changes table, under “Other” we have some figures ascribed to the Cyber Security Operations Centre. They seem to me to be exceptionally modest for what that centre purports to be. Could I get an understanding please about what is being funded through that allocation?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will get Mr Italiano to provide you with information about that.

**Mr ITALIANO:** The number that appears is an adjustment that has taken place as a result of some change in plan with respect to how the operations centre will be accommodated, so equating that to the funding that was allocated to establish the entire operation is not accurate.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Is that an FTE position effectively, Mr Italiano—an additional one? Is that what we are getting to here?

**Mr ITALIANO:** No, they are not FTE. There were some assumptions made about fit-out costs and leasing arrangements with respect to the physical accommodation for the operations centre. Those assumptions have changed. That is an accounting treatment to reflect that. The FTE that form part of the cybersecurity unit were funded in a previous budget, so that is the explanation.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** In terms of that centre’s continuing operations, where would I find the allocation in these budget papers?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The bulk of the funding for the cybersecurity unit was provided in November 2021, so it was part of a midyear review decision. That was an allocation of \$25.5 million at that time.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Would you be in a position to advise the current staffing level of the SOC?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes, we can give that to you now.

**Mr ITALIANO:** The approved FTE for the cybersecurity unit, not just the security operations centre but the entire unit, is 43, of which 39 are currently occupied.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Forgive me if I missed the previous interaction on this thematic issue but who in the Western Australian government sector bears ultimate responsibility for cybersecurity among government agencies? Is there an individual position?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will have to get Mr Italiano to explain that.

**Mr ITALIANO:** I think this is a useful discussion in the sense that cybersecurity is a distributed activity in the sector. If you go to any agency and you examine the responsibilities of a chief executive officer or a director general, they are responsible for risks to that agency and the management of those risks. Cybersecurity forms part of that overall risk environment for which agency and accountable authorities are accountable under relevant legislation to manage. We do not step in to take that accountability or assume it but we help agencies discharge that accountability by assisting them

with services and advice and technical support. It would be helpful, I think, to consider our role as one of coordination and leadership guidance and service delivery but the accountability for that rests with the relevant line agency.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** I see. So if I hear you correctly, presently there does not seem to be any inclination towards establishing, for want of a better expression, a cybersecurity tsar in Western Australia, which is a position recently stood up at the commonwealth government?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The position recently announced by the commonwealth is that of cybersecurity coordinator. That is in the circumstances of coordinating incident response, which is no mean feat, given the number of commonwealth government agencies involved. We do take that coordination role. We have a response coordination framework and we would play a coordinating role but that position does not assume accountability for the management of line agencies in the commonwealth.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** On a similar thread but different topic, the spending changes table on page 62 speaks to the Digital Capability Fund, particularly the ServiceWA app. I have a few questions in respect of that in the time available. Is it possible to outline what the suite of services provided by the ServiceWA app are and how many daily users are making use of that application?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think we might all sit back and just hand over to Mr Italiano because he is going to know the answer to that.

**Mr ITALIANO:** I note some optimism about my ability to respond. The services of course are known. Without being too smart about it, we could open up the app and there they are in front of us. We have added services since the COVID era, so things like FuelWatch, SharkSmart. We have a bushfire notification service in the app, unclaimed moneys et cetera.

That is clear and users are able to access those. There are intentions to add other services in the future.

With respect of giving the daily usage of those services, I can take that on notice. I do not have those numbers with me at the present time.

[5.50 pm]

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** That would be helpful, thank you.

[*Supplementary Information No C9.*]

**The CHAIR:** Before I give the honourable member the call, I got the impression that no one else wanted the call again. Is that correct? You do?

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Thank you, chair. I am sure that I will leave sufficient time to my colleague.

In respect of the operations of the ServiceWA app as they are presently, is it possible to explain the breadth of individual personal data that is collected as a consequence of somebody establishing a user account and providing their details?

**Mr ITALIANO:** The information collected will vary today as the app exists on what services the user wishes to access. Some of the services can be accessed without identifying yourself or providing any information. When we introduced the COVID vaccination service, that was a different matter. We sought to establish identity of persons so that we could be relatively confident that the vaccination certificate related to the person presenting it. In those circumstances, there would have been basic personal identification data held, but as it stands at the present, to answer member's question, the data held will relate to the service that the user is seeking to access. I think it is a pretty commonsense thing that if you are using the app just to get information, we do not need to know a lot, but if you are going to use the app for some transaction process or the like, then there is

obviously a need to gather that. A user has the ability not only to choose the service, but whether they wish to provide the relevant information. That is up to the user.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** With respect of some of the COVID era data that was captured, does the state government still retain the individual check-in data that we were all obliged to give over, consistent with whatever COVID directions were in place? Is that still retained? If I might use a prosaic example, would the government, should it wish to know, have the data to suggest that on 20 March 2021 I was at the Caltex service station at 10.43 am on a Monday and I then checked in to buy a latte at the cafe next door? Is that kind of reasonably prosaic detail that we are obliged to give over still retained by the state government in some form?

**Mr ITALIANO:** I will try to give a constructive answer on the information around venue attendance or check-in, as it commonly became known. The vast majority of that information that was collected was collected through digital means. There were manual registers used for people who were not able to use a digital option, but the vast majority of the data was collected digitally. That was collected by the SafeWA app. The way ServiceWA worked was effectively just to use the SafeWA capability. There were not two separate repositories; there was one. But data was under the custodianship of the Department of Health. Without wanting to step in to territory I ought not to, there have been coordinated efforts to dispose of that data. As the member might be aware, the government specifically legislated in relation to the use and retention of that data. To the extent that I understand it, there has been compliance with the legislative obligations to dispose of that data in accordance with the act.

Now, I hasten to add that I obviously cannot speak to the bits of paper that might be floating around somewhere in some retail outlet, but as far as the digital processes were concerned and the collection by the department by the SafeWA capability, that is my understanding.

**The CHAIR:** Before I move on to Hon Wilson Tucker, I have a question I want to ask with regard to the jet. It is just the jet and King Air?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** Can we get the data from the jet and the King Air on who travelled where, who was with them and the positions? That will need to be taken on notice.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. We do it each year. I think it is readily available.

*[Supplementary Information No C10.]*

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** I am not sure if my question is for the DPC or the Office of Digital Government. I am curious if either agency has received advice from any Australian intelligence or security agency related to the use of certain applications on government devices, particularly the classic example of TikTok.

**Mr ITALIANO:** We did not receive government advice in relation to TikTok. The commonwealth government declared a position in relation to its use by the commonwealth government and relevant commonwealth agencies. Having regard to the position taken by the commonwealth, we took a decision to also take that stance in relation to the WA public sector use of that particular application.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Has that advice been shared with DPC and then trickled down to parliamentary officers? It sounds like the WA government has adopted that position. Has that been circulated widely?

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**Mr ITALIANO:** We issued a cyber advisory to agencies setting out what they needed to do. That was done by way of both a process referred to as a CEO gateway, but also through our normal cyber alert channels as well.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Do you know if parliamentary officers have been advised of that position and what action they should take?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am going to have to take that on notice. I do not have the information here, honourable member, but we will take that on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C11.]*

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** This may be related or unrelated. I am probably going to get this name wrong, but Dahua security devices —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** DWER?

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** It is a Chinese manufacturer of security devices. There is also Hikvision. Have you received similar advice from the commonwealth around the use for government departments or parliamentary officers on whether they should or should not be using them?

**Mr ITALIANO:** I believe the member is referring to what we might call Chinese CCTV equipment. The commonwealth took no explicit position in relation to those devices. We have read reports that certain government agencies in the commonwealth have seen fit to audit those cameras and in some cases, take some action, but I draw a distinction between that and us receiving advice from the commonwealth. We have not received advice relating specifically to that topic nor was the position taken, as I indicated with TikTok, where the government actually issued an advisory to their own agencies. I will just draw that distinction.

**Hon WILSON TUCKER:** Does the WA government have a position?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Not that I am aware, no. Mr Italiano might be able to add something to that.

**Mr ITALIANO:** The position of the WA government is that every agency should be risk-assessing its ICT infrastructure as good practice. That would include the use of CCTV devices, if they are connected to government networks. We would not say that the only devices or infrastructure to be subject to an appropriate risk assessment are those that the member referred to.

[6.00 pm]

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, at page 62, we have the list of spending changes. One of the other spending changes is actually a reduction in spending estimated for the current financial year for COVID-19 coordination and communications. Now, in the previous financial year, the Auditor General had produced a report, discussing additional expenses for that same issue—an additional \$9 million. This is now a reduction of \$6 million. Part of that related to what was referred to as the “hotel quarantine review”. When was the hotel quarantine review finalised?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Chair, we might need to take it on notice. We think that that was completed back in 2021, so I do not have any information available here. If there was something specific the honourable member was looking for, I could take it on notice.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The date of the review being completed.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Okay.

*[Supplementary Information No C12.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And, in addition, which I suspect then you might need to take on notice, is: what was the cost of conducting the review?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We will need to take that on notice.

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**The CHAIR:** That is part of C12.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And the review, is that publicly available?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We think that the response to the review is publicly available, but to be sure, to be sure, I will take it as part of that question and just double-check for you, honourable member.

**The CHAIR:** It is all part of C12.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Okay. So, is that just the response, but not the —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I will double-check both.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** To be clear, what would be desirable is the review report and the response, but obviously what will be provided will be provided.

**The CHAIR:** Okay, it is all part of C12. Just to confirm, once again, is there any other member that has any questions? Okay.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, the independent COVID review that is being conducted at the moment, is that being facilitated or aided by the department?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes. They are providing secretariat response.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Assisting in things like drafting?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Collecting submissions and doing all that sort of stuff.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And typing or drafting the report—that type of thing?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes. So, assisting with the drafting, but the independent reviewer will finalise the report.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes, secretarial as you say. What is the cost of providing that secretarial service?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** It is yet to be confirmed, and we will make it available once the review is complete.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The cost?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** For the secretarial service?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The cost of the review.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** No. Just the cost of the secretarial service, I am looking for at the moment.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Well, no additional funds have been allocated to it. It is part of the agency's normal work.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Right, okay. What is the FTE allocation towards this secretarial service?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We think it is five, but to be confident, honourable member, I would probably take that on notice.

*[Supplementary Information No C13.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Will the independent reviewers also be remunerated in some fashion?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Do we know what that cost is?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No, but that is part of what would be made available once the review is complete.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Okay, because in some respects you just do not know how long is a piece of string, how much time that they might take on this—I can understand that.

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Is there some form of, if you like, and I use the word very loosely, contracted hourly rate that has been agreed to with the independent reviewers?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think we might take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** That is still part of C13.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Do we know when the review will be complete?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We are expecting to get the final report to cabinet in the middle of this year, but beyond that I have got no further information.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And you say “final report”, is that indication that a draft report is being provided to government in advance of the final report?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. A draft has not been provided. The new Premier has been provided with a briefing, I understand, on the work that has been done, but a final report has not been provided.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Who has provided that briefing to the Premier?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** The independent reviewers.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** When did that take place?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** We think in the last week, but if you want the actual date, that would have to be taken on notice.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Yes, please.

*[Supplementary Information No C14.]*

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Minister, so that briefing took place approximately sometime in the last week or so. Did it result in a briefing note or some similar document being produced?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I am advised, no.<sup>1</sup>

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** So it was just a verbal briefing that was given to the Premier?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** That is what I and advised.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Were members of the approximate five FTE secretarial service present during that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Yes.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** And did any of them keep notes of that briefing?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I would have to take that on notice. I do not know the answer to that.

**The CHAIR:** That is all part of C14.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** If we were to ask for the Premier’s diary notes in respect for that briefing, is that something that this department can assist us with?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You would need to put that request to the Premier and the Premier’s office. The department does not run his diary.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** That is what I am asking. So this department will not be able to assist us with respect to that request?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Correct.

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<sup>1</sup> A letter of clarification about this part of the transcript can be accessed on the committee webpage.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** The hotel quarantine review, to which I was referring to earlier—and, minister, you have taken on notice whether the report might be provided and the response—is there any information as to the status of the implementation of the recommendations that flow from that?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** No. I do not have that information here.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Would you be able to, then, take that on notice and update in respect to each of the discrete recommendations that were made?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I can take it on notice. I am not sure what would be able to be provided, but I can certainly ask the question.

*[Supplementary Information No C15.]*

**The CHAIR:** Just before you continue, Hon Nick Goiran, I thought Hon Neil Thomson was going to ask this, but he did not. I asked this question on his behalf for DPC last year with regard to his electorate office.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** His electorate office?

**The CHAIR:** Yes, and there had been some lag. He still does not actually have an electorate office.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have walked past his electorate office in Broome.

**The CHAIR:** That is a subsidiary one. That is one that he pays for. His DPC electorate office is in —

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Someone is giving me a bit of paper.

**The CHAIR:** I understand they have been working with DPC in Kalgoorlie. I just wonder what the status is.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Sure. There has certainly been delays in respect to his office due to the availability of suitable tenancies specifically in Kalgoorlie. Hot off the presses! An office was secured for him on Hannan Street in Kalgoorlie within the last week.

**The CHAIR:** Great! Where in Hannan Street was it, just as a matter of interest? Do you know what number it is?

**Mr STEWART:** 64—off the top of my head.

**The CHAIR:** 64! My sister has got the newsagents. I just wondered where it was in relation to that.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Good to know!

**The CHAIR:** Right near the town hall. Great little town.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** As you go up town, is your sister's newsagents on the left?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I have been in there.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, right near the town hall. Anyway, I do digress.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** Well, I suspect that the honourable member is busy packing and getting ready to finally move into his electorate office after two years.

**The CHAIR:** He will be very happy about that, I have got to say.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I do have a number of new themes to pursue.

**The CHAIR:** We have about five minutes, so why don't you choose one of them.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** They are questions that can easily be put in the additional questions, so if I have the choice between asking them now and assisting members to finish five minutes early, I prefer the latter.

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**Hon SUE ELLERY:** So do I!

**The CHAIR:** You would be very popular.

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Well, I would not say that.

[6.10 pm]

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Just regarding the happy news that Hon Neil Thomson has an office, is it possible to confirm whether all MPs elected to the forty-first Parliament have an electorate office now?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** There is only one who does not and that is Hon Ben Dawkins. They are working currently to secure an office for him.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Presumably, there are conditions attached to expectations of members of Parliament and their staff in terms of the conduct which is permissible within an electorate office. I understand that the rule book is the PEO guidebook, or whatever it is called. Can I put to you a hypothetical before we adjourn for the evening?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I do not like the sound of that!

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Is it consistent with the advice outlined in that guidebook that a member of Parliament can convene ostensibly a political meeting between themselves and their colleagues with the view to, I do not know, electing or supporting their favoured candidate for Premier of the state?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** Good question. I do not know that the PEO document is as specific as providing examples of what meetings would and would not be satisfactory. I would say, though, it would be highly unusual at a time of changing positions in any party for those conversations not to occur between members in electorate offices. I think it would be highly unusual for that not to occur, whether it is the Liberal Party, the National Party or the Labor Party. I can seek advice as to whether that would be considered appropriate, but I also make the point that I do not think the guidelines are so granular as to provide specific advice, and, frankly, I do not think we would want them to be because they would end up being like a telephone book, but I am happy to take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No C16.*]

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Nevertheless, is there generally a prohibition or some advice which is to the effect that a political campaign meeting, for example, for a by-election, for example, would not be an appropriate use of a member's electorate office, or would that be within the scope of the rules, noting that we do not want to get too granular about these things?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** I think the general principle—I do not have a copy of the handbook here with me now—is if it is something that can be branded as a political party matter, it should not be done in the electorate office. You cannot have Liberal Party signs on state MPs' offices. You can on federal MPs' offices, but you cannot on state's. But you cannot say that a member seeking re-election cannot have campaign discussions in their office. That is part of getting themselves re-elected. I do not know that the guidelines would go so granular as to what you describe.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Heaven forbid if I was to see, for argument's sake, hypothetically, a Labor-branded sign in a government MP's office and I was mightily put out by seeing that, for reasons other than the fact that it is not my brand, whom would I direct that to? To whom would I make a complaint or bring attention to?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You could write to the Premier.

**Hon TJORN SIBMA:** Someone in the department perhaps?

**Hon SUE ELLERY:** You could, but the normal way that an MP would communicate is not directly with public servants, rather with the office of the Premier.

**The CHAIR:** With that, we will bring this session to a close. I thank all witnesses and the minister for attendance today. It is very much appreciated.

Members, you may submit your remaining questions through the electronic lodgement system, which will close at 5.00 pm on 7 July.

Witnesses, the committee will forward the uncorrected transcript of evidence, with questions taken on notice highlighted, as soon as possible after the hearing. Responses to requests for supplementary information are due by 5.00 pm on 26 July. Should you be unable to meet the due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice should explain why the due date cannot be met.

Thank you once again for your attendance today. It is very much appreciated.

**Hearing concluded at 6.14 pm**

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