

**Division 43: Planning, Lands and Heritage — Services 3 and 4, Heritage, \$50 670 000 —**

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for Heritage.

Mr A. Kannis, Director General.

Mr V. Davies, Assistant Director General, Heritage and Property Services.

Mr M. Hanrahan, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms T. Widdicombe, Chief of Staff, Minister for Heritage.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with those details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon on Friday, 2 June 2023. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can I get some clarity, chair? The estimates committee schedule lists services 3 and 4, yet service 4 is actually Aboriginal affairs, which I thought was dealt with this morning. Is now the time to talk about service 4 as well?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No—only service 3.

**The CHAIR:** It is not Aboriginal heritage, in other words.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** There is a mistake in the committee schedule. The meeting of great minds made a mistake.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** The meeting of great minds over there.

**The CHAIR:** Does anyone have a question on division 43?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 720 and explanation of significant movements that notes —

1. The decrease in Total Cost of Service between the 2022–23 Budget and 2022–23 Estimated Actual of \$1.6 million is mainly due to deferral of expenditure for the Tropical Cyclone Seroja Cultural and Heritage Asset Clean-up and Repair Grants program to 2023–24.

Can the minister provide some clarity around the reason for the delay? Was it because the grants were slow in being applied for or was there another reason for that delay?

[9.40 pm]

**The CHAIR:** That is note 1 on page 720, minister.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to ask Mr Hanrahan to respond and explain, and I might add to that.

**Mr M. Hanrahan:** The delay is because we are actually not getting a lot of claims for grants and assistance in this. A lot of the affected people are covered by their own insurance, so we keep carrying the money over, waiting for potential applicants to come through. At some stage, a time will come when we will return that money if it is no longer required.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The current status is that three claims have been paid in total; that is my understanding. A total of \$40 154.84 has been paid out, and a total of 50 applicants have been recorded, but the numbers expected to undertake and claim for eligible works are significantly lower and expected to be only in single figures. As Mr Hanrahan highlighted, a lot of the damage to some of the properties of a heritage nature has been covered by owners' insurance.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have heard that claim often enough, but, as a local member, I also know that people were underinsured or simply could not complete the project. Correct me if I am wrong, but under the terms of the grants, people have to complete projects and then claim back the funds. The problem is that if they could actually complete the project, they would be liquid enough to complete the project. The minister can see the problem here.

**The CHAIR:** Okay. We get the question.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The question is: has there been any discussion within the department about the appropriateness of the criteria that were set, and has any feedback been given to either the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the Department of the Premier and Cabinet on those issues?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** First, the department maintains contact with the current applicants to assist in their recovery and conservation works. In terms of criteria, people have until June 2024 to complete the remaining works and make a claim, so they still have just over 12 months in which to complete those works and make a claim. I am assured that the department will continue to work with applicants on that time line, and if there are unforeseen circumstances, I am sure that the department will consider them on an individual basis.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I refer to page 722 of budget paper No 2 and ask the minister: can he give an update on the conservation work being undertaken at Fremantle Prison and what we can expect over the coming financial year?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for the question. Fremantle Prison is a very important heritage and award-winning tourism asset for the state. In fact, it won a number of tourism awards. Visitation numbers were impacted during COVID, but those numbers have now recovered. The ongoing demand for conservation work is apparent. In March this year, I announced extensive conservation works on some key components of Fremantle Prison, including the prison's commissariat, the main cell block and the parade ground. Those \$3.16 million worth of works have been completed. That was a 20-month program funded by state and federal governments. A lot of the work was done by Aboriginal contractors, businesses or firms and Aboriginal workers, which I think is a great achievement, and that work is of a very high quality.

We have committed \$17.8 million to the prison, including \$12.6 million over the next four years, and that will continue to do essential conservation work and will allow greater activation of the site. The prison is now a popular site for concerts and for cultural hire, as well as for traditional tourism-related visitations and tours. The tunnel tours continue to be popular and have recommenced. Overall, the government has made a significant investment in this World Heritage Listed and UNESCO World Heritage site. We will continue to support the Fremantle Prison director with the strategic plan that continues to look at activation opportunities. The McGowan government has invested and committed some important money over the coming four years.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Page 725 refers to local government heritage consultancy grants. Can the minister outline what those grants are for? Are they to help local governments with the preparation of heritage lists? What is the aim of that?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Clearly, local government has a critical role in identifying and considering the protection of heritage assets within its municipality. Essentially, part of this grant program has been to support local governments in updating what used to be called "municipal inventories" but are now called "surveys". Through community heritage grants, this fund also allows them to activate community events and activities that assist in the broader heritage interpretation of projects. A variety have been funded over the period and will continue to be funded under the community heritage grants. Funding of up to \$20 000 is offered. Quite often, we find in regional communities that an event or activity is focused on a particularly famous or well-loved heritage site or place, and that money is available for local governments and not-for-profits to promote and celebrate our history.

**The appropriation was recommended.**