

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

*Sixth Report — “No (More) Time to Waste:
The ongoing implementation of Western Australia’s Waste Strategy” — Tabling*

DR A.D. BUTI (Armadale) [10.07 am]: I present for tabling the sixth report of the Public Accounts Committee entitled “No (More) Time to Waste: The ongoing implementation of Western Australia’s Waste Strategy”.

[See paper 1929.]

Dr A.D. BUTI: Put simply, the Public Accounts Committee scrutinises value for money—the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of public spending—and generally holds public servants and statutory bodies to account for delivery of public services. PAC, which is the colloquial term for the Public Accounts Committee, has the power to examine the financial affairs and accounts of government agencies, statutory bodies and government trading enterprises. We also have the power to inquire into and report to the Assembly on any question that we deem necessary to investigate, is referred to us by a minister or is referred to us by the Auditor General. PAC and the Office of the Auditor General have demonstrated a shared commitment towards improving the quality of public administration in Western Australia. We have a good working relationship with the Office of the Auditor General. This is necessary and sensible, as the Office of the Auditor General plays a critical role in public administration by examining how effectively public sector agencies implement government policies and programs. As part of this role, the Auditor General’s team routinely conducts performance audits that can highlight examples of good practice or identify deficiencies in an agency’s operations and procedures. Performance audit reports generally include recommendations designed to help the audited agency address identified shortcomings, thereby facilitating a more efficient use of public money. Yet, there is no formal requirement for agencies to provide a response to these recommendations, and the Auditor General has no authority to demand one. Consequently, public accounts committees across most commonwealth jurisdictions usually provide some form of support to their audit officers to ensure performance audit recommendations receive due consideration.

In Western Australia, the Public Accounts Committee has undertaken an agency follow-up process since 1996, although the approach has varied in accordance with the preference of the committee members over the six parliamentary sessions that have ensued. Our approach is based on a triage methodology that assigns a follow-up rating based on the following five criteria: one, program or policy cost; two, public interest; three, criticality of audit findings; four, level of urgency; and, five, level of commitment and detail provided by the audited agency in its initial response, which is usually included in the audit report. In March this year, we triaged 24 performance audit reports from 2015 and 2016. Out of this process, nine reports fell within what we call the low priority triage range. For these reports, we opted to conclude our follow-up while reserving the right to open correspondence with the audited agencies should circumstances warrant interrogation in the future. Nine other reports fell within our medium priority range. With one of these reports, we chose to conclude our follow-up. For the remaining eight, we have sought and received written responses from the audited agencies. These follow-ups remain open while we consider the adequacy of the responses. Seven reports received the high priority triage score. For one of these, we decided to write to the audited agency; it appears to have already addressed the most pressing issues identified by the Auditor General. For the other six reports we thought it appropriate to call the audited agencies in for a public hearing to discuss in depth their responses to the audit reports. These hearings occurred over three sitting weeks in June, and we followed up each agency with a series of further written questions. Over the next few months we hope to deliver a series of reports highlighting follow-ups where we retain concern over the adequacy of the agency responses or where we see opportunities to build on some encouraging actions.

The report I have just tabled summarises our follow-up on the responses of the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation to the recommendations in the Auditor General’s twenty-third report of 2016, “Western Australian Waste Strategy: Rethinking Waste”. This was one of the six audit reports from across 2015 and 2016 for which we felt the findings were significantly serious enough to warrant follow-up by way of a public hearing and a series of further questions. Before continuing, I would like to make it clear that this report does not evaluate the overall merit of the waste strategy, nor the merit and effectiveness of the numerous programs and initiatives that are now emanating from it. Instead, we focused on the extent to which the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation have addressed the audit report’s recommendations. These recommendations sought to address a significant number of shortcomings involving the early implementation of the waste strategy.

We are dealing with a very important area of public policy here. Waste management is important, because improperly stored refuse can cause health, safety and economic problems. To prevent damaging the environment and to maintain a high quality of life, we must manage and store waste efficiently and safely. Even more importantly, we need to reduce the amount of waste we are producing. The Western Australian waste strategy was developed by the Waste Authority and launched on 6 March 2012 by the then Minister for Environment, Hon Bill Marmion, MLA,

the current member for Nedlands. The strategy aimed to reduce the amount of waste generated while simultaneously increasing the proportion of unavoidable waste diverted from landfill through improved resource recovery and recycling processes.

The Waste Authority has primary responsibility for implementing the waste strategy and plays a critical financial oversight role by preparing an annual business plan for approval by the Minister for Environment. The business plan outlines the Waste Authority's objectives and recommends priorities for the next five years. It also provides a breakdown of proposed expenditure for all waste strategy programs and administrative services for the year ahead. If approved by the minister, the Waste Authority then oversees the implementation of the programs and services in accordance with the business plan. The Waste Authority has numerous other functions enshrined in the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2007. These include advising the minister on matters relating to the act and advising the departmental CEO on matters relating to the regulation of waste services. In addition to providing support to the Waste Authority, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation has numerous other roles and responsibilities under the state's waste management and environmental protection legislation. These include regulatory activities such as issuing licences to waste management sites and monitoring compliance with the licensing conditions.

Ongoing ambiguity regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of the department and the Waste Authority led both entities to renegotiate the terms for a reviewed service level agreement throughout 2015 and 2016. These negotiations continued unresolved throughout the period of the audit—a point the Auditor General noted in what was ultimately a highly critical assessment of the waste strategy's early implementation. Unfortunately, we have found that the agencies have been slow to complete the 16 separate actions recommended by the Auditor General. In our view, the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation have completed just five of the 16 recommended actions to a satisfactory level. The failure to address these recommendations in a timely manner arguably extends from a significant legacy issue; that is, the inability of the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's predecessor—the former Department of Environmental Regulation—to confirm their roles and responsibilities through an agreed governance structure. We believe this has undermined the effective implementation of the waste strategy and has likely contributed to the failure of the strategy to meet all its 2015 landfill diversion targets.

The legacy issue cannot be underestimated. It has been a significant and enduring problem. When any entity, program or strategy commences on the wrong foot or without clarity of identity, purpose, role or responsibility, it can be difficult to turn the ship around to get back on an even keel and perform to an acceptable standard. However, history cannot remain an enduring inhibitor to improving performance. One's history needs to be acknowledged and evaluated, but then one must quickly move on to right the wrongs of the past and ensure the public of Western Australia has been serviced to the standard we should all expect in a developed, sophisticated and civil society.

On 1 June 2017, the new Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC, issued a ministerial statement of expectation to the Waste Authority. In this document, the minister outlined his expectation that the Waste Authority and department would —

... work collaboratively to ensure the Waste Authority's business is managed in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner.

Notable was his further comment, and I quote again —

I expect the Waste Authority will enter into a service level agreement with the department responsible for the administration of the WARR Act ...

On 1 July 2017, the former Department of Environmental Regulation was subsumed into the new Department of Water and Environmental Regulation under the McGowan government's machinery-of-government changes. The Waste Authority advised us that the following month, the director general of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation endorsed a temporary service level agreement with the agreement that it be reviewed within 12 months of adopting a new governance charter to ensure no gaps or conflicts in both complementary documents. The director general of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation expects that the revised governance framework will be finalised by the end of 2018. Similarly, the Waste Authority is now confident that the service level agreement and governance arrangement will be properly prepared and agreed to in a reasonably short time frame.

It appears that working relations between the two key entities have improved following the appointment of a new director general and the establishment of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation midway through 2017. Since that time, both entities have demonstrated a renewed commitment to establishing an agreed governance structure, addressing the outstanding audit report recommendations and working together to improve Waste Strategy outcomes. However, there remains much to be done to overcome what has been an unsatisfactory

commencement to the rollout of the waste strategy. The Waste Authority and Department of Water and Environmental Regulation have numerous actions underway that aim to address most of the concerns highlighted in the performance audit report. To avoid further unacceptable delays, it is crucial that both entities finish these tasks promptly. We are pleased that both the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation have demonstrated to our committee a commitment to address the issues that have plagued the early years of the waste strategy. In their interactions with us, each has conveyed a sense of optimism regarding the future administration of the Waste Strategy. They conveyed a level of confidence that most of the issues will be resolved and the Auditor General's recommendations fully actioned, including the imminent completion of the following major tasks. Firstly, finalising the governance framework; secondly, attending to any subsequent revision of the current service level agreement that may come out of a review scheduled to take place within 12 months of the governance framework being finalised; thirdly, reviewing the Water Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act; fourthly, developing a waste data information strategy; and fifthly and last, making regulatory amendments to mandate waste and recycling data collection. Let us hope that our optimism is well placed.

Our report makes seven recommendations for action by the Minister for Environment, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Waste Authority. We believe these recommendations, if enacted, will go a long way to ensuring the expectation of the Minister for Environment—as noted in his ministerial statement of 1 June 2017—is achieved and, more importantly, this state has a waste strategy that delivers high quality results for the public of Western Australia.

In concluding, I would like to thank the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for their cooperation throughout this follow-up process. I would also like to thank the Auditor General, Ms Caroline Spencer, and her team for their assistance throughout the follow-up process, which we very much valued. I must stress, however, that we have acted independently in conducting our analysis and framing our conclusions. I also acknowledge the collaborative working relationship of our committee and thank my fellow committee members: Mr Dean Nalder, MLA and Deputy Chair; Mrs Lisa O'Malley, MLA; Mr Simon Millman, MLA; and Mr Vince Catania, MLA for their diligence and hard work. Further, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank our secretariat principal research officer Mr Timothy Hughes and research officer Mr Michael Burton for their excellent assistance and dedication throughout this inquiry. Before sitting down, I also acknowledge that the Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson, has just released a new waste strategy. I have only had a very quick look at it, and I must say that the new waste strategy appears to be ambitious, innovative and long overdue. Hopefully, it will go some way to addressing many of the issues that we have outlined in our report.

MR D.C. NALDER (Bateman) [10.25 am]: With the Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Armadale, I would also like to acknowledge the collaborative work undertaken by my colleagues on the committee: Lisa O'Malley, Simon Millman and Vince Catania—I should say the member for Bicton, the member for Mount Lawley, the member for North West Central and obviously the chair, the member for Armadale. Firstly, in establishing a response to the sixth report of the Public Accounts Committee, I would like to frame the work and reiterate some of the points the chair has mentioned today.

In March 2012, a waste strategy was developed and announced by the former minister, the member for Nedlands, Bill Marmion. The Auditor General undertook an audit and found some quite adverse findings of the work that had been undertaken. However, in saying so, I acknowledge that the Auditor General found that there had been an improvement in the management of waste since 2012 and that waste generation and recycling figures were trending in the right direction. But the report went on to list 17 key findings, almost all of which were critical of both the Waste Authority and the then Department of Environment Regulation. The issues seemed to stem from cooperation between the agencies. If we look at the waste strategy that was implemented in 2012 there were improvements; however, there were the 17 adverse findings by the Auditor General in October 2016. The work of the committee and the findings today are the subsequent work that the Waste Authority and the department have undertaken since that audit of 2016. It would appear on the surface that there have been improvements in the relationship and cooperation between the Waste Authority and the department, but the reality of that matter will be the proof in the pudding. What we have to be interested in as a government and as members of Parliament on both sides is the betterment of our waste strategies for Western Australia and particularly with the recycling of our waste. I would like to highlight some concerns on page 7 of our tabled report that show that we are still a long way behind the set targets. Our diversion ratio away from landfill is at 36 per cent for metropolitan municipal solid waste, when we have a target of 50 per cent by 2015 and 65 per cent by 2020. That shows that we need to improve drastically on the outcomes that we have achieved with the diversion to landfill, particularly in our metropolitan municipal solid waste that is delivered to our waste management facilities.

The report illustrates the need to improve the relationship, and it appears on the surface to be an improved focus on both the Waste Authority and the department to work together on the recommendations that have been put forth by the Auditor General, but this is what we need to focus on as an outcome delivered to ensure improved recycling

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 11 October 2018]

p6909a-6915a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Dean Nalder; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Simon Millman

of our waste in Western Australia. It would appear on the surface that there is still a lot of opportunity to improve and enhance the sorting out of our general waste to ensure better outcomes of recycling for Western Australia.

As was pointed out by the chairman, only five out of the 16 recommended actions have been completed to a satisfactory level. That has been the primary concern and it is great to hear that the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the Waste Authority focused on those other 11 outstanding recommendations from the Auditor General. Delivering on those recommendations is important, but they have to follow through with improved outcomes for diversion of landfill.

I will briefly look at some comments that were made by the Auditor General. The report states —

The lack of cooperation and uncertainty around roles meant that departmental staff assigned to the Waste Authority were 'subject to the competing priorities' of the respective agencies. In this environment, the Waste Authority was 'unable to require the assigned staff [to] give priority to projects it regards of most importance.'

As part of the commitments that have been given by the agencies in discussions with the committee, it would appear that they are now focusing on that to ensure that they deliver on the 11 outstanding items. Finding 3 of our report notes —

There now appears to be an improved working relationship between the current Waste Authority Board and the Director General of the new Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

As I said, though, the proof will be in the pudding.

Looking at other activities that have been undertaken, it is pretty clear from this report that we have been quite comprehensive in the expectations that we have set for the department. I really appreciate the work of this committee and I look forward to following up in the future to ensure that the department has delivered on the expectations that I believe exist on both sides of this house. Again, I thank the members of the committee for their diligence in this report. I thank the principal research officer, Mr Tim Hughes, and the research officer, Mr Michael Burton, for their work in supporting our committee. To be honest, without their help and assistance we would not have been able to achieve the outcomes that we have.

MRS L.M. O'MALLEY (Bicton) [10.32 am]: I rise to add my contribution in speaking to the sixth report of the Public Accounts Committee, "No (more) time to waste; The ongoing implementation of Western Australia's Waste Strategy". I would like to begin by thanking the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, the member for Armadale, for his ongoing guidance and leadership, and my fellow committee members for their contribution to this report. I join the chairman in expressing my thanks to the secretariat, the principal research officer, Mr Tim Hughes, and the research officer, Mr Michael Burton, for their invaluable work. I also sincerely thank the agency representatives who met with us during the preparation of this report for their openness and willingness to engage so fully.

In part, the job of the Public Accounts Committee is to inquire into and report to the Assembly on any proposal, matter or thing it considers necessary, connected with the receipt and expenditure of public moneys; and to consider whether the objectives of public expenditure are being achieved, or may be achieved more economically. It can be said that identifying where waste exists and recommending ways to reduce waste is fundamental in what we do as a committee. In examining cost versus effectiveness we can effect important changes in waste reduction. The waste that we examine as a committee is fiscal in nature and in this report, "No (more) time to waste" our aim is unchanged, as we examine the ongoing implementation of Western Australia's waste strategy as a follow-up of agency responses to the Auditor General's Report twenty-third report of 2016, "Western Australian Waste Strategy: Rethinking Waste". In this report there is a natural connection between purpose and point of interest. This point of interest being the waste we create by our very existence as we go about the activities of life and the strategies applied to managing this waste in the local context by the responsible agencies. Waste management may not be at the top of everyone's priority list and we can choose not to engage in conversation about it, but we cannot choose not to be impacted by it. Waste and the implications of waste management impact on us where we live, work and recreate, and we must do a better job. There really is no more time to waste.

The focus of this report is agency effectiveness, but this can only be made stronger when partnered with personal responsibility. With that in mind I would like to set the scene with a quote by *Zero Waste Home* author Bea Johnson. She states —

Refuse what you do not need; reduce what you do need; reuse what you consume; recycle what you cannot refuse, reduce, or reuse; and rot (compost) the rest.

This report is the result of the committee's follow-up of the commitments previously made by the two responsible agencies—that is, the Waste Authority and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Commitments were made at the introduction of the waste strategy back in 2012 and restated in the 2016 Auditor General's report. Improvements have been made, but these have been slow and although the management of waste has gotten better,

this report finds that there has been a failure up to this point to address recommendations in a timely manner, with, as stated previously by the other members, only five of the 16 actions recommended by the Auditor General being completed to a satisfactory level. An inability to complete a greater number of recommended actions appears to have been influenced by the absence of an agreed governance structure between the two responsible agencies. This historic lack of clarity of identity, purpose, role or responsibility appears to have greatly contributed to the less than ideal commencement of the waste strategy. The committee has been advised of efforts being made to formalise the relationship between the Waste Authority and DWER with the revision of the service level agreement leading to the signing of a temporary SLA, the agencies have expressed confidence that these issues will be resolved by the end of 2018. It is encouraging that on becoming the new Minister for Environment, Hon Stephen Dawson, MLC, issued a letter of expectation to the Waste Authority outlining his expectation of greater collaboration between the authority and the department, as well as the two agencies entering into a service level agreement.

Central to the waste strategy is the reduction of waste generation running alongside increasing levels of landfill diversion through improved resource recovery and recycling processes. Great landfill diversion initiatives are currently being trialled in partnership with some metropolitan local government authorities, such as the “Food Organics Garden Organics”—or FOGO—3-bin system, which recently resulted in one local government succeeding in a 65 per cent landfill diversion rate. With the current diversion rate for Perth being around 40 per cent, the results of the FOGO trial represent a significant achievement and are an important example of what can be accomplished. It is important to note that to get a true picture of landfill diversion rates we must have reliable and consistent data. I would like to end by highlighting one particularly important finding and recommendation in this area which can be found on page 26 of the report. It states —

Finding 15

The Waste Authority and the department have changed the methodology around how two landfill diversion targets are calculated and reported without clearly explaining the rationale behind these changes, or resetting the respective targets. This serves to undermine confidence in the quality of reporting on progress against Waste Strategy targets.

Recommendation 6

The Waste Authority, in its next Annual Report, clearly explain any changes it has made around how it defines its four landfill diversion categories and the impact these changes have had on the targets and rates for each category.

This report concludes that improvements are apparent but that there is still much to be done. I am hopeful that the changes and improvements outlined by the Waste Authority and DWER, along with the findings and recommendations in this report, may serve as a turning point for the Waste Strategy. I commend this report to the house.

MR V.A. CATANIA (North West Central) [10.39 am]: In speaking to the sixth report of the Public Accounts Committee, I would first like to acknowledge and congratulate my colleagues on the committee—the chair, Tony Buti, the member for Armadale; the deputy chair, Dean Nalder, the member for Bateman; Lisa O'Malley, the member for Bicton; and Simon Millman, the member for Mount Lawley—for their fantastic contribution to this report. As the chair said, the Public Accounts Committee has the power to examine the financial affairs and accounts of government agencies in this state, including statutory bodies and government-trading enterprises, and to inquire into and report on any question which it deems necessary to investigate or which is referred to it by a minister or the Auditor General. The Public Accounts Committee and the Attorney General take a collaborative approach in their task of ensuring that government agencies fulfil their obligations in implementing the recommendations in the Auditor General reports. That is critical to holding our agencies to account and ensuring they fulfil their roles and responsibilities on behalf of the public of Western Australia.

The purpose of this report, which is titled “No (More) Time to Waste”, is to examine the implementation of Western Australia’s waste strategy. The report does not seek to evaluate that strategy, but rather looks at how agencies are working together to deliver what the waste strategy sets out to achieve. The report finds that, unfortunately, agencies have been slow in completing the 16 separate actions recommended by the Auditor General. The Department of Environment Regulation has completed just five of those 16 recommendations. Therefore, the role of the Public Account Committee has been to keep an eye on that agency to ensure that the implementation of those five recommendations is underway and it is delivering the objective of the waste management strategy, which was started under the previous government by the previous Minister for Environment, Hon Bill Marmion.

Finding 3 of the report, which was highlighted by the member for Bateman, states —

There now appears to be an improved working relationship between the current Waste Authority Board and the Director General of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. Since April 17, both

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY — Thursday, 11 October 2018]

p6909a-6915a

Dr Tony Buti; Mr Dean Nalder; Mrs Lisa O'Malley; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Simon Millman

entities have demonstrated a renewed commitment to establishing an agreed governance structure and removing any remaining ambiguities about their roles under the *Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Act 2017*. These are positive developments.

It is still early days. As the member for Bateman said, only time will tell—as the report says, there is no more time to waste—how these agencies are working together efficiently and collaboratively to deliver on the waste management strategy.

The other members of the committee have highlighted the report and what the Public Accounts Committee has been able to deliver. As I said, this is the first of many Public Accounts Committee reports that will be tabled in Parliament as we examine the Auditor General reports to ensure that government agencies are doing what they should be doing on behalf of the public of Western Australia.

As the member for Bateman said, the committee cannot do its work without our committee secretariat. I thank our principal research officer, Mr Timothy Hughes, and research officer, Mr Michael Burton. They do an amazing job behind the scenes to ensure that the committee is able to table reports such as this in Parliament—as I said, there will be many more to come—in which the committee will be holding to account the agencies of the Western Australian government to ensure they are doing their job and representing the people of Western Australia and the wishes of the government.

MR S.A. MILLMAN (Mount Lawley) [10.44 am]: Like my colleagues on the Public Accounts Committee, I stand this morning to contribute to the tabling of the committee's sixth and most recent report, "No (More) Time to Waste". I thank my fellow members for their contributions this morning. I would like to pick up where the member for North West Central finished off, and that is with the role of the Public Accounts Committee. Members may or may not be aware that the Public Accounts Committee is an essential attribute of the Westminster system of Parliament. The Public Accounts Committee was one of the first committees established in the Westminster system in the nineteenth century in the House of Commons. The committee has an important function to fulfil. The executive summary of the report summarises that function with the following quote from the Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation —

PACs can close the accountability loop by holding follow-up hearings and by monitoring the implementation of [Auditor General's report] recommendations.

The executive summary goes on to state —

For more than two decades, the Public Accounts Committee and the Auditor General have demonstrated a shared commitment towards improving the quality of public administration in WA ...

The Office of the Auditor General conducts performance audits —

This had been referred to by other members —

which provide key insights into how well public sector agencies implement and oversee various government programs and policies. Performance audit reports often include recommendations aimed at improving agency operations and remedying any deficient practices identified during the audit.

That outlines the role of the Auditor General. The report goes on to state that the role of the Public Accounts Committee is as follows —

The Public Accounts Committee enhances the impact of this work by following up with audited agencies—usually after a minimum of twelve months—to find out what actions they have taken in response to the audit recommendations. Depending on the adequacy of these responses, the committee can issue a report with its own recommendations requesting further action around issues raised in the audit or the follow-up.

That is precisely what this report does. I now want to quote from the chair of the committee's excellent foreword. He states —

In conducting follow-ups of performance audit reports, our approach is based on a triage methodology that assigns a follow-up rating based on five criteria.

The report goes on to state that those five criteria are program or policy cost; public interest; criticality of audit findings; level of urgency; and level of commitment and detail provided by the audited agency in its initial response. The committee believed that having applied those five criteria, it was necessary to do a follow-up of the implementation of Western Australia's waste strategy. The member for Bicton said that waste management may not be at the top of everyone's list. That is probably right. However, what should be at, or near, the top of everyone's list is good governance. That is exactly what the Public Accounts Committee has directed its attention to in this report. We cannot be ambivalent about this issue when there are so many people in our community who are diligent about reducing their waste. I use as an example the City of Stirling, which covers most of my electorate

of Mount Lawley. The City of Stirling has implemented an excellent three-bin waste management system, with a yellow bin for recycling, a green bin for garden waste from the many beautiful gardens in Mt Lawley, Coolbinia and Menora, and a red bin for the household waste that goes into landfill. That system is used diligently by many people in my electorate. When that is combined with the way in which the people in our neighbourhood have taken to the single-use plastic bag ban, we can see automatically that waste minimisation, and reduction and re-use, is prevalent and has been adopted and embraced by people in our community. I suspect that part of the reason for that is the excellent efforts being undertaken by the educational institutions in the electorate of Mount Lawley. I commend the excellent work of particularly the five public primary schools in my electorate—West Morley, Yokine, Mount Lawley, Coolbinia and Sutherland Dianella.

As I have gone to these schools and as I have attended P&C meetings at these schools, I have noticed how much of a commitment to our environment there is in the education being delivered. Particularly, I want to commend some of the school principals: Peter Harty at West Morley Primary School, Jenny Hirsch at Yokine Primary School, Cavelle Monck at Mount Lawley Primary School, Paul Wescott at Coolbinia Primary School and Jenn Allsopp at Sutherland Dianella Primary School—all of whom are excellent educators and educational leaders who are focused on shaping the minds of future generations, so that we can all live in harmony with our environment and do our bit to reduce and minimise waste.

I will just touch on a couple of things. I commend Peter Harty, who is the principal at West Morley Primary School, for being an assiduous supporter of the River Rangers program. Members may be aware of the River Rangers program that encourages students to get out into the natural environment to see how beautiful it is around the Swan and Canning Rivers, to relish and enjoy that and to reflect on how important it is to preserve and protect our natural environment. I also commend Mount Lawley Primary School, which, under the watch of the principal, Ms Cavelle Monck, has implemented a program for young students to raise awareness of the importance of reducing, reusing and recycling. This year the school has implemented a separate bin system. I also commend Coolbinia Primary School, which next week will have an incursion from Captain Cleanup. Hopefully members in the chamber will be aware of Captain Cleanup. For those members who are not aware of Captain Cleanup, I will introduce him by reading from the webpage titled “Meet the Captain” —

The Captain Cleanup Story

In the late 1970s the Keep Australia Beautiful Council of Western Australia created an Australian environmental superhero, Captain Cleanup, to help educate young Western Australians about keeping Australia beautiful. The Captain encouraged everyone in schools and at festivals to clean up their own mess, bin their rubbish and take care of the environment.

Over the years the Captain has changed his look but not his message.

In 2003 Quintin George took over the Captain Cleanup program.

Today Captain Cleanup appears and performs sustainability shows at schools, universities and festivals to more than 15,000 Western Australians a year.

His trusty, well-worn and one in a million 1976 HX Holden Clean Machine is recognised by generations of Western Australians.

Mr D.R. Michael: Member, you'd be pleased to know that I still have my three Captain Cleanup awards from 1997.

Mr S.A. MILLMAN: As a fellow resident of the City of Stirling, we enjoy our three-bin system and we know how useful it is for us.

Let me regale members with Captain Cleanup's mission —

“Together we will create a more sustainable, healthier and happier environment to live in and enjoy.”

Every day people send billions of tonnes of waste, toxic gases and pollution into the environment and atmosphere.

This pollution is accelerating the natural global warming process. Our world climate has changed and is more severe as a result.

Captain Cleanup needs your help to turn the tide of pollution and keep the environment healthy.

Activities such as recycling, composting, growing veggie gardens, using solar or wind energy or even having a few chickens in the backyard can all help the environment.

Join Captain Cleanup and do your bit!

“Be part of the solution and not the problem.”

Captain Cleanup

Members can see just how important this issue is. The Public Accounts Committee is taking this message and making sure that the necessary governance structures are in place in Western Australia to ensure that the efforts of residents, citizens, students and schoolchildren to make sure that our waste is minimised—and, whenever it can be, recycled—are worthwhile, vindicated and supported.

I thank my fellow committee members. I thank the chair of the committee, the member for Armadale, who is erudite and assiduous, and makes sure that the committee stays on point and delivers reports such as this. I thank the members for Bateman and North West Central. I pay particular thanks to the member for Bicton. Her interest in and commitment to this particular area of public policy was unparalleled. I will finish by sharing the sentiment expressed by my fellow committee members in expressing our gratitude to the committee secretariat, principal research officer Tim Hughes and research officer Mike Burton. I recommend this report to members and to the public generally. Thank you.