

Division 46: Heritage Council of Western Australia, \$1 557 000 —

Mrs L.A. Munday, Chair.

Dr A.D. Buti, Minister for Finance representing the Minister for Heritage.

Mr A. Kannis, Director General.

Mr B. Harvey, Executive Director, Heritage Services.

Mr S. McLeod, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr G. Hamley, Chief of Staff, Minister for Heritage.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* 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 these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined 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 close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

I give the call to the member for Vasse.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to page 775 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, and the explanation of significant movements. Paragraph 1 states there is an expected reduction in grant funds available due to an expected rise in operational costs. How does the Heritage Council work with grant recipients to meet project expectations, noting that there are significant construction pressures at the moment and the cost of supplies is increasing?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Which page is the member looking at?

Ms L. METTAM: It is a comment under the heading “Explanation of Significant Movements”.

The CHAIR: What page are we on, member for Vasse?

Ms L. METTAM: It is page 775.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Unless I have got a different page—is the member talking about significant issues impacting the agency?

Ms L. METTAM: It is the explanation of significant movements.

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the member referring to the heritage grants program?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: The paragraph states that the council “provides an annual grants program for conservation ... The grants assist in protecting the social, environmental and economic value”. Is that what the member is talking about?

Ms L. METTAM: Yes.

Dr A.D. BUTI: So what is the member’s question?

Ms L. METTAM: Given that we are in a very heated construction market at the moment, how does the Heritage Council work with grant recipients to meet project expectations, noting the pressures on delivering projects at this point and the rising cost of construction?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Thank you, member. I will ask Mr Harvey to answer that.

Mr B. Harvey: Thank you, minister. The department, on behalf of the Heritage Council, works closely with applicants prior to them submitting applications and one of the things that we discuss with them is the potential cost of the work they want to do. Applicants are obviously required to also make a funding commitment to the project, so that is also factored in there. This has been raised as a particular issue in the most recent grants program, which the Minister for Heritage, Minister Templeman, recently announced the awards for, and it is something that the department plans to take back to the Heritage Council for its consideration on how that can be considered in the future.

Ms L. METTAM: Further to that, what impact has that had on the grants that have been appropriated or delivered? Have we seen a reduction in the number of grants or has there been a delay?

Dr A.D. BUTI: Is the member asking whether there has there been a reduction in the granting of grants or the applications for grants?

Ms L. METTAM: In terms of the granting of the grants.

Mr B. Harvey: No, there has not been a reduction, member. Again, the program was oversubscribed. A measure that the Heritage Council introduced this year to try to spread the available grants was to reduce the cap from \$100 000 to \$40 000 to ensure it went further, and that was successful in terms of a greater number of grant recipients receiving the funding that they were requesting. Certainly, there has been no shortage of applications to the fund, in excess of the funding available.

The appropriation was recommended.

[3.30 pm]