

Division 4: Public Sector Commission, \$27 478 000 —

Mr I.C. Blayney, Chairman.

Mr C.J. Barnett, Premier.

Mr M.C. Wauchope, Public Sector Commissioner.

Mr A. Dores, Director Workforce Performance.

Mr A.B. Barrett, Director, Transition.

Mrs A.J. Alderson, Chief Finance Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The Premier may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the Premier to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the Premier's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 19 June 2015. I caution members that if the Premier asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office.

[Witnesses introduced.]

[4.30 pm]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for West Swan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I direct the Premier to page 81 of budget paper No 2, which refers to assistance and support to public sector bodies and employees in relation to administration, management, integrity and governance matters. My question relates to the investigation undertaken by the Public Sector Commission into the Healthway issue. Since that time some other agencies have come into the spotlight regarding their use of hospitality and sponsorship arrangements. At the time, I think the Premier said he asked the Public Sector Commissioner to look at that issue. What is the update on the investigation into the other agencies, such as Tourism and Synergy?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Following the Public Sector Commission investigation into Healthway, which was initiated in a sense by the Auditor General, I was highly concerned by the results of that report. I considered that what had happened in Healthway was unsatisfactory and unacceptable. As a result of that, the chair and the board of Healthway eventually all resigned. New legislation has been introduced to Parliament to ensure that the operations of Healthway are more in line with the Lotteries Commission, which I think is an appropriate model. After all, it is expending taxpayers' funds, and the minister—in this case, the Minister for Health—needs to be ultimately responsible and accountable. Therefore, he must have some say in the way in which that body operates, just as I have a say in the way in which the Lotteries Commission operates. As a result of that, I requested the Public Sector Commissioner to look across other agencies, particularly with respect to the receipt of gifts, usually in the form of tickets. Some of that has also raised concerns and a lot of corrective measures have been put in place, either by the heads of those agencies or their ministers. The Public Sector Commission is undertaking its work and I will ask the commissioner to comment on progress.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: The Public Sector Commission has started a thematic review of the acquisition and provision of ticket and box access for sporting and cultural events by public sector agencies, pursuant to the power of review under section 24(1)(b) of the Public Sector Management Act. The review will extend to all public sector agencies that responded to the parliamentary questions. As government trading enterprises are outside the power of review in section 24(1)(b), I will be seeking the cooperation of the ministers responsible for those agencies to also participate in the review. The scope of the review is being finalised and we anticipate that it will take some months before it is completed. It will be a fairly comprehensive review.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is that review likely to become public by the end of this calendar year?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I would imagine so, but I will get the Public Sector Commissioner to comment on the timing.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: I would hope the review would be completed by the end of this calendar year. As to the question of when it will be made public, that is another decision to be made.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 78 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. Does the Public Sector Commission have any specific strategies for school-based traineeships?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Public Sector Commission undertakes quite a range of training and recruitment operations within the public sector. There is a school-based traineeship program and I understand there are a number of other programs. I will ask the commissioner to comment on the school-based traineeship program and perhaps he can mention the other programs the commission operates.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: The school-based traineeship program is managed by the Public Sector Commission. It is a program for government school students who are interested in undertaking employment-based training in WA public sector agencies while completing years 11 and 12. The traineeships are conducted over 18 months and trainees spend two days a week working in a public sector agency and the remaining three days a week at school. It usually starts in February every year. At the completion of year 12, the trainees who have successfully completed the specified competencies will receive a certificate II in government, which is a nationally recognised qualification. The program has been highly successful. We have run something like 82 school-based traineeships in the past five years and the Public Sector Commission has taken on a number of those permanently as mainstream employees. Other public sector traineeship programs are youth employment strategies and a transition-to-employment program, which is an initiative to improve youth diversity in the public sector.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 80 of budget paper No 2. I note that all of these effectiveness indicators are now lower than they were in 2013–14 and they are budgeted to continue to be lower. Why is there such a decline in performance of the Public Sector Commission?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I must say that I do not see a decline in the performance of the Public Sector Commission but, as in the previous category we looked at, these are subjective assessments. I will again get the Public Sector Commissioner to comment.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: It is our realistic expectation of what we are likely to achieve by way of assessment by our clients. We are taking on a range of new functions and that will complicate our business over the next few years.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: I refer to the significant issues impacting the agency on page 78. Can the Premier advise the readiness of the Public Sector Commission to accept the transfer of the minor misconduct function from the Corruption and Crime Commission to the PSC on 1 July 2015?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes. As the member says, the transfer of that function will occur on 1 July. That is the transfer of not only some people, but also a budget reallocation from the CCC to the Public Sector Commission. This was a policy decision of government and, I think, a good policy decision. Issues of minor misconduct with the public sector really need to be dealt with within the public sector. If they are matters the police should be involved in, it goes to that level. If they are seen to be more serious, they can go to the CCC. But I think the mere fact of a public servant who may have committed minor misconduct to be basically recorded as having appeared before the CCC could destroy someone's career. That is an excessive penalty; even just the appearance is excessive. I think the transfer is appropriate. I will ask the commissioner if he wants to add anything to that. I think all is in readiness for the transfer of a function that really should lie with the Public Sector Commissioner.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: We have established a small transition team to work with the CCC for the transfer. I have taken my two deputies offline to develop new processes and systems for the misconduct notification and assessment process and also to develop a suite of new products to deliver to a range of new clients because, amongst other things, the transfer brings into my purview the behaviour of local government employees, the employees of public universities and also the government trading enterprises. We are in the process of developing joint notification guidelines with the CCC. We have had a number of consultation sessions with our new client group, including the four vice-chancellors of the public universities, a number of GTEs, Local Government Managers Australia and a number of local authorities, both metropolitan and regional. More importantly, since commissioner McKechnie has been appointed I have had a number of discussions with him about how we might move forward. We have agreed to conduct a joint forum in early July to go to the new clients.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the first dot point on page 79. My first question is about the workforce renewal program, which, as I understand it, the Public Sector Commissioner is largely administering. What are the total cuts to the global budget of the public sector as a consequence of the workforce renewal program? What is the Premier's expectation of how that will work? Will it mean a reduction in the number of older employees and an increase in the number of younger employees, as Mr Conran said earlier? How will it be implemented across the public sector?

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Libby Mettam

[4.40 pm]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is a public sector-wide policy. As older employees leave or retire, for whatever reason, they will be replaced with new entrants on lower salaries, and therefore presumably younger. I think that will have a very positive effect across the public sector. If we take just one portfolio area, education, many teachers have been great educators and worked for many years in the classroom. It can be a demanding role, and many get to the stage at which they think they would rather move on and do something else towards the end of their careers. That offers the opportunity for more new graduates to go into teaching. The same can be said widely across the public sector. There will be budget savings, but the turnover of staff will depend on the rate at which people leave. There are incentives in various agencies for redundancy and the like. Generally, the experience has been that when a redundancy program is offered, it is generally oversubscribed. People choose to take advantage of it because they want a change in life or a change in career. I will ask the commissioner to add any comments he wishes.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: Just to correct a misconception, I do not have overall responsibility for managing the public sector renewal policy, but obviously mine is one of the agencies that is subject to it. Many of the points the Premier has made are valid for the Public Sector Commission. As I indicated earlier, we are in the process of transitioning our organisation to take up the Corruption and Crime Commission functions, and as a consequence of that, we will have a look at our organisational design in any event. There are opportunities for agencies generally to do that, and to look at the number of levels of reporting they have in their organisation, for example. We get exceptional value out of our graduate programs. Most agencies have graduate programs of one kind or another, and we have had some first-class people coming through who can operate well above the level that would be expected.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I take the Premier back to the Hale House 500 Club function, now that we have the Public Sector Commissioner here. I refer to page 81 of the *Budget Statements*, which refers to assistance and support by the Public Sector Commissioner. I just want to know, from a Public Sector Commission point of view, exactly how using government offices for political fundraising purposes is seen, whether other government offices are used for fundraising events by political organisations, whether that would be appropriate under the public sector code of ethics, and whether any staff are permitted to act in that manner, using public sector buildings.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I again restate that it was not a fundraiser. It was not a Liberal Party event; it was a 500 Club event. Again, the full cost and the full staffing of that event was undertaken by the 500 Club. It was a one-off event, and I am sure there will be further one-off events with not-for-profit organisations and the like from time to time. There was no involvement of the Public Sector Commission in that. No staff were employed as part of that; they were all outside staff of the 500 Club or the caterers.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have a copy of the invitation here. The Premier said it was not a fundraiser, but the invitation shows the cost of \$100 per person. It was sent out by the 500 Club, and googling the 500 Club reveals that it is a fundraising body for conservative organisations, in particular the Liberal Party.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That does not make that event a fundraiser.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is the Premier's interpretation; it is not the truth.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I raise a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition said that that is not the truth; it is the truth, and if he can establish any evidence of funds going to the Liberal Party or members of Parliament, I demand that he present it. This is just a complete fiction.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: On the point of order, the Premier has made it clear that he has done no investigation; he has not asked anybody in the 500 Club or done any examination of the accounts of the 500 Club. He has no knowledge of the profitability of that event. He has made that clear in the previous division. He cannot now claim to have some detailed knowledge of the financial affairs of the organisation. If he does, he should table the information and prove that he is telling the truth.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member cannot provide any evidence, because there is none.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order, but I ask the Leader of the Opposition to finish his question.

Mr M. McGOWAN: As I understand, the Premier has said that this has not breached any rules or laws or anything of that nature. I wrote to the Public Sector Commissioner. Maybe the Premier can refer to the Public Sector Commissioner in relation to his answer here.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will decide that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Of course, the Premier will decide that.

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Tuesday, 9 June 2015]

p62b-69a

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Libby Mettam

I wrote to the Public Sector Commissioner. I asked about the use of government buildings and accommodation for political party fundraising.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The 500 Club is not a political party fundraiser.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier can say that, but it siphons money into the Liberal Party. In his reply, the commissioner wrote —

In general terms, this would exclude the use of public resources for private business purposes or for party political purposes. This code however, only applies to public sector bodies and employees, including chief executive officers, chief employees, ministerial staff and boards established under their own legislation. It has no application to Ministers or Members of Parliament.

Earlier today, the Premier indicated that at least one member of his staff had been involved in coordinating this event.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not say that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier said it was John Hammond.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not say that he coordinated the event.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It does not happen organically. The 500 Club does not just roll up at the Premier's office and organise a function without anyone in his office knowing about it. That is not the way it happens. The Premier indicated that John Hammond was coordinating.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not say that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He had a role in organising the event.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: He did not coordinate the event.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is what the Premier said. My reading of the Public Sector Commissioner's letter here would be that John Hammond, and therefore the Premier's office, has breached the code of conduct by allowing the Premier's office to be used in that manner. I am asking whether that is a correct interpretation.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, because it was my decision.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Maybe the Premier should ask the Public Sector Commissioner to comment.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not allowing the Public Sector Commissioner to comment on this, because I am not allowing his office to be drawn into the Leader of the Opposition's tacky political attack. The event was authorised by me as Premier, and related to my office as Premier and Cabinet. That was the event. It was agreed to, and it was on the basis that no profit was to be made from it. It did not involve the Public Sector Commissioner. If the Leader of the Opposition wants to pursue this further, he should do so in the appropriate forum, which is the Parliament of Western Australia.

Mr M. McGOWAN: We are in the Parliament! This is parliamentary estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: Let the Premier finish, please.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Is the Premier saying that as an individual person or in his role as the Premier of the state of Western Australia?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is the office of the Premier. I happen to be the Premier, and just as the member for Rockingham is the Leader of the Opposition and has his office, and just as ministers have their offices, that is part of executive government. It is not the public service.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Does the Premier understand that when he says that it is his office, he actually means that it is the office of the Premier and that the Premier is the Premier for everybody in Western Australia, not just for people who voted for the Liberal Party?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Premier's office is not generally a public building, although many people come through from all sorts of parties. I remember during last year's estimates offering the Labor Party a chance to see the office and even to host some of its supporters there. As long as it is on a not-for-profit basis, it is welcome to do so. I will approve it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Premier, I will just ask the exact same question again, and I wonder whether I am able to get an answer from the Premier, if he understands —

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Do not patronise him.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: He chooses not to answer my questions, and it could only be for one of two reasons. Either he deliberately does not want to answer the question or he is incapable of answering the question.

[4.50 pm]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Cannington's questions are so confusing, so voluminous and so boring, but ask it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Does the Premier understand that he is not just Premier for Liberal voters in Western Australia but for all people in this state?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What dot point is that in the budget?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am asking the Premier a follow-up question. The Premier did not object to the question that was asked. This is the Premier's problem: he just does not get it. He does not understand why he is being paid all this money. Is the Premier a Premier for everybody in this state or is he Premier only for people who vote Liberal?

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Point of order.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Which dot point is the member for Cannington referring to?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am referring to the dot point at the top of page 79 of the *Budget Statements*.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Foolish—a completely foolish comment!

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Chairman, can we bring the questions back to the budget papers?

The CHAIRMAN: No, I will accept the question from the member for Cannington, but I want it put precisely so that we can get a straight answer.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In respect of the question the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier that related to the first dot point on page 79, the Premier said it is his office. I am asking the Premier to clarify. The Premier has agreed with me already that it is not his office in a personal sense, but rather it is his office in respect of his capacity as the Premier of this state. I am asking the Premier now, for the third time, a very simple question: does the Premier understand that he is Premier for everybody in Western Australia, not just members of the 500 Club who donate to the Liberal Party to get him elected to Parliament?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is only one Premier of Western Australia; it happens to be me. It has been for seven years and it may be for another few years. I find the member for Cannington's question naive, childish and of no relevance to the estimates process.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the second dot point on page 79 of budget paper No 2. Can the Premier please advise the work the Public Sector Commission is doing in the area of Aboriginal employment?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is a target for Aboriginal employment, and Western Australia has met what was a sort of Council of Australian Governments set of targets. I think there has been a little slippage, but I will ask the Public Sector Commissioner to explain the numbers on that. But it is certainly important for Western Australia that we do make that extra effort to employ Aboriginal people right across all sectors, both government and private. I think one of the observations that the commissioner might make is that often when people are brought in and given training in the public sector, they may well move out into the private sector. That is not a bad thing at all; it is quite a good thing. I will hand over to the commissioner.

Mr M.C. Wauchop: In 2008, COAG set a national target for Aboriginal public sector employment by 2015 of 2.6 per cent. Western Australia went for a stretch target of 3.2 per cent, which we did achieve at one point during that period but it has slipped back a little. As the Premier indicated, what we have found is that we have trained people who were sought after by the resources sector at one stage, and I guess with the changing economic circumstances, we may well actually be more attractive to some of those people coming back into the sector. But the employment strategy we had was a five-year strategy involving something like \$8.5 million. It had five themes—to create culturally inclusive workplaces, to attract Aboriginal people, to build capability and careers, to foster Aboriginal leaders, and to be accountable. We have had a very successful Aboriginal traineeship program that has, I think, put through something like 170-odd young Aboriginals through the training program. That leads to a certificate II or III in government, so they end up with a good qualification. We have also awarded four scholarships for a new PSC mainstream leadership program, along with some other development programs.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Premier, I understood that the commissioner said that this program was part of the government's agenda to achieve the targets set in COAG. I am just wondering whether the Premier could specify what those Aboriginal employment targets are?

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Libby Mettam

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The commissioner may be able to help there.

Mr M.C. Wauchope: I did actually mention those. The target nationally was 2.6 per cent; WA went for a stretch target of 3.2 per cent, which we achieved at one stage during the five-year period. We slipped back a little as a consequence of slippage—people from the public sector out into the private sector—but, as the Premier indicated, we have made people job-ready, and I would think that with the changing economic circumstances, some of those people may well come back into the sector.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier has a target for Aboriginal employment. I wonder why he does not want to have a target for female membership of government boards?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Within the public sector, the majority of the workforce—I think 60 per cent or more—is women, and I think the number of women who have risen to chief executive officer or director general level has been significant, particularly under this government; indeed, a number of the major agencies are now headed by women. I think that is commendable. It is not in the DNA of the Liberal Party to set targets on that; we appoint people according to merit, and that, I think, is appropriate. I have been very pleased to see the way in which women have responded. I do agree: I would like to see more women on boards, and this government takes a conscious effort to do so, but we do not do it on the base of arithmetic targets. That is not the Liberal way.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I just wonder whether the Premier is saying that Aboriginal people are being employed because they are being employed as to a target and not being employed on merit. Is that what the Premier is saying?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I am not. The member for Cannington's style of questioning really belittles this Parliament. If the member cannot ask a sensible question —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is the Premier's stupid answers that belittle the Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington, you had a regular question to ask; you are on the list.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Leader of the Opposition wanted to do a follow-up question.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I do; on the government boards. My question is to the Premier and relates to the dot point on page 78 of the *Budget Statements* about government boards and committees. Maybe I could ask for supplementary information here, but how many government boards or committees are there? As I understand it, there are 322. Can the Premier verify that? How many people are sitting on those government boards and committees, and does the government keep a register of those people? Does the government keep a register of who is being paid and what they are being paid?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: All that is, essentially, public information. I think there are a number of committees. We have defined boards as a board on which there is at least one external person and that person is paid. That is because a lot of bodies are really internal to different agencies or for some other reason. We continue to work to reduce the number of boards. A significant number of them have been established by legislation and, therefore, they cannot be simply removed by an executive. We have a Repeal Day and members will see more government boards disappear each year during that process. An example that always comes to my mind is that we have a cabinet process appointing members of country cemetery boards. I do not think that belongs within the state government province at all, but again there is, I think, a legislative responsibility in that area. We will continue to do that, and I require ministers to really make the case that a particular board has a substantive and significant role. I do not think for government agencies—directors general or whoever—to consult with industry necessarily requires a board structure. There will always be a number—obviously government trading enterprises and other areas; there is a number that are required in health, education said so on—but I will continue to strive to reduce the number of boards. I am not critical of the people who serve on those boards, but there is a cost, not only in fees to the agencies in servicing those boards with staff and the like. I do not believe, in a general sense, that that is the most effective way to govern in a modern society.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Back to the question I asked. As I understand it, there are over 300 government boards and committees. Can we have a list of all the government boards and committees, the people who sit on them and the pay the people on those boards and committees receive? That should be public information.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Maylands has actually asked that question, and I think either it has been answered or will be. There was also a detailed report presented, I think, a year or so ago on the boards and their composition and the like. I am happy to answer a question on a specific board but I am not willing to provide information on 332 boards, so if the Leader of the Opposition can hone his question down to which board or boards he is interested in, I will certainly supply that information.

[5.00 pm]

Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Libby Mettam

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier's answer is contradictory. On one hand, he said that the member for Maylands asked a question and that he is prepared to provide the answer —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition should look at that, if he is unaware of it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I understand that she has not asked a question about all that information. I am asking for that information; the Premier has the Public Sector Commissioner sitting next to him. The Premier claims to be open and accountable. I am asking for information about what boards are out there, who is on them and who is paid. I do not think that is an unreasonable question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have just said I am not going to supply that information for 332 boards.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier is not going to supply information to the Parliament of Western Australia about all the boards across the state and who sits on them.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I am not. I am not going to require public servants to plough through every board.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is an easy piece of information for the Public Sector Commissioner to acquire and release, and it should be released.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Good on the Leader of the Opposition. Why does he not ask me a question on notice and I will answer it for specific boards? I am not going to dedicate a whole unit to spend days on 332 boards, so —

Mr M. McGOWAN: Why does the Premier not ask the Public Sector Commissioner whether it is easily obtainable information? He is sitting next to the Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The question is to me and I have answered it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, the Premier has not.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am asking. We have the head of the Public Sector Commission sitting next to the Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am the person who is accountable in estimates.

Mr M. McGOWAN: He would have that information at his fingertips and I am asking, for the sake of public benefit, that that information be released.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Has the Leader of the Opposition read the report on the boards?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Has the Leader of the Opposition read it? I do not think he has, has he?

Mr M. McGOWAN: What is it called? What is its name?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was released about 18 months ago. The Leader of the Opposition has not read it; he should go and read it first.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It said that 700 boards exist but are not counted.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: He should go and read it. I have read it; he should read it. Ask questions on specific boards, and I will answer them.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It said the 700 boards still exist but they simply are not counted anymore. That is what that report said.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I just said that we defined what a board is.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier said that they would be abolished, but the Minister for Health said that they would not be. That is what that report said.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I just said we defined what a board was, which had not been defined.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Minister for Health is ignoring the Premier's directive because he will not abolish those boards.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Which boards is the member talking about now?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The whole list under the Department of Health.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Some of them are required under clinical practice requirements.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Yes, and the Premier said in this chamber that they would be abolished, but then the Minister for Health told us that they would not be. That is exactly what happened, I know. Does the Premier want me to give him the page reference?

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Tuesday, 9 June 2015]

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Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Sean L'Estrange; Mr Bill Johnston; Mr Matt Taylor; Mr Mark McGowan; Ms Libby Mettam

Mr C.J. BARNETT: When we came to power there was a board for every fruit and vegetable in the state, and every fish had a board.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Most of them still exist; it is just that the government no longer includes them in its count.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: All right. If the member has a question on specific boards, I will be delighted to answer it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: All of those committees still exist—every single one of them.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a totally reasonable question to ask.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Ask it on notice and I will answer it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier will not even answer it. He is making this Parliament into a joke.

The appropriation was recommended.