

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

Division 3: Premier and Cabinet (except Native Title Policy), \$183 752 000 —

Mr I. Blayney, Chairman.

Mr C.J. Barnett, Premier.

Mr P.F. Conran, Director General.

Mr J. Catlin, Acting Deputy Director General, Community and Human Services.

Mr D.R.M. Smith, Deputy Director General, Economic and Deregulation.

Ms K.H. Andrews, Acting Assistant Director General, State Administration and Corporate.

Ms J. McGrath, Executive Director, Office of Science.

Mrs A. Boland, Acting Director, State Administration.

Mr R. Kennedy, Acting Executive Director, Strategic Projects.

Mr T.M. Leeming, Executive Director, Community and Human Services.

Mr B. Allen, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Premier.

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 the 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.]

The CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition has a question.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Welcome to everyone. My question for the Premier is based upon the first dot point on page 69 of the *Budget Statements* related to administrative support to the Premier. The Premier's department and office provides support to him in terms of functions and events that he is involved in. I want to ask a series of questions about the 500 Club fundraiser that was held at the Premier's office in December last year. How was contact made between the Premier's office and the 500 Club in relation to the coordination of that function? Who was the contact at the Premier's office in relation to organising the event? Who organised security, cleaners and administration? Who was the liaison point between the 500 Club and the Premier's office?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Which date is the Leader of the Opposition talking about?

Mr M. McGOWAN: In December of last year, the Premier held a 500 Club function.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That was an end-of-year function for the 500 Club; it has been hosted previously in the Parliament. Last year it was hosted in the office of the Premier and cabinet, and all expenses were met by the 500 Club. It was not a fundraiser at all. Indeed, I do not know that there was much in the way of surplus funds, but the agreement was that that would be forwarded to a charity if, by chance, there was a surplus. The costs were met by the 500 Club. Indeed, I do not think it should be overused, but I think both the Parliament and indeed the office of the Premier and cabinet can be used on occasion for outside events.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I return to the question I asked. It was \$100 a head that was charged—which is not the question; we know that—but my questions are: Who made the contact between the Premier's office and the 500 Club in relation to coordinating the event? Who was responsible for coordinating the event? Which staff members were responsible, both personal staff and departmental staff, for organising this event that used the Premier's office?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The 500 Club took full responsibility for the event. Obviously, it had to be consistent with security and other issues, being that it was the office of the Premier. I take responsibility for the decision to allow

Extract from Hansard

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

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the 500 Club to use that. Who was involved in discussions? I would imagine probably Mr John Hammond. He usually liaises with outside groups; that is just what I would imagine would have happened. But there were very clear criteria attached to that, and that was that the 500 Club had to organise the event, the caterers, drinks, staff and whatever else, and had to also make sure that the place was cleaned at the end.

Mr M. McGOWAN: So, the Premier is saying it was probably John Hammond. Is the Premier able to clarify which staff members were involved; and, secondly, can the Premier clarify for the benefit of members what cost there was to taxpayers after the holding of this event?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There was no cost to taxpayers.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Can the Premier clarify which staff —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There was none.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier has said “probably John Hammond”. I am asking him: it was a fundraiser —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was not a fundraiser.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It was \$100 a head. Can the Premier tell us which staff members were involved in organising this particular event? I realise the Premier authorised it, but it does not just happen organically; people have to be involved in coordinating and organising, and I just want to know who was responsible for that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I again state that this was not a fundraiser, and the condition for any event held, whether it be in the Premier’s office or the Parliament, is that they cannot be fundraisers. I laid down those criteria two or three years ago. I do not know whether the Labor Party has ever taken advantage of that; that is up to the Leader of the Opposition or indeed any other party. It is a strict requirement that they are not fundraisers and cannot be used for that purpose.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I seek clarification and have a follow-up question to the opposition leader’s question. Was an invoice raised by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to the 500 Club for the use of the facility and any other costs; and, if so, on what date was that invoice dispatched and how much was it for?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, there were no charges because the 500 Club was responsible for the event in terms of catering and staff, and accepted responsibility for making sure the kitchens and everything were clean. Now look, the opposition can argue, I suppose, that some electricity went through some light bulbs, and that would be true, but the costs of the event were fully met by the 500 Club. My staff did not organise the event. They made clear the conditions of it, as to where guests could and could not go; they were responsible for all that. I think that is quite proper. The President of the United States uses the White House occasionally. We should not be so precious that public buildings cannot be used by members of the outside community—as long as they meet the full cost of that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I ask a further question in this regard. What other organisations have held functions at the Premier’s office? Have there been other organisations that have had access to the Premier’s office in this way, and if there have—also in relation to the 500 Club event—were staff on duty to ensure that people did not go into various aspects of the building they were not entitled to or should not have gone into?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: From memory, in terms of outside groups, there certainly have been a number of government events—the public sector management awards were held there. That is an important event and the member for Cannington should not scoff at it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is because it is not an outside organisation.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am just explaining the use of the building.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: But the Premier did not answer his question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If the member for Cannington is going to be so rude, we are going to have a long afternoon, are we not?

In terms of the use of the building, most of the use has been for government events.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Of course—it is owned by the government!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If the member for Cannington wants to answer the Leader of the Opposition’s question, by all means have a good chat amongst yourselves!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am just waiting for the Premier to answer the Leader of the Opposition’s question.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington, I do not want an open discussion.

[2.10 pm]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Point of order, Mr Chairman. I seek your assistance. It would help everybody, Mr Chairman, if you actually got the Premier to do what you said at the start, which is to answer the questions, not talk about things that were not asked. He was asked whether outside organisations had used the facility, not whether the government had used the facility; of course the government has used the facility. It belongs to the government. That was not the question and his answer does not relate to the question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Further to the point of order, I am answering the question and I am explaining the use of the building. If I may continue, in terms of the frequency of use of the building for events beyond, if you like, my immediate office, the public sector management awards have been held there for several years. In fact, that is probably the long-term pattern; the awards should be held there. We have had a science event there and the Perth Fashion Festival launch was held there last year. Again, the Perth Fashion Festival accepted all responsibility for that. In terms of what the member referred to as outside use, when Hon Norman Moore retired we had an event there for him that was funded by parliamentary members of the Liberal Party. Those, to my recollection, were the only so-called outside uses of the building.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Can I ask, by way of supplementary information, for a list of organisations that have held functions using the Premier's office and the cost of each of those functions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have just told the member.

Mr M. McGOWAN: No, the Premier said, "To the best of my recollection". It is Parliament; we are supposed to get accurate answers.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have just given the member an accurate answer. To the best of my knowledge —

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is not an accurate answer.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member can ask his questions the way he wishes, and I will answer them the way we wish to, and we might get there. As soon as I start to answer, members opposite interrupt. The discourtesy is extraordinary.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Chairman, point of order again. I ask you to make the Premier do what you said, which is to answer the questions asked. You said that the answers need to be short and relevant to the question. That is the duty of the Premier. It is not for the Premier to determine what his duty is; it is the standing orders that set that out, and I would appreciate it if you could help the Premier to do his best as a witness for us.

The CHAIRMAN: Up to this point I consider that the Premier has been answering the questions and they have been relevant.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The answer is that the Perth Fashion Festival launched its program there, which is a low-key event, and it took full responsibility for any costs associated with that. The 500 Club end-of-year Christmas function was held there, and it took full responsibility for the running of the event and the costs. The only other one was, as I said, a Liberal Party event paid for by members of the Liberal Party as a farewell event for Hon Norman Moore. Those were the three events.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to costs and revenue, the Premier is saying that not much of a profit was made. Has the Premier seen the total costs and total revenue from that event?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We did not make any profit as a government, and —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: No, the Premier said the event did not make any profit, or much profit.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The events were designed to cover costs; they did cover costs, and that is it. Those were the conditions under which the premises could be used. That is no different from the member or any other member of Parliament having a function in Parliament House; no different at all.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Has the Premier seen the total cost and total revenue for the 500 Club Christmas event?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I was assured that the event essentially broke even and that if there was any surplus it would have been small and would be forwarded to a charity.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Was there a surplus?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I do not think there was; it may even have run at a loss at the end of the day. For the cost of a cocktail function, \$100, it was a pretty good cocktail function; I do not deny that. But that was the 500 Club's event; all I did was make the premises available on a one-off basis, and I will no doubt do the same for other groups. I expect some not-for-profit organisations may request the opportunity to do that, but they will always be just one-offs.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It was obviously rent-free, so I can understand why the 500 Club could afford to go big on the alcohol and nibbles. Were any Department of the Premier and Cabinet officers invited to that event?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I do not believe they were. The guest list was the guest list of the 500 Club, not mine.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So the Premier can guarantee that there were no DPC officers at that event.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not believe there were any there, no. I do not think there were. There were certainly some members of Parliament who were there because they are members of the 500 Club; no public servants, to my knowledge.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If I could just continue on that line of questioning. As we all know, the 500 Club is a fundraising arm of the Liberal Party —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, not of the Liberal Party, in support of the Liberal Party. There is a difference.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I thank the Premier for his wise clarification. Will the Premier be holding a 500 Club function there this year in a similar way?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No.

Mr M. McGOWAN: So that was the only time the Premier's office will be used for a 500 Club event?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I said it was a one-off; it will not be held there this year, and the pattern with the 500 Club Christmas event is that it has generally been held at the premises of one of the members, one of the hotels. It has previously been held in Parliament according to the rules of the use of Parliament and this year I allowed access to my office. There is a lot of interest in seeing the building because it is a magnificent piece of heritage restoration and has, indeed, been recognised in a number of awards for heritage architectural design and the way in which a new building has been attached to an old one. There was a lot of interest in the building, and it was a very good event, but it was a one-off.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Just finally, I asked the Premier earlier for supplementary information about the events that have been held at his office; I asked again, and he said no. First of all, he said there had been five events held there, and when he clarified his answer he said that there had been three events. Will the Premier, by way of supplementary information, provide a full list just so that there is clarity in respect of this question and so that we can understand which groups get access and which groups do not?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have answered that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier said five events first up and then went down to three, so clearly there are two different stories here. I am asking the Premier: is there a list that he can provide by way of supplementary information or not?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Does the Leader of the Opposition want inside or outside events?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Both.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have given the Leader of the Opposition the three outside ones.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I said both.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition wants both now.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am asking for supplementary information; I do not think it is too much to ask.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Does the Leader of the Opposition want government use of it, or non-government use of it, or both?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier's office is a publicly funded building. I would like a list of events held in the Premier's office over the course of the time it has been occupied. I do not think that is too hard to answer.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think the Leader of the Opposition needs to clarify this. This week, I hosted a meeting of Muslim leaders. Does the Leader of the Opposition regard that as an event?

Mr M. McGOWAN: No, I would not regard that as an event. The Premier is splitting hairs. I am asking which outside groups get access to the Premier's office to hold events; a list of the events that have been held there over the course of the last three years.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The outside events have been Liberal Party members of Parliament for Hon Norman Moore's farewell; the launch last year of the Perth Fashion Festival; and the 500 Club Christmas function. If there are any further outside users that I have overlooked, I will provide the Leader of the Opposition with that information, but I do not believe there are.

The CHAIRMAN: The Premier will provide us with a list of the outside users of his offices for functions. Is that correct, Leader of the Opposition?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Correct, thank you.

[*Supplementary Information No A14.*]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to the ninth dot point on page 66 of budget paper No 2, which states —

- Assistance will be provided to other State government agencies in response to the Commonwealth Government on the National Disability Insurance Scheme, the Home and Community Care program and other priorities in the human services arena.

I am interested in the other priorities and ask whether the Premier's department has been involved in the decision to scrap the funding of financial counselling services for not-for-profit organisations in Western Australia. That will have a huge impact on low-income Western Australians. If the department has been involved in the discussion, what advice has the Premier received on the impact on low-income earners in Western Australia?

[2.20 pm]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That decision was taken as part of the budget preparation and announced by the Minister for Child Protection. I realise that decision will have an impact, but I do not believe it is the prime function of the Department for Child Protection and Family Support to provide financial counselling. Yes, it may be seen as a hard decision but we have to do that right across government. The prime focus of that agency is to look after and protect children. When we came into government, around 2 000 children were in the care of the state, which has now increased to around 4 000. The department's priority is the protection of children.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The second part of my question was: what advice did the Premier receive on the impact that will have on low-income earners in Western Australia?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not aware of any advice on that; it was handled within the department and by the minister responsible. I suggest that the question is more appropriately asked of the minister during this week. As I said, my position is that the priority is child protection, not financial counselling.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have a final question on this issue. Does the Premier have anything to say to Western Australians in my electorate, particularly children, who will suffer because of the withdrawal of this service, which is such an essential part of the work of non-government organisations in Western Australia?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There are not-for-profit providers of counselling services, some of which will receive state government funding. There are also commonwealth-funded services.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, this year the rules have changed slightly for Chairs of estimates hearings in that follow-on questions are counted as questions. That means members will need to be conscious that we are working on the opposition asking about 80 per cent of the questions, but follow-on questions are counted as questions.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Are they counted in the 80 per cent?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the fourth dot point on page 66 of volume 1 of the *Budget Statements*. If the South West Native Title Settlement proceeds as planned, will there be cost savings to the government in the future?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I thank the member for Vasse for that question. The signing yesterday of the native title settlement for the south west including Perth is a historic moment. The process now has to go before the National Native Title Tribunal, which will probably take six months or so. We do not anticipate any disagreement. The fact that all the six Noongar claimant groups voted in favour on a voluntary basis was a brave and important act of self-determination and a significant step towards an ultimate reconciliation of our peoples. The substantial benefits for Noongar people include payments of \$50 million a year for 12 years, 320 000 hectares of land, housing, cultural and economic development, joint management of the conservation estate and a whole host of other things. For the wider community and the private sector, it means that government projects such as the building of a new road, a powerline or a conservation estate will not have to go through a native title process in Perth and in the south west. Native title is basically conceded. Of course, planning, heritage, conservation, environmental protection and all those other issues will still apply. A huge regulatory burden has been removed from the development process for Perth and the south west. This is of great benefit to government agencies, the private sector, individual landowners and the Aboriginal peoples. There is still a little way to go but we are up to the final step. This will be an advantage to a lot of people, particularly in the member for Vasse's electorate.

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

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 67 of volume 1 of the *Budget Statements*. The Premier understands my frustration with the Commonwealth Grants Commission's handling of the vertical-fiscal imbalance that greatly impacts on Western Australia. Can the Premier provide an update on Western Australia's declining GST share?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes. The Abbott government is the only government during the period of this government that has provided any tangible assistance in terms of the GST share. I find it extraordinary —

Mr M. McGOWAN: It has gone down to 30c.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is right.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is that assistance?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Anyone who jumps around in a monster suit cannot be taken seriously, but the member opposite has asked a question on a serious issue.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, can we just hear the Premier in silence, please?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I find it extraordinary that since the introduction of the GST, Western Australia actually gets less in a dollar amount than it did 15 years ago —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: — when every other state has seen its GST receipts go up by two to three times and —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington, I will have to call you.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I say to the government members to my right who are serious about economic issues affecting this state, the GST share was about 38c in the dollar for this current financial year and is due to fall to 30c. The \$500 million provided by the Abbott government has effectively kept us at around the 38c level. Ironically, GST payments to Western Australia will rise over coming years and other states will see how damaging rapid falls in GST can be. Any sensible commentator would agree that the solution to GST is ultimately to move towards a simple per capita distribution and retaining some part of that, maybe several billion dollars, to support the weaker states such as Tasmania, South Australia and maybe the Northern Territory. However, there is no case for redistribution of GST between Western Australia, New South Wales, Victoria or Queensland where 90 per cent of Australians live and where 90 per cent of the Australian economy is based. We are all big enough and hairy enough to look after ourselves and manage our own affairs but the weaker states need assistance. Unfortunately, the Labor Party simply does not grasp the issue.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier is right: the GST arrangement for Western Australia is a shocking deal. It has been a rotten deal since the day it was signed and it has gotten worse during the entire period it has been in place. I know that this year the GST share has gone down to 30c in the dollar, which is a very small amount of money in terms of the amount that the state puts in. However, I am interested in the context of Western Australia's finances that the AA+ credit rating that Western Australia currently holds is a negative rating. Is the Premier confident that we will retain the AA+ credit rating? Has the Premier had any advice from the credit rating agencies and/or the Treasurer that we will retain that credit rating; and, if so, what is that advice?

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: What page is that on?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am referring to the same dot point.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Those questions are probably best put to the Treasurer. My response is that with the combination of declining relative and indeed absolute returns out of GST receipts plus the fall in the iron ore price, it was impossible to avoid the budget deficit we face for the coming year. This year will probably not be too bad but the coming year will be difficult. As to the ultimate resolution, it will be an ongoing debate. As to credit rating agencies, who knows? The impact of the downgrade, which I suppose is a political issue, has very minimal effect on the finances of the state. If we take away that political debate, and it is fair enough that that happens, the Western Australian economy is still by far the strongest economy in Australia.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will just clarify that. As the Premier said, it is a matter for Treasurers but he is the Premier of the state and has been the Treasurer three times. I am interested to know whether he has received any advice on whether Western Australia will keep the AA+ credit rating. Does the Premier have a view or is he confident that we will retain it?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not going into the land of guessing. I suggest that the member address his questions about discussions with credit rating agencies to the Treasurer. I have not and do not meet with credit rating agencies.

[2.30 pm]

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

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So, the Premier does not meet with rating agencies or has not met with them since he has been —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have, but not in recent years, no.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: When they started writing bad things about him.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. I have not met with the credit rating agencies at least in the last three or four years. I do not do that. That is the Treasurer's job.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to the fourth dot point on page 69 of the *Budget Statements* concerning the communication of government policies and activities. I ask about the Bigger Picture advertising campaign. What is the total cost of that campaign across all agencies? What agencies are involved and who is the coordinator of that campaign?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a very good promotion of the activities of government. It is modern, it is effective, it reached far more people than other campaigns and it contains quality information. The response, in terms of assessing that campaign, has been extremely strong. People want to know—whether it relates to transport issues, health care and public hospitals, shark mitigation or whatever else. It has been a modern form of communication, and indeed the communication costs of this government are well, well below those of the previous Labor government. Very significant savings are being made in that area. The projected media expenditure by government in 2014–15, including the Bigger Picture campaign, is \$23.2 million.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Sorry; what was that?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I answered it. I can tell the member in terms of individual departments. This is advertising in general: for tourism, \$4.5 million; the Department of Health, \$2 million; Main Roads, \$1.1 million; the Department of Housing, \$1.1 million; WA Police, just under a million dollars; the construction and training fund, \$850 000; the Department of Education, \$750 000; the Potato Marketing Corporation of Western Australia, \$750 000—that is interesting, but that is private funding—Perth Market Authority, \$670 000; and Perth Zoo, \$550 000 to a total of \$13.2 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The \$13.2 million relates to total government expenditure by those agencies. What happened to the \$23.2 million the Premier initially said?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There are other agencies that spend money. The answer to the member's question was: the total media placement expenditure by all government departments was \$23.2 million. I have read out the major ones.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does that include that \$23.2 million in government trading enterprises?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: All government agencies—\$23.2 million.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to my original question on the Bigger Picture, the Premier has talked about the success of the Bigger Picture campaign, so what is the total expenditure and what surveys or other assessments have been undertaken about its success?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There have been quite a number of surveys, I guess, of responses, and, also, most Bigger Picture campaigns draw the member of the community towards a website, and as those websites are accessed or information is sourced, that is recorded. We have a good feel for the use of the campaigns. A recent police campaign was very effective.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a further question, as in my original question: what is the total cost of the Bigger Picture campaign?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have not got that with me, but I will undertake to provide the member with funding. The member wants the total cost. I will provide that to the member, because she presumably wants each of the campaigns and by agency, so I will undertake to provide that.

The CHAIRMAN: Can we have precisely what the member for West Swan is expecting the Premier to provide?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is the total expenditure of the Bigger Picture campaign by agency.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Or by portfolio probably.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I thought the Premier said agency.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We will provide it.

[*Supplementary Information No A15.*]

The CHAIRMAN: That is total expenditure on advertising for the Bigger Picture campaign across portfolios.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: When the Premier was earlier reading out figures related to the campaigns, he said that was for media placement. I wonder whether the Premier could tell us what the media management expenses have been and what the agency expenses have been.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If we are focusing on the Bigger Picture campaign, funding comes from the respective agencies. As part of their work, health and education have always had promotional and information campaigns. I am not going to go down and try to cost every individual who may have played a role.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No. That is not what I am asking, Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am telling the member for Cannington what I am answering. We will tell the member the cost of the Bigger Picture campaigns, but bear in mind this is not additional government funding; this is coming from agencies and replacing what they had always done—just doing it in a more effective way.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I will just clarify what I am getting at. In managing every advertising campaign, the Premier engages two types of consultants. Sometimes it is the same business, but it is always two functions. One is the management of the placement of the ads, and the second is the creative work for the campaign. To just provide the placement costs is not actually the full cost of the advertising because you cannot not do those other two functions. It is just a matter of fact. If it is \$23.2 million and there is 20 per cent extra, that is nearly \$5 million in additional costs. It is not a trivial amount. Quite often it will be more than 20 per cent. That is why, on behalf of the taxpayers of Western Australia, I seek a proper picture. I would like to know the creative agency costs and the media management costs. They are very significant costs to government.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: How would the member cost a lot of the work that is actually done within —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not asking for the Premier to cost the internal work of the department. I am asking for the external costs of the agencies that provide services to government for these activities.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Much of the work is done within departments.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am not asking for that information.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Cannington can ask whatever he wants and I will answer whatever I want. What I have undertaken to —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, the Premier answers in accordance with standing orders.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Chairman, this will end in a moment if this guy does not start to behave.

The CHAIRMAN: Let the Premier answer the question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will provide the cost by portfolio or agency—essentially, it is portfolio: health, education, police—for the Bigger Picture campaign, and I will provide that as supplementary information.

The CHAIRMAN: That is supplementary information A15—the one we have already done, is it not?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is slightly different wording. I prefer that wording to the one he used before because then he said the cost of the Bigger Picture ads, which is what I am after, rather than just the placement costs, which is a different issue. I am after the cost of the campaign—not the cost of the placements.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes. I have told you what I will provide.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Across government.

The CHAIRMAN: No. We think it will be covered under supplementary information A15.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How many sponsored content features are planned? I think three have been undertaken so far. How many further sponsored features are planned under the Bigger Picture advertising campaign?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Bigger Picture is a theme that runs through government information that is provided. Each program, whether it is health, police or education, is a decision made at the time. There is no answer to the member for West Swan's question because there is no planning of so-called placements or sponsorships. Each campaign is looked at individually.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of course there is an answer to my question; it is just whether the Premier will give it to me or whether he knows it. The Premier is telling me there is no further sponsored content to be undertaken by this government.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not say that—but it is not in place or planned at the moment. Each campaign is looked at individually on its merit. Not every suggestion for a campaign goes ahead unless I am convinced that it is of merit.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So the Premier has personally approved every advertising campaign?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Every campaign comes to my attention as Premier, yes.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Does that include how to bake muffins in the *Women's Weekly* campaign?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Not the specific detail of that, but the theme there was around a regional campaign and reflecting regional country life. You may roll your eyes, but in any media —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I did not roll my eyes, Premier. Do not make those sorts of suggestions.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, the member did not. The Leader of the Opposition did.

Any campaign, if it is to be effective, has to actually reach the target audience. If we are talking about regional advertisements, I suggest the member for West Swan has a close look at them. They are high quality, superbly prepared, and they make a message. They are a message about the independence of country life. They apply the issues of educating a country child. That is modern advertising. We have gone beyond putting out the bland government notice. The world has moved on.

[2.40 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am glad the Premier personally approves of baking demonstrations!

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: I refer to the seventh dot point on page 67 of budget paper No 1. I understand some major steps have been taken in the creation of new marine and national parks in the Kimberley, including Kimberley national park and great Kimberley marine park. I also understand that there have been major advances in the management of the Kimberley landscape and marine science under the Kimberley science and conservation strategy. Can the Premier outline the recent milestones achieved in the creation of Kimberley national park and great Kimberley marine park and the next steps in 2015–16, and the important landscape scale conservation and marine science achievements that have been accomplished to date under the Kimberley science and conservation strategy?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think history will show that the greatest environmental conservation achievement of this generation has been the protection of the Kimberley. Indeed, with virtually nothing done in the Kimberley prior to this government, we have seen the creation of the Camden Sound Marine Park and the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park—not simply a matter of drawing a line on the map—and the proposed Horizontal Falls, Roebuck Bay and great Kimberley marine parks. Also on the terrestrial side, there is the Prince Regent Nature Reserve and most recently the agreement reached with the state government and Rio Tinto and Alcoa for the Mitchell Plateau addition to the terrestrial parks. Indeed, it has been a generous act by those companies to give up their mining leases over the Mitchell Plateau. Members opposite might remember that it was a Labor government that granted those mining leases over the Mitchell Plateau. This government has negotiated them out of the mining area, and that is now proceeding. We will now find vast areas of the Kimberley actually preserved. In fact, in terms of the marine areas, over 60 per cent of state waters in the Kimberley region will be in marine parks when this process is completed over the next couple of years.

In addition, this will result in great employment opportunities for Aboriginal people, joint management of areas and so on. There are 25 scientific projects underway in the Kimberley now. Western Australians should be proud of that. It is one of the world's great wilderness areas and it is now protected. I thank the member for his interest in marine science.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the fourth dot point on page 69 and to communications. The government has engaged Mr Robert Taylor for \$1 250 a day. Which specific services does Mr Taylor provide for that \$1 250 a day? Has the contract been extended or renewed? If so, what is the new contract and what is the length of time of and remuneration for Mr Taylor?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Taylor was employed on a contract basis as part of the preparation and presentation of the 2015–16 budget. He did a very good job. One reason the government does that and has done it previously is that we have far fewer media staff than the former Labor government. Therefore, when we have peak periods of activity, such as that, we are inclined to employ additional contract employees. Bear in mind that not only did the former Labor government have media officers for every minister, as has this government, but also it had a policy unit within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. We abolished that. We also abolished the media office, and we operate with a far leaner number of media staff; therefore, at peak times we will take on contract staff. I think that is entirely appropriate and benefits taxpayers.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Back to the question I asked: has Mr Taylor's contract been renewed or extended? If so, what are the terms of renewal or extension and what is his remuneration?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It has been extended for a relatively short period under the same conditions as his existing contract.

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Mr M. McGOWAN: Can I ask what are the details of the extension?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That has already been made public.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Where has it been made public?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: His contract has been made public. It has been reported in the media.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The extension of his contract has been reported in the media?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: His contract was reported in the media, including the amount he was paid. He has now been given a short-term extension under the same conditions.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: For how long?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I cannot answer that. I can probably get an answer before we finish today.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If that is formalised, can I ask for the details of that by way of supplementary information?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, because I will try to get the answer now.

Mr M. McGOWAN: What happens if the Premier does not get the answer? This is Parliament. We are asking questions about expenditure of government money.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have undertaken to get it. If at the end of the session, we have not got it, then I will probably agree to what the Leader of the Opposition is saying. If I can get an answer now, I will get it.

The CHAIRMAN: I am in a quandary. The Premier has to agree to provide supplementary information.

Mr M. McGOWAN: After this session, we go onto divisions on the Ombudsman, lotteries, state development and the like, and we cannot come back to this. We do not have four hours in which to wait for this answer. That is why I am seeking it by way of supplementary information.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am sure I will be able to get the Leader of the Opposition the information as to the length of the extension of his contract very shortly.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps before we finish this division, we can come back to it and make it a question for supplementary information.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Thanks for your sense, Mr Chair.

The CHAIRMAN: That is, subject to the agreement of the Premier.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to the sixth dot point on page 67 of budget paper No. 2, which states—

The Department continues to provide advice to the Premier to ensure the effective management of major new infrastructure including involvement in inter-agency oversight of the commissioning of the Perth Children's Hospital and the new Perth Stadium.

What is the total cost of the new Perth Stadium, including our future obligations to the operator?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Perth Stadium is handled by the sport and recreation and Treasury portfolios, although I am very much involved as Premier. When we announced the start of construction, full details were put out on the costings of the stadium, and they have not changed. The only thing that has changed is that the stadium is well ahead of schedule. It is up to 15 per cent built now and will be 25 per cent built by the end of September.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In terms of the effective management of the major new infrastructure, does the Premier think that knowing the total cost is part of that effective management?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is why it was released publicly.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What is the total cost, including the obligations to the contractors?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I refer the member for Cannington to media announcements that detail the cost and timing of the stadium. That information has been in the public arena for months.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am just amazed that the Premier does not know what the total cost of the project is if he is in charge of its effective management.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am amazed that the member cannot even read government media releases.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am interested to know why the Premier, if he is in charge of this and if the buck stops at his desk, is incapable of answering a simple question such as: what is the total cost of the Perth Stadium, including obligations to these outside organisations?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As I said, it has been made public. It is in the budget papers and I will find the reference shortly. It is in the budget papers.

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

The CHAIRMAN: We will come back to that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am happy to come back.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is public information. It is out there.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is not true. That is not the case. As I say, I am surprised that the Premier is incapable of answering the question if he says that he is responsible for the effective management of this project.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not have the number on my forehead but it is in the budget papers.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If he cannot answer a simple question, it raises the question of his capacity to effectively manage the project.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As the stadium financials in the budget papers say, the 2013–14 budget reported the total cost at \$1.277 billion—on time, on budget, as is the transport infrastructure.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am seeking clarification. That \$1.277 billion includes all obligations to the contractors for the stadium?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is in the 2013–14 budget. There is nothing that has changed in the costings of the stadium.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Does that mean that the portion of the borrowings that had been funded by the construction consortium is included in that \$1.277 billion?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Part of the total cost.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: There are no additional expenses apart from what the Premier has just said?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a long-term project.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is why I am asking the question.

[2.50 pm]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a long-term project, but the costings have been fully explicit on this project ever since we made the decision in 2011 to proceed. There could not be a more accountable project. I understand that the Labor Party opposes the stadium, but this project is well into construction, it is going well and the costs have been publicly released throughout the planning and contract-signing process. It is in the budget papers. I will not do the member's research for him.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: My final follow-up question —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Go and read page 169 of the budget papers!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand the Premier said that he is referring to last year's budget papers. The Premier said the 2014–15 budget; if he is saying 2015–16 —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Page 169.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier said 2014–15 —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I was relating figures for 2014–15 but they are detailed in this budget paper.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: — if he meant 2015–16, that is fine.

I just want it confirmed that the private financing component is within that \$1.227 billion figure.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is the total cost of the project. It is financed through both an equity injection and by our public sector. Basically, the government is funding 60 per cent of construction and the private sector 40 per cent. That is an efficient financial model for the state government.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Mr Chairman, I am asking this question because it is very important —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member is confusing himself, let alone everyone else.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you asking another question?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I am seeking to clarify the answer the Premier gave. The Premier just indicated that the private sector is funding 40 per cent of the borrowing costs. What I am seeking to have absolutely locked down is that \$1.227 billion includes the 40 per cent that is being borrowed by the private sector. It is not a complex question. If the answer is the answer, the answer is the answer, but I do not want to find out later on that in fact the 40 per cent being funded through a capacity payment is not part of the \$1.227 billion cost.

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

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Again, it states in the budget papers that 40 per cent private equity financing over the life of the contract is \$422.8 million. Read the budget papers.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is extraordinary. We still do not know whether or not this is the final figure. Forty per cent of the cost of construction is an obligation on the taxpayers of Western Australia, but they do not borrow the money up-front; they pay the construction consortium over the life of the stadium. Is that, or is that not, part of the \$1.227 billion? It is a very straightforward question, and the Premier still has not answered that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have.

Mr M. McGOWAN: So is it part of it?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have answered. The details of the costings of the stadium have not changed. It is 40 per cent equity by the joint venture proponents and 60 per cent provided by the state government. It is quite proper that while this generation pays most of the cost, part of the cost occurs over the life of the project. I understand that the Labor Party is dead against this stadium and is vehemently opposed to it, but it will not destroy it because it is a good project. It has been well costed, well financed and it is well into construction. The member can bleat on as much as he wants, but this government is going to build the stadium.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Can I clarify that the Premier just said that the \$422 million that is being financed by the private sector is in addition to the \$1.227 billion?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. It is the cost in current dollars of the total project.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I do not understand that. If it is in the budget —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I cannot help it if the member cannot comprehend that.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The budget papers are not about what the private sector is doing; it is about the appropriation the government is asking us to grant.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In today's dollars, yes.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In today's dollars for Western Australians.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is right—the net present value.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: But the \$422 million is separate. That is the amount that the private sector is borrowing and does not come to us as an appropriation. Only the capacity payment comes to us as an appropriation. That is the way the deal has been structured. That is why I am trying to clarify whether the Premier is saying that of the \$1.227 billion, only \$805 million is being funded by the budget.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I am not saying that at all.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What is the Premier saying?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member asked the question and I have answered it. I cannot believe that the member has not comprehended all of the detail that has been made available continuously over the stadium project.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I think the problem is the Premier does not understand the information that is being presented in the budget papers.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Okay. The member can assume that if he wishes, but that is the end of that topic.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is not; it is up to the Chairman when it is the end of the topic.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member is going nowhere so far.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier is going nowhere because he does not understand the plan.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This has been inept. Come up with some real questions!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier does not know the rules that he is applying.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the Leader of the Opposition wants to ask a follow-up question on this issue.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is an important subject matter. I am pleased that the new Perth Stadium is in the Premier's estimates. I want to clarify a couple of things in association with this. First of all, we know that there is an appropriation for \$1.277 billion, or was it \$1.227 billion?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We have provided information. I have provided it; it is in the budget papers. It is not strictly my portfolio but it is absolutely explicit on the details.

Extract from Hansard

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

p35b-62a

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

Mr M. McGOWAN: I know it might be in the budget papers but there is a line item here, or at least a dot point, that mentions this project. The Premier is selling it as part of his agency. The Premier has said that effective management has been provided by his department, so I think it is fair enough that we ask questions about it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it is not.

Mr M. McGOWAN: But that is what the Premier's budget says.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No; the management of the project is through Treasury and the Department of Sport and Recreation.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am reading it. It states —

- The Department continues to provide advice to the Premier to ensure the effective management of major new infrastructure including ... the new Perth Stadium.

That is why I want to ask the Premier about it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If I can explain my role on the advice of the department: Treasury and the Department of Sport and Recreation have carriage of the stadium project. Where I become involved is probably, for want of a better term, the significant policy issues; for example, the allocation of seats to clubs and the like and to the general public—those sorts of issues. I get involved in policy issues. It is a Department of Sport and Recreation and Treasury project.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier has raised a lot of issues and I think the member for Cannington has teased out one of the major ones. The sum of \$1.277 billion is in the budget. Is the 40 per cent of private sector funding, which is around \$422 million, additional to that or not?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The budget reflects that. The annual budget does not, because obviously the stadium is paid for over a 25-year period, but the total cost of the project is quite explicit. It is the figure that has been quoted repeatedly in media releases and recorded in the budget.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is the total cost to taxpayers —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, that is right.

Mr M. McGOWAN: — up-front.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. It is the cost of the project —

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the private sector financing component in addition to that?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is the cost of the project brought back to a common year base for valuation. It is simple financial modelling.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: There is \$1.227 billion in the budget that we are going to expend in accordance with the appropriation that we are making in the budget. As the Premier says, there is an additional charge because future generations will have the use of this facility. Over 25 years the government will make a capacity payment, an availability charge, to the construction consortium. What is the annual cost of that availability charge?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not know the answer to that question off the top of my head. The member could ask the Minister for Sport and Recreation or the Treasurer.

Mr M. McGOWAN: What is the cost of the transport infrastructure?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The transport infrastructure is about \$300 million for the rail station, which will be state of the art, and the Labor Party would no doubt have been delighted with the announcement over the weekend of the pedestrian and cyclists' bridge, which will cost \$54 million.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: We would have had a tram over there.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: You would still have been stuck in Subiaco if that was your policy!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to the stadium, the Premier said he is interested in the number of seats —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I said the allocation of seats is an issue.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Will there be sports stadium memberships?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Most likely there will be a limited number of those, probably on an annual basis. But the public can be assured that the general allocation of seats will be around 10 000.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier is estimating between 5 000 and 10 000 stadium memberships?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, nothing like it.

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

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What is the figure?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That has not yet been determined, but nothing like the figures the member is suggesting. It will be a limited number.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What is a limited number?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That has not been decided. As I have said, general admission to the public will be pretty well right on 10 000 seats, which I think is a very adequate allocation, plus of course the host clubs will also get allocations that will be above what they could have at Subiaco.

[3.00 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the Premier confirming today that there will be stadium memberships?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There will be; the number is yet to be finalised. Indeed, the full negotiations about the operation of the stadium are underway, and there are bids about operation and the like, but they will include a limited number of stadium memberships, which is not much different from buying a box at the stadium to be honest. It is a seat instead of a box.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So will it be around 5 000 or 3 000?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: They are fanciful figures; they are not accurate.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What are the accurate figures?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not divulging negotiation points that are going on now with the bidders.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: With the bidders?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, to the stadium operator.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is it not the financier that actually wants the stadium memberships?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a matter for the whole operation of the project, and I am not going to discuss issues that are currently underway with the bidders in an objective, independent bidding process for the right to operate the stadium. What I have been insistent upon, right from the beginning, is that there be a large number of general admission tickets—and there will be.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Page 169 of the *Economic and Fiscal Outlook* refers to the contract value of \$1.2 billion, not \$1.227 billion. The contract value does not include the future availability charge. Is that what I am to take from the Premier's answer?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I do not think the member can take anything.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand I cannot take anything from the Premier's answer, that is why I am trying to get some proper information so that taxpayers know —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We are done; we are finished.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Does the \$1.2 billion contract value —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am not going through the member's fantasies about what he thinks —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: — that the Premier referred to include the future availability chart—yes or no?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member for Cannington should ask the question of the Treasurer on the finances of the stadium if he wishes.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Vasse.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I know the member is trying to undermine the stadium. He is going to hate it when the Eagles and Dockers play the first game.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I cannot believe it. The Premier comes in here saying "effective management" and acts like an idiot.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We'll be there.

The CHAIRMAN: Premier! It is unusual to be called in estimates. Member for Vasse.

Several members interjected.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: What was that, Premier? I did not hear you.

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

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington!

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the ninth dot point on page 66 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, under the heading “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. How are the comparative National Disability Insurance Scheme files progressing in Western Australia, and what steps is the government taking to determine WA’s future approach to an NDIS?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is a lot of interest in the way the National Disability Insurance Scheme comes to being. One point that must be made is that it is misnamed; it is not an insurance scheme at all or anything like one. However, that was the terminology adopted during the time of the Gillard government. Western Australia was the last state to sign up, principally because we have a different scheme in this state which is based on using not-for-profit organisations, and also is very much a devolved scheme. Subsequently there was agreement that we would trial two schemes in Western Australia—the Western Australian My Way scheme, which is a devolved not-for-profit-based scheme as against what most other states are doing in terms of the NDIS. It is interesting to note that the My Way scheme is proving to be significantly less costly. An average package for each recipient is around \$24 000 compared to the NDIS scheme at \$33 500. It seems to be more effective. Having read some of the correspondence from people receiving this support, there seems to be a strong preference for the way in which a more devolved local scheme is delivered. If people have a significant disability, they like to know the people they deal with; they like to know them face to face rather than dealing with someone sitting behind a desk in Canberra, or probably Geelong, as it will be ultimately. There may be some other factors—I do not deny that—but I think the trials have been conducted in an objective way, and I am optimistic that at the end of the day we will see an NDIS across Australia that is more devolved than the original planners had intended and provides better services to those with a disability. It is an important process. There is still a huge question over whether the commonwealth government can fund the sorts of promises that were made during the Gillard years. People sitting around the COAG table really did not believe the figures that were being thrown around; that is the truth.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Speaking of commonwealth funding, I direct the Premier to the first to sixth dot points on page 66 of the *Budget Statements*. The Premier has indicated before that the commonwealth is not being forthcoming with assistance towards the cost of native title settlements in Western Australia in the way that was promised by Paul Keating in 1993 or thereabouts. What has the commonwealth’s attitude been towards assisting with the cost of the south west Noongar settlement?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition is right: Paul Keating as Prime Minister promised at the time of the Native Title Act going through that the commonwealth would fund 75 per cent of native title settlements entered into by state governments. John Howard as Prime Minister confirmed that. Following that, I think Kevin Rudd probably may have sat on the fence a little. Julia Gillard made it very clear in writings to the states, including this state, that the commonwealth would not do that, and the position has not changed since then. The commonwealth has indicated some very small contribution, but really it is only in line with what they have done in terms of helping claimant groups mount their cases. We continue to make that point. But let me make it absolutely clear that even if commonwealth money does not come, the state will honour its \$1.3 billion commitment in money and land and other aspects to the Noongar people, and that is in our budget and has been for some time.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The sixth dot point states —

The State is continuing to pursue a Commonwealth contribution to the South West Settlement.

So the settlement signed yesterday did not really incorporate any significant commonwealth commitment as a part of that process?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, it is not assumed. The state government will continue to argue that the commonwealth should contribute because it is to its benefit and it is an historic agreement: it is the biggest in past history and into the future it will be the biggest. Even if the commonwealth does not contribute, the state will honour the full terms of what was signed yesterday.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Okay. Just to absolutely clarify, yesterday’s deal was signed without commonwealth contribution?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There is no assumption of commonwealth funding in it. I think there was a figure of \$10 million bandied around, but that is basically existing commonwealth funding for native title claims—nothing new.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is 100 per cent state; okay.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to “Administration of Executive Government Services” on page 69 of the *Budget Statements*. My question relates to the Ministerial Code of Conduct and some of the issues that were

raised in the public domain last year about conflict of interest and shareholdings. Are there moves to change the Ministerial Code of Conduct? Has there been change to practices in relation to cabinet meetings and the declaration of shares and potential conflicts of interest?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Some minor changes are proposed to the code of conduct and the way in which that is managed. They are not radical changes and they are being put in place.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: What do those changes involve? Do they require the selling of shares of ministers around the cabinet table?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will ask the director general to outline the changes that have been put in place and some of the procedural matters.

Mr P.F. Conran: The issues we are particularly looking at now relate to share ownerships and the sale of shares. One of the challenges is to deal with the issue of private shareholdings as opposed to public shareholdings. We are getting some clarification from an expert in relation to those issues.

[3.10 pm]

We are looking also at the issue of self-managed super funds. It is obvious to us that in the future a number of members of Parliament will have self-managed super funds. I think that will be an increasing trend. The question then arises is: how do we best deal with those issues recognising that with a self-managed super fund there are certain obligations in accordance with commonwealth legislation to certify that members' funds are properly and adequately managed and that they are otherwise accountable for that? We have considered the issue of blind trusts being established to deal with self-managed super funds. However, that presents challenges for the declaration that each director of a self-managed super fund has to give in relation to their actual control of their fund. We have been getting some advice on that issue. Procedurally, the Premier has requested that from, I think, July, as part of normal cabinet processes, consistent with practice that is starting to develop in a number of private sector organisations, but also elsewhere, there be an up-front conflicts-of-interest declaration, which is just a reminder to everyone to have regard for an agenda and to reflect upon their individual circumstances. That is the best way to draw information from people of any potential conflicts or perceived conflicts they may have. That is a process that we should be introducing from July.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: In relation to ownership of shares, is consideration being given also to ownership of other private property, for example land, that may provide a benefit from government decisions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: People are required to declare their assets and that includes land.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Sure. We know that people declare these things or the assets are on registers somewhere, but whether they make a declaration during cabinet or exclude themselves is the next step. Is that being considered as part of the tidying up of ministerial codes?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: What is your example?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I am saying, if a minister had, for example, an investment property —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: You do not have an example?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Pardon?

The CHAIR: I am sorry; the member for West Swan has the call.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Is it a hypothetical question?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Yes.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: If the member does not have an example —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier just interrupted me.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I tried to answer the question.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Honestly!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Come on; lighten up.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier interrupted me and then said, "You don't have an example." Hypothetically, if a minister had a commercial business that would directly benefit from a significant road project, would they be required to make a declaration, for example?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a hypothetical question. Ministers are required to declare in cabinet meetings any conflict or perceived conflict of interest.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Did the Treasurer declare his conflict of interest in owning Telstra shares when cabinet decided to give \$42 million to Telstra during last year's budget process?

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: He omitted to declare that. But can I say that I do not think there was any significant conflict. He should have declared that as a matter of formality, but to suggest there was any potential for any personal gain is just fallacious. According to the formalities of cabinet, yes, he should have declared it. It did not cross his mind; that was a mistake, and I have made that point to him.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: If giving \$42 million to a company that a minister is a shareholder in is not a genuine conflict of interest—I cannot remember the exact words; I am not trying to put them in the Premier's mouth —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Real or perceived.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Can the Premier give me an example? Would it be a conflict of interest if the government gave \$200 million or \$500 million to a company that someone had shares in? When would it be a conflict of interest?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not answer hypothetical questions. If the member asks me a question of fact, I will answer it to the best of my ability. I will not get into a hypothetical debate. If the member thought a contract for some mobile towers could have any tangible effect on the Telstra share price, he has a naiveté that astounds me.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: That is an incredible answer.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a good answer; it is spot-on.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: I refer to the last dot point on page 66 in volume 1 of budget paper No 2 under the heading "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". How will Western Australia continue to build on its scientific capability in each of the five science priority areas identified in the Science Statement for Western Australia?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: In an economy or a population the size of Western Australia's, obviously science is important. This state has a very proud science record. Much of our industry—agriculture, mining and petroleum—has a science base to it, but we need to pick out those areas in which we can do best as a small population. The recent release of the science paper, which I think was an important step, identifies five areas—mining and energy, medicine and health, agriculture and food, biodiversity and marine science, and radio astronomy—all for fairly obvious reasons. The effort of government and much of the private sector on science research and application is in those areas. In terms of our international relations, we are also now working, I think, effectively through our trade offices in building collaboration. Two recent examples include some botanical research in Jiangsu province, China, where a centre of some botanical studies is located, and more recently marine science and oceanography with the University of Mumbai and the University of Western Australia. That is important. I think also the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre, the largest super-computer capacity in the Southern Hemisphere, is assisting a range of science areas including medicine, agriculture, human studies and the like. Science is the common link. I think the diversification of our economy, in large part, will come about through the development of science. For the first time, we are seeing genuine collaboration between universities and the private sector in a way that is bringing great benefits.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the bottom of page 65 of the *Budget Statements* and the reference to \$400 000 allocated for shark hazard mitigation projects. During the estimates hearings in 2014, the Department of Fisheries said it would seek compensation from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet for all the resources it expended on the ill-fated shark drum lines that the Premier put in place over that summer. Has the Department of Fisheries sought that compensation, what amount has been allocated to the Department of Fisheries to pick up that cost, and what was the final cost of that drum line exercise?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Who sought compensation?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Department of Fisheries said it was negotiating —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Who?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The director general said it in estimates in 2014.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Departments do not get compensation; government makes policy decisions and funds are allocated accordingly. The funding of the shark mitigation process has been through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. We have funded what has taken place. It is not up to directors general to demand compensation from the government. We do not operate that way.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Department of Fisheries indicated during estimates last year that it was negotiating with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet for reimbursement of the costs incurred as part of that ill-fated program. Has any allocation been made to the department to make up those costs?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Department of the Premier and Cabinet would have funded the —

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Mr M. McGOWAN: Let me finish: has any allocation been made to the Department of Fisheries consequent to it seeking that from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am happy to make more information available on the expenditure under the shark mitigation program. There is significant expenditure across a range of areas, not simply the catching of sharks but also aerial patrols, better observation on beaches, rapid response to imminent threat and the like. All that information has been made public, but I am happy to make it available again if the member wishes to have it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I would like some supplementary information if that is what the Premier is offering on the total cost of the shark mitigation program, in particular the drum lines initiative. In particular, I would like any of the additional costs sought or received by the Department of Fisheries to pick up the cost of that program.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will provide information on the full costing of the shark mitigation program, which is public in any case, but we will provide it again.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Before we agree on that supplementary information, I want to clarify that the Premier is saying that in that information, the cost of the drum line will be shown as a separate line item?

[3.20 pm]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes; all aspects of the program. Can I say that the major cost of the program has been aerial surveillance; that has been the biggest cost by far.

Mr M. McGOWAN: As part of that—I am just seeking an answer—was there an allocation made to fisheries to pick up the additional costs it had to expend to put in place that drum line program, as it indicated it was asking for from the Premier's agency?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a department of fisheries and a shark is a fish, so it has a responsibility. Indeed, I will provide the costs of the program. Yes, various departments have been funded to do various things, as have the surf lifesaving clubs along our coast. We will provide that detail. I am not going to go beyond what the cost of each component was. It has been delivered by agencies, some of it has been delivered by surf lifesaving, and some of it has been delivered by local government in terms of swimming enclosures and the like. I will provide the total cost of the program by subcomponent.

[*Supplementary Information No A16.*]

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to the first dot point on page 66 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2. What has the government done to commemorate the Anzac centenary to date?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think Western Australians should feel very proud —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Has the member for Churchlands not read the *Budget Statements*? It is in the budget papers; what is he doing asking a question like that?

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Cannington!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Was it the member for Cannington in the Cookie Monster suit? He would probably be quite good at that!

The CHAIRMAN: Premier, would you like to answer the question?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am trying to.

I think Western Australians should feel very proud of the way in which this state played a key role in the launch of the Anzac centenary, and indeed in the events that have taken place to this point. Without going through them in full detail, basically the state role was to upgrade Mt Clarence—the site of the first dawn service—which was a heritage project; the funding of Centennial Park in Albany; the Anzac events late last year in terms of the departure of the two fleets; and in particular the opening of the National Anzac Centre, which was jointly funded by the commonwealth and Western Australia. I was delighted that the New Zealand Prime Minister came over to be part of that launch. There was the funding of Blackboy Hill and the Fremantle departure of the Western Australian troops. Of course, *The Giants* production told the children's Anzac story in a contemporary way to the children of today. It was the biggest public event in this state's history, and may be the biggest arts event in Australia's history. As to Anzac Day itself, there was funding for Returned and Services League of Australia clubs and a whole range of services, including sunset services, and free public transport on the day. There was the student tour that allowed 32 students to go to Anzac Cove. Lotterywest also provided a whole range of grants for various community events, and there was also the publication of Western Australian Victoria Cross and George Cross recipients. I think we did a fantastic job as a state. I think the public of Western Australia rightly feels very proud of that, and there will, no doubt, be further events over the coming four years

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of particular battles. But I think it is fair to say that far more happened in Western Australia around the Anzac centenary than was the case in any other state.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I refer to page 68 of budget paper No 2, particularly the heading of “Outcomes of Key Effectiveness Indicators”. I note that one states —

Outcome: The Premier and Ministers receive high quality, rigorous and timely policy advice:

I wonder for what reason that quality fell between 2013–14 and 2014–15?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: On what assertion does the member say that the quality of advice fell?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: It is because the figure goes from 4 to 3.8. The target was 4.3, and it fell to 3.8, so it has gone down over the years. So, I am just wondering what the cause was of the lower quality of advice to ministers and other agencies from the Premier’s department.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That assessment is as it is. The director general might like to make a comment; I certainly do not have one to offer.

Mr P.F. Conran: The survey required respondents to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the level of satisfaction of agreement or agreement of specific policy services being delivered. The rating scales were as follows: 1 was well below expectations; 2 was somewhat below expectations; 3 was met expectations; 4 was somewhat above expectations; and, 5 was well above expectations. The 2014–15 estimated actual—3.8—does represent a decline from the 2013–14 actual of 4, and also a decline from the 2014–15 budget of 4.3. However, it indicates that on average, the policy services delivered to stakeholders were above expectation—that is, 3.8 is obviously higher than “met expectations”. The figure of 4 for the next year obviously indicates that we are seeking to improve on our last figure.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: But the question I asked, Premier, was about the cause of the decline.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was an assessment or survey about what people think of the performance of the department. I do not know that there is any one cause. I do not think that this is a particularly objective statistic, but there it is for what it is worth.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Premier, if it is not an objective statistic, why is it in the budget papers?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a statistic that is an opinion; that is all it is. It is not objective fact; it is a guide as to how people perceive the performance of the department in that area. I think what can be read into that sort of data is pretty limited.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to the second bullet point on page 70 of the *Budget Statements* that relates to strategic policy advice and coordination as Minister for Science. Can the Premier provide an update on what is happening with the new Scitech? We understand that it will not go on the Burswood peninsula, as promised, but what is the existing lease in relation to Citywest for the current Scitech, and in which areas is the government looking at moving Scitech to in the next few years?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The commitment made by the Liberal Party at the last state election was to provide \$15 million towards a new Scitech—bear in mind that Scitech is a non-government body—and assist with land. Yes, I certainly suggested Burswood as a possible site. Scitech does not consider that the best site and would prefer better transport, and that makes sense.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: A \$2 billion stadium is all right for a bad transport location, but not Scitech!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Footy is played 22 weeks a year on a weekend. We would not provide seven-day transport if people are not there. I would have thought —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: So the stadium is not going to be used seven days a week?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is why Scitech made the point that the transport would not be the regular service that Scitech would look for.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The Premier has to admit that that does sound funny.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I want to ask about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Further questions?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am trying to answer it, but the fools opposite just carry on. If they are serious about an answer —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Calm down.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This is the *Sesame Street* team! We can see them in the zoo!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government Premier is spending \$350 million for transport infrastructure that could not service Scitech. That is what the Premier is telling us, so who is the fool then? In relation to Scitech, to what areas is the government considering moving Scitech?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Scitech is a private body. It is not a government body, although it gets significant funding —

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government made an election commitment —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am answering if the member for West Swan would just listen for a moment. Stop chewing and listen!

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The government did not mention it was a —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Just listen!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for West Swan, let the Premier answer the question and we might go somewhere.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Scitech, at government initiation, is conducting a survey, if you like, of potential sites for Scitech. I have not seen that final report, but I expect it is imminent. That will assess a number of sites. I have made some suggestions; others have made suggestions. But I will say to the opposition that my more recent thinking—it may be of some of my ministerial colleagues—is that there is considerable merit in Scitech being incorporated within the new Museum or adjacent to the new Museum, so that is also likely to be an option. But we have yet to make that decision, nor has Scitech. In the meantime, Scitech has renewed its lease at its current premises and it will certainly be there for several years, but we are planning beyond that lease.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How many years are left on the current lease?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think it took a five-year lease. That has been the basis on which it has been leasing at that premises, so it has renewed that. Clearly, a new Scitech—not only the site, but the design and construction—will take some time. We will see what its report suggests in terms of sites, and the government will also look at whether some sort of co-location with the new Museum is a more effective way of going. I have to say that I think there are great advantages in that. That may not be Scitech's view. In Victoria, the equivalent of Scitech is part of the Museum Victoria organisation.

[3.30 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: When does the current lease expire?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not know. Scitech renewed it for five years. It did that some time ago.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It was 2020.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is not a government body; it is a private body.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: If the Premier has the information—they are telling the Premier—just tell us.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member should ask Scitech, but it was a five-year renewal entered into some time last year, I think.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Was it last year or this year?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not enter into the lease; it is Scitech's lease.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: The director general knows, so just ask him!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a five-year lease entered into last year. I am correct.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: So, it is 2019?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am correct.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Is the Premier confirming that it is 2019 that the current lease expires?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The member can ask Scitech that; I do not know that. This is not part of the estimates.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: It is.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not care. I will ask the director general if he has more information, but Scitech entered into a five-year lease extension. If the director general knows when that commenced and when it concludes, by all means he can tell us.

Mr P.F. Conran: The date is June 2018—then there are options until June 2023, but the effective date is June 2018.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will give up my question for the moment while I consider that answer.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the eighth dot point on page 67 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. I understand the strategic assessment of the Perth and Peel regions is the largest environmental approvals streamlining reform undertaken to date in Western Australia. Can the Premier please outline the key benefits that the SAPPR will deliver to this state?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This environmental strategic assessment of Perth and the Perth coastal plain is complex. Once it is concluded—it will reach a conclusion; it is taking longer than we thought, but it will get there—it will basically give a clear environmental assessment for Perth so that we will know which areas are to be protected in the conservation estate, and which areas can be developed for housing, commercial, public works and the like. It will stop the duplication of any sort of development, whether it be government or private sector, having to go through state and then commonwealth approvals processes and it will protect biodiversity. Along with the native title settlement, I think these two in parallel will save both government and industry hundreds of millions of dollars in the process of any development and at the same ensure that what should be protected is protected. It is worth the effort and will do an enormous amount to reduce the amount of red tape and unnecessary regulation and redoing examinations over and again. Once the documents are completed, they will be released—that will be this year—and there will be three months' public consultation. It has been a very difficult process, but a well-conducted one.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I go back to the costs of inquiries on page 69 of the *Budget Statements*. The DPC, of course, has been responsible for a range of inquiries on a range of subjects. I refer to the Blaxell inquiry into the hostel at Katanning. The government committed to putting in place everything that Commissioner Blaxell suggested, including a one-stop shop for reporting child abuse. That was the Premier's commitment, but he has not done that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am asking why.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, we have not. As a government, we set up the Blaxell inquiry very quickly. It was very well conducted and unearthed some unpleasant facts about what had happened at St Andrew's. The government endorsed the recommendations. On further examination, the concept of a one-stop shop, if you like, or point for reporting child abuse was not seen to be practical. It involved Health, Education, policing, Child Protection and the like. If we were to have a one-stop shop, the Commissioner for Children and Young People was suggested at one point. On careful consideration, it was decided that that would not be effective. There were traditional lines of reporting, particularly Child Protection and Police, and we did not want to disrupt that. The fear was we would have lower rates of reporting than we currently have. There has been some reform and improvement to the system, but we have not proceeded with that recommendation. That is correct.

Mr M. McGOWAN: If I can clarify, Premier, that Commissioner Blaxell, who examined all these issues, recommended it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Yes, he did.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier put out a press release on 19 September 2012, shortly before the state election, in which his principal response to the Blaxell inquiry was to establish a one-stop shop for reporting child abuse, but we learn today that he has walked away from that. Why is it that Commissioner Blaxell was wrong?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did not say that he was wrong at all. They were the Leader of the Opposition's words and not mine.

Mr M. McGOWAN: In effect, the Premier has said that.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, I have not. I have not said that at all. What I said, and I repeat myself, is that we endorsed the recommendations, but on further examination within government we believed that that would not be an improvement in the reporting of child abuse. We did not want to disrupt the major destinations for reporting, particularly Child Protection and Police, but also coming through Health, Education and elsewhere; we did not want to limit reporting. Indeed, in a recent debate about Aboriginal communities, including some of the comments by the Commissioner of Police, one of the overwhelming observations was the chronic under-reporting of child abuse.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Therefore, if there is chronic under-reporting of child abuse under the existing system, and Commissioner Blaxell, a respected Supreme Court judge who looked at all of these issues, came up with this recommendation, which the Premier then endorsed and put out a press release to that effect, I find it almost inexplicable that the Premier would walk away from that finding, particularly because, as he said, it would be the establishment of a child-focused system of reporting of child abuse. I might add that I imagine it would have been something with a great deal more simplicity than the existing disjointed system that is resulting in, as the Premier said, chronic levels of child abuse being unreported.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Judge Blaxell's report was into a boarding school; it was not across the state. He drew his conclusion. We accepted it. On closer examination, we decided to not go down that path. I have answered the question twice already.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Why has the Premier never announced that before now?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think it is common knowledge that the government is not following that. Everyone knows—perhaps the Leader of the Opposition does not.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The last time I remember the Premier saying anything on this he endorsed it in a press release.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That was at the conclusion of the Blaxell report, which was an effective report and a job very well done by Judge Blaxell.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The twelfth dot point on page 66 of budget paper No 2 says that the department is working closely with other key agencies on the state response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. I wonder whether the Premier could provide some details of the work that the department is involved with on that issue.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We are cooperating with that commonwealth-initiated royal commission in terms of powers to investigate and so on, and we are also making premises available. I ask Mr Tom Leeming to comment on it; he is closer to the action than I am.

Mr T.M. Leeming: The Department of the Premier and Cabinet is coordinating the government's interaction with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. There are a number of elements of that. The first is coordinating the response to notices to produce by the royal commission, which have been fairly large in number and certainly large in the volume of data requested through us to transmit over there for its consideration. There has also been a number of policy issues pursued by the royal commission on redress schemes, around civil litigation reforms, and dealing with sexual abuse in out-of-home care, and policy settings around that. We have coordinated, through that process, a number of government responses to issues papers that have been provided by the royal commission and we have appeared at various private hearings of the royal commission on some of those topics.

[3.40 pm]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier's adviser just said that there has been an examination of civil litigation reform. Does that mean that the government is reconsidering its position on the statute of limitations for children to bring action against a perpetrator?

Mr T.M. Leeming: The royal commission has so far issued only an issues paper on that topic; it is yet to issue its final recommendations. That is the stage the process is up to. There will be some recommendations by the royal commission that no doubt the government will wish to consider in due course. No recommendations have been made by the royal commission on that topic to date.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand that the royal commission has not yet made that recommendation. I am wondering whether the state government is nonetheless examining the issue of that tort reform.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I cannot answer that. I do not know whether Mr Leeming has any comment. We are doing all we can to cooperate with the royal commission.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the third dot point on page 69, which is the promotion of Western Australia's interests overseas. In August 2013, the Premier, to much fanfare, committed to setting up an overseas office in Africa, and I think he indicated that it was to be established in Nairobi sometime during 2013–14. How is that going?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We have a Western Australian representative in Africa; that is in place. I would suggest that that question is probably more a matter for the state development portfolio, but we certainly have a very good person in that position. When I went to Africa last year, he was of great assistance and took part in discussions in Lusaka with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa group about Western Australia

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signing a memorandum of understanding, which we subsequently did; so, yes, we do have a presence in Africa. It is a small one, but it is there.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier committed to setting up an office in Africa. I have been to the offices in China, Japan and various other places, and they are significant in representing the state's interests. The Premier indicated that the African office was significant for the reason that there is increasing mining activity going on in Africa and that Western Australia has some sort of role in that, particularly Western Australian overseas investors. He also indicated that the office would be in Nairobi. When we say "Africa", Africa is a big place. Do we have an office in Nairobi or is it just someone operating out of Dubai?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: They are separate. The Dubai office has an overarching role in Africa, but we have an employee who works from his office in Nairobi. That is obviously a fairly small operation. Africa is a big continent, but the Dubai office has oversight over Africa and the Agent General's office in London also deals with African nations because all of them tend to have offices in London. That is also a point of contact. We expect our presence in Africa to grow; it is small at the moment, but at least it has begun. For Western Australia to sign an agreement with the 19 COMESA countries is a big achievement for something that has been underway for only a little over a year.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the role as our representative in Africa his or her full-time job as a Western Australian government employee acting for Western Australia's interests in Africa?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: He is a contract employee. Again, I think the question is probably better asked of the state development portfolio. I am not sure whether the job is full-time. I do not know the details of the contract, but I am sure we can clarify that later in the afternoon.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I refer to page 71 of budget paper No 2 under the heading "Completed Works Asset Replacement/Upgrade" and the line item "Ministerial Office Accommodation—Dumas House". Is Dumas House one of the buildings that the government is looking at selling as part of the range of government accommodation that the government has announced that it will sell and lease back as part of a budget management process?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Are there any other buildings looked after or controlled by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that the government is looking at selling as part of its asset rationalisation?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We have a number of proposals about government accommodation and an overriding desire to see more government departments move out of the CBD to subregional areas in the metropolitan area. We have committed to the Department of Parks and Wildlife relocating to Bunbury and that project will get underway during the coming financial year. We are also looking at Joondalup, and, indeed, the member for Fremantle is campaigning very heavily for the Department of Housing to sell its premises in East Perth and lease premises in Fremantle, and that is one of the projects under consideration. If her ambition to see Housing located in Fremantle is to be realised, it will require the sale of an existing property and the leasing from a private developer of floor space. I assume the member would support that.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: I have a further question on the asset sale process. What role does the Department of the Premier and Cabinet play in identifying the assets that are to be sold and the process through which they will be sold?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The overall process is across government, so obviously that includes DPC, Treasury and other agencies, particularly if it is their premises. The process is being managed through the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee and DPC is represented in that process.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Which is the lead agency in the asset sale process? Is it DPC or Treasury?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is Treasury, but I can tell the member that of the two key components, the sale of non-property assets is very much the responsibility of the Treasurer and me, and the sale of land assets is very much the responsibility of the Minister for Lands and me.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: On a number of the occasions in this chamber the Premier has made great play of the idea that governments would be stupid to lease premises from the private sector because we do not pay tax while private landlords do. When did the Premier change his mind on that issue?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think that principle is still true. Other things being equal, it is preferable for government to own its own premises; for example, Dumas House, the Premier's office and, in the future—I am not suggesting that it is near—ultimately a Treasury building within the parliamentary precinct would make a lot of sense. However, it is not the only consideration. For example, the Department of Housing is in a building that is 40 to 50 years old; it is a rabbit warren and is essentially a dysfunctional building on a large block of land, so there might well be a good reason for selling that and moving that agency into a more functional office. If that

provides an opportunity to decentralise out of the CBD—Housing does not need to be in the CBD—to, for example, Fremantle, then on balance one might well decide to sell that property, use the proceeds for the lease and maybe retire some funds to Treasury. Although the principle of government ownership still stands, each issue should be viewed as a case-by-case issue.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I refer to the last line item on page 65 headed “Workforce Renewal Policy”. Roughly \$18 million will be cut from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet over the course of the forward estimates. How will those savings be made?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Again, I will ask the director general to comment, but questions on the workforce renewal policy are probably best directed to the Public Sector Commissioner. Insofar as it affects the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, I will ask the director general to comment.

Mr P.F. Conran: Savings will be achieved over the forward estimates based on bases of aggregate separations. We will be developing a range of strategies and there may be some slight downsizing in the department. When the opportunities arise, we will replace high-level officers with lower level officers. To give the member an example of how this can work—I made this point to the Premier yesterday—we had some fantastic work done in our agency by junior staff who were graduates who came through the department. Our graduates these days are exceptionally well qualified. They have exceptional skills. I wish I had had the opportunity to have the range of skills that these people have. These junior staff have demonstrated right across our agency the ability to carry out and conduct some of the most complex works. It is quite clear to us that the future of agencies such as ours and others is to bring through graduates and to build them up. We can then bring them through and replace higher level officers with people who are, frankly, more skilled than some of these officers at a higher level, and they are paid at a lower level. We will be looking at those opportunities as they arise, and we will also bring in some people from other agencies with cross-government skills as well to help assist with those people. I think we will see a younger, much more vigorous workforce, and although we have a specific responsibility under workforce renewal to reduce our budget, that will be one of the key ways in which we will do it and why it is appropriate that we use the term “renewal” as part of this policy because it will renew the public sector with some really fantastic young kids. That is a very important part of this process.

[3.50 pm]

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: How does the Premier manage the work value principles under his enterprise agreement? Classifications in the agreement are specified in respect of the type of work performed. How does the Premier manage that when getting more junior staff to do work of this high quality that the director general has just mentioned?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is a question for the Public Sector Commissioner, who oversees this process. The Public Sector Commissioner has responsibility for this policy but with respect to this department —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: That is what I was asking about.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was a general question.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No, it was not. It was a supplementary question to the information provided by the director general.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am answering it in a courteous way, which the member is not doing.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: You are being discourteous; that is the problem.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: You are such a rabbit!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Stop being so arrogant! If the Premier was not so arrogant, this place would go much easier.

The CHAIRMAN: Members!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The policy is the responsibility of the Public Sector Commission. I have just said in relation to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that the director general can answer, but ask the question of the Public Sector Commissioner.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The Premier is referring to members as rabbits.

The CHAIRMAN: Members, I am just discussing it. I did not have a chance to hear it because there was too much interplay across the chamber that I was trying to keep track of, so I did not hear the member use —

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I did call him a rabbit and I withdraw.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps that was a bad call; thank you. Do we have a further question or can we move on? Premier, the ball is in your court.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I just withdrew.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: So the Premier is refusing to explain how his agency —

The CHAIRMAN: Members!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: You did not call me an idiot, did you? I am mortified!

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I have asked the director general to answer.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Bateman, that is not helping! Member for Churchlands.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Premier —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Sorry, with respect, I understood that the Premier has asked the DG to answer my question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This is *Sesame Street*—the grumpy man in it!

The CHAIRMAN: The member could be right but let me check. My understanding was that the Premier said he had answered the question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The director general answered with respect to his agency.

The CHAIRMAN: My apologies.

Mr P.F. Conran: We will go through some processes of job redesign. Across our agency we have very general job descriptions because we try to ensure that we have a very flexible workforce, particularly in the policy area so that we can move people in and around our areas very quickly as the various demands arise. That does involve some job redesign. We are aware of some industrial instruments and we make sure we keep within our various obligations in those instruments. What is pleasing is the willingness of junior staff to take on the more complex roles. I remember having some great opportunities as a young officer and was given some complex roles at an early stage. As senior people in the department, we have an obligation to ensure that our young staff get wide experience and experience in dealing with complex issues. They get a great deal of confidence out of it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Across the forward estimates are \$18 million worth of savings. Is the Premier able to provide by way of supplementary information details of the functions that the department will stop, the roles that will be reduced and the number of people who will be made redundant, because in many ways that is the only way those savings can be achieved?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The savings are across the total wages bill of the department and, as the director general said, the longest serving—“older” if the member likes—and higher paid public servants will be replaced by younger people on lower commencement salaries, and that will be across the agency.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Can the Premier provide details of what is planned there by way of supplementary information?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Those decisions have not been made. The director general might be able to expand on some of his thinking but that is a matter to be managed within the department and it is not person-for-person; it is across the total wages bill.

Mr P.F. Conran: We deal with that on an emerging basis. We cannot now make a specific call as to what our full-time equivalent count might be or what our mix of people will be in four years. It depends upon the priorities of government, the people we have and how we move them around. I cannot give the member a snapshot, and I do not think anyone implementing this policy can properly give the member that. We have budgets within which we work; that is the budget we deliver and we work within that. That might mean some reductions of higher levels and replacement of other levels. It may mean that over a period we do not need as many people to carry out the same piece of work. One would hope that if people do the same sort of work year after year, there would be some efficiency in that process that could over time lead to a reduction in demand. Technology itself has also had an impact in that regard. Technology means that processes are sometimes a lot quicker, and sometimes the reverse of course, but we manage these things as we see fit.

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Mr C.J. BARNETT: Madam Chair, a question was asked prior to you being here about the contract for Robert Taylor. His contract is based on an annual salary of \$125 000, which is not exorbitant in my view. I said I would provide some details and that can be tabled.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we can table papers, Premier.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I will just ask someone to hand it then to the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: I refer to page 65 of volume 2 of the *Budget Statements* and the spending change related to the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre grant. Can the Premier advise us on the purpose for which these funds will be used?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I thank the member for the question. If any member of Parliament would like to visit the Pawsey Supercomputing Centre, I would be happy to arrange that. It is perhaps not interesting, but I think the scale of it makes an impression. In this year's budget the state government has allocated another \$21.5 million over the next five years for the operation of the centre. The significant capital funding of around \$80 million was basically provided by the commonwealth, and the state is assisting with the operation. It is conducted as a joint venture between the CSIRO and each of the universities in Western Australia. The centre's major use is obviously for the Square Kilometre Array project but it is also used quite widely across the mining industry and for medical research—a whole lot of areas. It provides a huge boost to the science capacity of this state and in the handling of big data, which in itself can be an attraction. We expect overseas users to become more prominent. It is the highest capacity supercomputer in the southern hemisphere and it has just had installed what is called a Magnus supercomputer. I think it is a great advance for science. Some of the examples of work beyond the SKA are as follows: Curtin University is using it to study respiratory diseases; the Department of Mines and Petroleum is generating a very high resolution map of mineral resources in the state; and the Carnegie Wave Energy project has done a lot of its modelling on the supercomputers and so on. There has been a really big advance in the science infrastructure of this state, and, indeed, in other areas I think our science capacity is growing very dramatically. It is a good advance.

[4.00 pm]

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: My question relates to note (b) on page 73 under "Income Statement". The number of full-time equivalents in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet has grown from 677 in 2013–14 to 706 in 2014–15. In what areas were those additional staff employed?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: As the member would be aware, the biggest employment of staff within Premier and Cabinet is electorate staff. I would also add to that staff in ministerial offices, which I can say are significantly below the staffing levels in ministerial offices under the former Labor government—I think about 20 fewer. That is a significant efficiency and saving to the taxpayer —

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: We did not employ friends and relatives like the Labor Party did. I will ask —

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is that why the Premier has blown debt by \$33 billion?

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How is Dexter Davies going?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Look at Hon Michelle Roberts and her record—mates' rates! However, in terms of staffing within the department's core function areas, I will ask the director general to comment. The Labor Party cannot run away from history! I am here to remind them all the time.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: How is Mia's dad going?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not really know if that is a question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is the sort of sleaze we get from the Labor Party. Never mind; we are ready.

Mr M. McGOWAN: It points out the hypocrisy.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Point out whatever you like; the sleaze from that side of politics is something to be seen to be believed.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: The Premier is the best comedy act in Perth!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Were you in the monster outfit?

The CHAIRMAN: Since it is now four o'clock and we have been here for two hours, I was going to ask if members wanted a five-minute break for a comfort stop or a 10-minute break to have a cup of tea as well. What would be the preference?

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Mr M. McGOWAN: Five minutes.

The CHAIRMAN: We will be back in here at six minutes past four.

Meeting suspended from 4.01 to 4.10 pm

The CHAIRMAN: Member for West Swan.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: We were part way through a question related to “Income Statement” on page 73 about the increase in FTEs from 677 in 2013–14 to 706 in 2014–15. Can I have an explanation about where the staff are from?

Mr P.F. Conran: In the policy service 2 area of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, four extra staff were put in positions in the strategic assessment for the Perth–Peel region. There were two extra in the native title area to assist in particular with the south west native title settlement. There has been one extra in the cabinet secretariat to assist with that area. We have had two extra come in on the transfer of the Western Australian natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements; they have come from the Fire and Emergency Services Authority. We have had some extras in corporate support and executive support. They are overhead-type positions. We also had a reduction of two in the science area. In our policy area, we have had an increase of 17. In our other area, service 1, we have had an increase of 12. Four of those are funding of FTEs to provide relief to parliamentary electorate officers. The member will appreciate we have new relief arrangements and we need cover for those. The cover is by way of an increased FTE allocation that allows us to cater for that. We have two extra in the Constitutional Centre to come on for some programs. We have three extra in the ministerial office areas. I just point out that the number of full-time equivalents is a snapshot in time. They are a snapshot on a particular day, so we can be up and down a few FTEs depending on issues such as people away on maternity leave arrangements and various staff movements. In that area we have also had—this is a peculiarity in how FTEs seem to be treated, as I understand it—an 11 extra FTE in the corporate services area. That reflected that in 2013–14 we had a recruitment freeze, and as a consequence of that, once that freeze was lifted, the number of FTEs seem to increase. We have also had some offsets in a reduction in administrative support of two in that area and also one in the State Law Publisher. Combined, that is 17 FTEs for service 1, and with the 12 extra in service 2 we get the total of 29.

Ms R. SAFFIOTI: Of those 12, four were electorate office backup, three were ministerial staff and what were the other five under that 12?

Mr P.F. Conran: Sorry, of the 12, that is in service 2, they are FTEs for strategic assessment, native title, cabinet secretariat and corporate support—they are spread across that area—and the Western Australian natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements. In service 1 it is four FTEs—sorry, I may have given you the wrong figure. There are 17 FTEs in service 1. There are four FTEs for parliamentary executive officers, three ministerial officers, two for the Constitutional Centre of Western Australia, and 11 for corporate services, recognising the change for the recruitment freeze, offset by losses of three FTEs in administrative support and at the State Law Publisher.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question refers to the Office of Science on page 73. One of the key funding areas for the Office of Science is the state government’s Western Australian Fellowships Program, which is a very successful program that has been running since 2003. I was wondering whether the minister could provide us with the details of the current science fellowships, which have been funded, and what the plans for future science fellowships are across the forward estimates.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is a good program. It is being continued, although the number may be fewer. I will ask Ms Jennifer McGrath from the Office of Science to comment.

Ms J. McGrath: We currently have three Premier’s fellows. One started in 2012 and two in 2013. They go through the fellowship for four years. The fellowship provides 50 per cent of the funding over that four-year period and the university that they are attached to pays for the rest of the program.

Mr R.H. COOK: Are there further plans into the future?

Ms J. McGrath: At this stage there is no plan for future fellows, but that is something that would be looked at in the development of the longer term strategies that will come out of the work around the science statement priorities.

Mr R.H. COOK: In the estimates hearings last year I asked the Premier about the science statement, “A Science Statement for Western Australia”, which was described at that time as a science strategy and the Premier said that it would be out at the end of 2014. Of course, it came out in 2015—this year—as a science statement or a capability statement. I am therefore wondering, in regards to the Premier’s statements in last year’s estimates

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hearings, whether he is intending to publish a strategy or a policy going forward, rather than a capability statement of where performance in science has come to, where it has come from and where it has arrived at.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I think that my choice of words, “A Science Statement for Western Australia”, better describes it. It is a document that identifies the five priority areas; that is fairly evident. It also documents the science capacity of the state, both in terms of universities, government and the private sector. It is a statement of where we are and what we are going to concentrate on. The implementation of that, I guess, comes in many ways. There is a high level of collaboration taking place now. Indeed, I and others are working on greater levels of international collaboration around those priority areas.

[4.20 pm]

Mr R.H. COOK: In that sense, as the Premier described, the capability statement is more looking at where we have come to or it is a backward-looking document. Is there a forward-looking document on how the government wants to proactively progress the science policy in this state?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It is a snapshot in time of Western Australia’s science capacity and who is involved. That needed to be documented because a lot of it was unknown to different groups. It is also forward looking in clearly identifying the five priority areas. In terms of government spending on science, obviously only a small part is through the science portfolio; most of it is through health, agriculture or whatever. In that sense, it is equally forward looking.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think we will try to get onto the Public Sector Commission relatively soon.

The CHAIRMAN: I have the member for Bateman down.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have one quick question on this. On page 70, there is reference to intergovernmental negotiations and positions and matters raised through the Council for the Australian Federation and the Council of Australian Governments and so forth. I refer to the medicinal cannabis trials going on in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria and the fact that each of those states—one Liberal and two Labor—has decided to participate. The Premier said on the weekend that Western Australia is part of the New South Wales medicinal cannabis trial. How is Western Australia part of the New South Wales medicinal cannabis trial?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: When that trial was suggested by the New South Wales Premier, Mike Baird, Western Australia was one of the states that agreed to be part of it. Through the health ministry, we are working with the New South Wales government. It is doing it but we are effectively participating in it. It was decided at COAG that it was pointless having several different trials around Australia, so we agreed that New South Wales would do it and every other state would participate—that is, share information, be informed, be kept up to date and whatever.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Is the Premier suggesting that Queensland and New South Wales are participating in a more active way in that terminally ill people and people with chronic pain are receiving drugs and Western Australia is watching?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The Leader of the Opposition should ask the health minister; he obviously has responsibility for that area. We agreed that we would be part of that and not have trials in different parts of Australia. It is as simple as that. An obvious reason is that the other states are closer. We are going along with it, and I was one of the first Premiers to indicate that we would go along with it.

Mr M. McGOWAN: New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria are trialling it, but when you say Western Australia is part of that, we are not actually trialling it.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No. We are not trialling it in Western Australia; that is self-evident.

Mr M.H. TAYLOR: I refer to the last dot point on page 67 of volume 1, budget paper No 2. Can the Premier please outline the significance of his April travel to India and Singapore and what opportunities for WA were highlighted?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Perhaps I meant more in India. On a personal level, I had not been to India for a long time; in fact, it was prior to my being a member of Parliament. India is developing rapidly. There is a projected eight per cent growth and everyone seems to be endorsing that. There is an enormous sense of confidence in Prime Minister Modi. I hope he can realise the expectations of him. Australia–India trade is only \$15 billion, and in comparative terms that is tiny. For Western Australia, the most immediate opportunities are, I guess, in the selling of liquefied natural gas. I think there are also obvious opportunities in training and in helping to develop and invest in the Indian mining industry, which, if I can say so, is quite backward compared to the industry here. Beyond that, the Indians would like to see more people attending university and trade training courses here and the opportunity for us to participate in training. It is early days but we are having some discussions about

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creating a sister-state relationship with Andhra Pradesh, which is seen as one of the more dynamic parts of India. I think it is early days but there is a lot of scope because our trade is very limited and restricted to a few commodities.

I think the relationship with Singapore is growing very strongly. Perth has the biggest Singaporean population outside Singapore. Its financial business services are already well established. Petroleum trade is important. Interestingly, one of the most significant but smallest programs was Western Australia's assistance with hockey coaching and training in Singapore, which was well understood. We are looking at doing similar work in water safety and the like, and at tying up with some of the big state-owned enterprises in Singapore. It will involve small dollars but will be well noticed. I will probably go back to Singapore in the next few weeks so that we keep building that relationship.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I note that the Premier went to Singapore. When we opened the office in Singapore, we had to close the office in Malaysia. We talked about this last year. The Premier noted that the Malaysian government had registered its concern with him about that decision. When the Premier went to Singapore, did he think to drop in on the Malaysians and talk to them about our relationship?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I do not think there is any problem at all with the relationship with Malaysia. They understood that the state's capacity to have multiple offices throughout South-East Asia was not realistic. However, and perhaps coincidentally, as the member will be aware, the Sultan of Johor has just purchased a small parcel of land at the Sunset site. I met with him and he encouraged us to develop a stronger relationship with Johor, bearing in mind Johor is literally 10 minutes from Singapore—so I think that is what will happen. We have had a longstanding and good relationship with Malaysia.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: In respect of the state of Johor, did the Premier meet anyone from the government of Johor?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have met the Prime Minister on several occasions.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: No; I am talking about the state of Johor. The Premier just mentioned the Sultan. I wondered whether he met anyone from the government of Johor.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No; but the Sultan has invited me to Johor, and that is something I hope to accept. I repeat that I have met Najib, the Prime Minister, several times over the years and I have a good relationship with him.

The appropriation was recommended.