

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Division 37: Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries — Service 1, Local Government; Services 2 and 3 and 6 to 15, Culture and the Arts, \$215 160 000 —**

Ms S.E. Winton, Chair.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for Local Government; Culture and the Arts.

Mr D. Ord, Director General.

Mr G. MacMile, Acting Executive Director, Local Government.

Ms S. Sherdiwala, Director and Portfolio Chief Financial Officer.

Mr R.D. Didcoe, Acting Executive Director, Culture and the Arts.

Mr M.E. Cunningham, Director, Investment, Research and Policy, Culture and the Arts.

Ms D.S. Merritt, Acting Director, Strategic Initiatives.

Mr G. Hamley, Chief of Staff, Minister for Local Government; Culture and the Arts.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available tomorrow. The Chair will ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. If an adviser needs to answer from the lectern, will they please state their name prior to their answer. 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. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, and I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information will be provided. I will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by Friday, 30 October 2020. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge that through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Nedlands.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I refer to page 549, service 1 at the top of the page, "Regulation and Support of Local Government". I was just wondering whether the minister can explain the slight increase in budget estimates for 2020–21 over the actuals in the previous year of approximately half a million dollars. I know that to some extent it may be explained by the first note on page 552, which talks about additional grant money for program delivery, but could the minister explain specifically what the approximately half a million-dollar increase in the budget is above last year's actual, please?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for Nedlands for the question. As the member would be aware, the appropriation for the department comes through a range of funding services or funded services. They include regulation in support of local government, culture and arts industry support, asset infrastructure support services to client agencies, regulation of gambling and liquor industries and sport and recreation industry support. In relation to the increase, these appropriation increases are mainly due to the WA recovery plan that the government announced as part of its recovery plan for COVID-19, and they include items that are introduced during the 2020–21 budget. The impact of some of these grants is that there are timing issues. The timing of grant payments to recipients will vary because they will vary from project to project and between years, resulting in variable appropriations. Essentially, the appropriation increase is attributable to the increased appropriations as a result of the WA recovery plan.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I move to the forward estimate for 2021–22, which is pretty similar in all three years, actually. There is nearly a \$2 million reduction in these years, which is a substantial reduction. Can the minister explain why there is such a big jump downwards in the forward estimates, and will that impact on staffing as well?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I will answer the member's last question first. No, there is no impact on staffing with regard to those variations. As highlighted there, the appropriations change because of grant funding and time lines, but I might ask the director general just to make a very quick comment in regards to those specific figures.

**Mr D. Ord:** They are just reductions in relation to the specific appropriations for recovery.

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** They have been expended.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Because it is a \$2 million drop, that is significant. The actual for 2019–20 was over \$15 million, and in estimates it is roughly \$15.5 million, dropping down to below \$14 million. It seems like there must be a sort of major reduction in some operational aspect. If indeed it is a reduction from just the budget to the forward estimates, it must have still been there the year before, because, basically, the actual for 2019–20 is very similar to the budget.

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I am advised the increase included an appropriation for the introduction of the puppy farming proposal.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That seems so here; I get that. A lot of work has been done on puppy farming, so the appropriation was boosted to cover that. That makes sense. Following through on the staff numbers, were staff numbers in the actual 2019–20 and also 2020–21 boosted? Did that increase in those two years?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I will ask the director general to make some comment regarding staffing, but as the member would be aware, there are elements relating to inquiry positions or inquiry requirements. There is some capacity to, if you like, access staffing in terms of inquiry that are actually accounted for. I think it is the liquor and gaming component of the staffing. However, if a local government, for example, has an authorised inquiry, the skill set of those who are involved in liquor can be attributable to that skill set for an authorised inquiry. I understand that that has happened.

**Mr D. Ord:** Members will notice that for the first time, the department has a new set of key performance indicators. Those were developed in consultation with Treasury and the Auditor General as a result of the machinery-of-government changes. In consolidating those, there are KPIs related to regulatory functions, and part of the local government regulatory functions were incorporated in a single KPI so the staff were actually allocated in that area. There are 55 FTE for local government, of which five are now caught up in the regulatory section or in the regulatory side of this budget, and the remaining 50 are recorded in the local government staff numbers. It is just simply a change in the way that Treasury has laid out the appropriation. There is no change in staffing numbers in this particular section of the budget. We have, in fact, received some additional FTE to deal with the national redress program, which is in the minister's culture and arts area, and we have also received an FTE to deal with additional infrastructure-related COVID recovery. They are in the forward estimates period for a period of years and then drop away once those programs end. Otherwise, we are at the same FTE level that we were at last year.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I note that on page 552, under the key efficiency indicators, it does say 55 staff actual in 2019–20, which the director general mentioned, and the budget is 50. That leads to another two questions. Will that 50 FTE that is in the budget carry through for the three years? That is one question. It means that in the local government area, there is a reduction of five, even though I think it was said that they can pinch staff from other sections that might have increased. Could the minister explain that?

[2.10 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I will answer the first question. Those figures remain for the forward estimates. As the director general has highlighted, because there is a change in the KPI requirements, staffing resources appear in another line item under another budget, but are utilised within the department's core requirements including, of course, in the local government area.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That leads to the other area. One of the big areas that the department has had a lot of work to do over the last four years has been inquiries, which the member mentioned, and I asked a question on the staffing numbers in that area. I understand there are nine that specifically work in that section, and they have been very busy because I think only one of the 12 inquiries were outsourced. They are obviously working overtime. One question is: can the department use other staff, or is it looking at increasing the number of staff in that area so that inquiries can be finished in a quicker timespan? That is, I guess, my question.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** First of all, in answer to the question regarding authorised inquiries, I want to make it very clear that authorised inquiries are the normal business of the agency. They are not extraordinary. An authorised inquiry is initiated by the department by the director general. We have had a number of authorised inquiries, as the member is aware, in regards to the last couple of years. The nature of the inquiries from council to council vary. Some of them are complex or require complex investigation and, therefore, a more enhanced response, if you like, from the department; others may be of a more minor nature. We cannot really compare an inquiry from one council to another, but I am confident the resources of the department are able to cater for the demand. I want to acknowledge the expertise of the investigating officers within the department; they are very effective and efficient officers who do a very difficult job. As the member would be aware, there are always two sides to any story when you are investigating a whole range of matters. Many of the officers are drawn from professions in which investigation is their bread and butter. I just want to dispel anything about authorised inquiries being something out of the ordinary; they are not. They are one of the key areas of business for the department, and the director general, and his officers, of course, allocate resources according to need.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Just following on from that, I understand it is the normal course of business, but the question relates to allocating staff. There are nine people in that branch that does inquiries. The question was: has the director general considered increasing the number from nine to, say, 12? The answer that the minister gave me to question on notice 6115 gave me a time frame of when each inquiry started and finished, and the one that was outsourced, which was the Wiluna one, was basically finished in three months. That was the main workload, but it was not reported on for, you know, nearly two years. I assume that it was ready to, I guess, be signed off by the staff, but that

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

---

they were busy doing other inquiries. This is just a suggestion. I am wondering whether the department has considered increasing the number or moving some staff from one section of the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries into that area to pick up the peaks and troughs.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy for the director general to make a comment.

**Mr D. Ord:** Thank you, Chair; thank you, member. Yes, as the member has described it is exactly as it happens. The department initiates authorised inquiries through matters that come to our attention through complaints or through referrals from other agencies—the Public Sector Commission, the Corruption and Crime Commission and the like. It is the only mechanism by which we can in fact utilise investigators to go in and demand information. By nature, they are often complex and, if we are working with other agencies, we have to work within their domains in terms of information management and the like. An investigation is not always able to work through a continuum, because it might need to stop for a period while we return information and then we are given further instructions to go on. We have, in fact, six FTE in the local government investigations team paid for through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries' appropriation, but we have drawn on the broader capabilities that we have in the department through Racing, Gaming and Liquor as it has a significant inspectorate. We have bolstered those numbers, particularly during COVID, because there was less work to do. The casino was closed for a long period so we were trying to advance, I guess, the closure of a number of inquiries that had been open for some time. We certainly do use contractors, but they are pretty well limited to forensic-type analysis, when the matter might relate to financial mismanagement, potential financial mismanagement or procurement matters. Dealing with behavioural matters or complaints against process in the act itself needs specialists with knowledge of the act and, as I said there was quite a significant backlog of matters to be dealt with. Due, I think, to the City of Perth being such a high-profile case, we had a period when a lot of people wished to bring matters to the attention of the department about their own local government, so it has been a very busy work period. But, as resources are available, we move them around within the department, and we are very confident that we are coming to the tail end of that heavy workload and we have adequate resources to meet any demand over the next financial year and the forward estimates.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** I refer to page 545, line 25, “Stop Puppy Farming Centralised Registration System”. I ask the minister to please expand on the purpose of the funding.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for the question. As the member is aware, the government's policy commitment to stop puppy farming has been introduced into the Parliament. The legislation has passed the Legislative Assembly and is currently in the Legislative Council for debate. The figures that appear in the budget relate to the centralised registration system. This is an important component of the policy initiative to stop puppy farming, because it is through a centralised registration system that the government will have the capacity to track a pup from birth through to its demise. Of course, it is a centralised system; therefore, no matter where someone may be in the state, there will be a record of a particular pup's birth. That also provides information on breed, et cetera. There have been queries—I think the member for Moore may have asked a question—regarding who is to pay for the centralised registration system. I have said continuously that the centralised registration system is to be paid for by government and that there is an appropriation for that centralised system to be able to be delivered. This is a policy area that we are very, very committed to. We are very keen to see the stop puppy farming legislation pass before the end of this year, before this Parliament concludes, because it will mean that we will see a substantial impact on the inhumane practice of puppy farming in Western Australia. It will also enhance the importance of responsible pet ownership. People who own pets have a responsibility, and we believe that the policy levers in regards to the stop puppy farming initiative are well founded and very strongly supported through a strong consultation process. There has been criticism by some elements, but we believe that this system is fair and equitable. There is a commitment to some exemptions, particularly for working dogs, but the central registration system is a key component. To water that down or to allow that to be dissolved in any way in terms of its importance or impact would, effectively, gut the legislation's policy initiative. There is money in the budget for the centralised system.

[2.20 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** “Stop Puppy Farming Centralised Registration System” under new initiatives on page 545 has, I am presuming, ongoing recurrent costs in the forward estimates for the operation of the system. I note in the forward estimates year 2021–22, it is \$1.8 million. Firstly, can the minister confirm that that \$1.8 million is included in \$13.844 million for the first line item of the service summary on page 549?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, that is correct.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Thank you. When I asked the question earlier about a \$2 million reduction in the forward estimates from \$15.6 million down to \$13.8 million, it is really closer to a nearly \$4 million reduction of the current operations. It is quite a substantial reduction from what it is now because that figure of \$13.8 million includes nearly \$2 million for the stop puppy farming register. Is that true?

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is how the budget appears. It incorporates the commitment for a centralised system under that puppy farming regime.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes. The point I am making is that there will be a more than \$2 million reduction in the last two years of the forward estimates. That has just been confirmed. It would be nice to know exactly what that reduction is in.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I will ask the director general to respond.

**Mr D. Ord:** Member, it relates to that matter we picked up earlier around the KPIs. Some of the appropriations moved into the other area in which we are capturing the KPIs. It has not been as clearly enunciated in the papers as it might have been. We will certainly take that up with Treasury. The money is there, but some of that salary is in the other appropriation, which pays for those five extra staff.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** With approximately \$1.8 million or \$1.6 million in recurrent costs in the future for maintaining a registration system, how many FTEs will that involve?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The establishment or construction of a centralised system will be in place or commence once the legislation has been passed. Of course, there will be a period in which the registration system will be established. I am not across exactly what that might mean in additional FTEs. Mr MacMile, are you happy to make a comment?

**The CHAIR:** Mr MacMile?

**Mr G. MacMile:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, member. Once the stop puppy farming bill is approved, there will be an initial increase in FTE for a contract to basically front-end the program—to take all the data from local governments and get the system up and running. That is for a period of only 12 months, so that is why there is an initial increase. In the subsequent out years of the forward estimates, it levels off to the ongoing administration and governance FTE of the system.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I went to the stop puppy farming briefing, and they said the numbers of extra staff. Can the minister say how many people will be dedicated to that?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. I am happy for Mr MacMile to give the member the detail.

**Mr G. MacMile:** There will initially be three contract positions for the 12 months in the ramp-up to implement the system. Then there will be five FTEs ongoing to run the system.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** In the forward estimates, where there are 50 staff, will that be changed in next year's budget to 55 FTEs to add the five for the puppy farming legislation?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That would be for publishing in the next budget, I would assume, yes.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I am trying to get it all together. I am assuming the dollars are in here, but the FTEs are not yet in?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is correct.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I refer to covering the costs of the registration system. I understand that \$1.2 million is for establishment, contractors, and the ongoing cost to the department. Has the cost to the councils of running their end of the registration system been considered?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy for Mr MacMile to respond.

**Mr G. MacMile:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, member. The system allows for the vast majority of the registrations to come through. Initially, all the local government information will be migrated across to the centralised system, and the vast majority of registrations from the go-live date will come directly through the centralised system. It will not prohibit the person who is used to and may not be proficient with online payments from still going into their own local government and paying across the counter as they might have done for a very long time. Through the system, there will be a periodical reconciliation between the centralised system and the local governments so that we make sure that we keep the records up to date and the financial aspects balanced.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** My understanding is that when someone registers their dog or registers it as a breeding dog, there will be a payment made at the council, so that there will be a cost recovery mechanism for the council. Is that correct, minister?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. For the breeder registration, it is a one-off payment.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** How is that fee set, who sets it, and what is it?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Mr MacMile, did you want to make a comment on that, because there have been some discussions around that area?

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Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**The CHAIR:** Mr MacMile?

**Mr G. MacMile:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, member. Yes, there has been some modelling as part of the business case. The fees are very similar to the fees that are currently paid. What we have seen is that the South Australian government has had a centralised system in place now for around four years, and it has found that over time everyone gets used to paying centrally. The vast majority—up to 80 to 90 per cent of people pay online. There still is a remnant small number of people who like to pay across the counter at their own local government. The system allows for both, and then, regardless of whether or not the fees are paid through the centralised system, or over the counter, there is a reconciliation between the two areas on a periodical basis.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** My understanding is one of the reasons that the Western Australian Local Government Association is not 100 per cent happy with the bill is because the fee, as I understand it, is set by the department, not by each council. I think they have taken some umbrage over that. Can the minister confirm whether that is his view of what the situation is?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Obviously, WALGA has a position on some of these matters, but the fees have been focused on affordability, but also cost recovery.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I think one of the issues is for some councils—say, out in the regions—it may be a more expensive exercise than in a metropolitan council. Does the minister have a comment on that?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Well, dogs and cats are core business of local government. It is something that local governments do and have done for some time. In fact, it is an important role for local governments. Local governments will need to comply obviously with the arrangements around the centralised system. Remember that this system will assist local governments to have greater capacity of understanding and control of some of the issues that impact on pet ownership and, indeed, inappropriate pet ownership. I think this policy initiative will also have great benefits for our local governments in order to do their core business of dog and cat management—in this case dogs—even more efficiently.

[2.30 pm]

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** All the planning is in place; the budget is in place. Are we just waiting on the other place to finalise the legislation?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** As I said at the beginning, this was an election commitment. We took this to the election in March 2017 and we have not hurried this legislation. We did not race it through in the first or second year because we wanted to get it right; we wanted to make sure that the consultation process was thorough. A significant number of people responded to the various mechanisms of consultation. It is quite remarkable that when we talk about pet ownership and, indeed, appropriate pet ownership, and issues affecting cruelty to animals and cruelty to pets, it raises the ire of the general public and, in fact, it raises the ire of the general public over and above many other issues. We believe this policy is a good one. We believe this initiative has been well devised, researched, and consulted on. The legislation is in the other place. We have had further conversations with some of the cross-party membership and minor parties in the other place, but we are keen that when this bill comes on for debate that it is passed before Christmas, because it will send a very strong signal to those people who practice puppy farming or engage in those practices or, indeed, engage in inappropriate and inhumane practices, that they have been targeted. We do not want to see that happening anymore. As I said, I think, more broadly, this will enhance people's understanding of the importance of responsible pet ownership as well, and that is a good thing. We only need to look at the Christmas period, for example, when huge numbers of dogs and cats are abandoned or dumped after Christmas. The shelters, of course, are faced with that problem of re-homing. This initiative also includes, as the member would be aware, a focus on people adopting and re-homing pets as well. It is a good policy and I hope the opposition parties support it in the upper house when it comes for debate before the end of the year.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is a lengthy answer to the member for Bunbury. It was a very good answer.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** It was a very good question!

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes. It certainly explained the minister's position well.

Can the minister explain the cost and fee structure of the centralised register a little bit more? When people who register the animal and pay the fee centrally rather than through the local government, what percentage of the fee is returned to the local government to assist with the administration of the task of managing the dogs that they have within the area, given that ranger costs are a substantial part of a local government's annual budget?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** Member, thanks for the question. Registration means that there is now a designated record of that particular dog. It is the responsibility of local governments now to address issues around pet ownership. We are not creating a new role for local government; that is a role for them now. The centralised registration system is the

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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mechanism to capture the data. There will be a transfer of data when the centralised registration system is established and all local governments will have their data. I cannot remember the term Mr MacMile used. It was not “transition”.

**Mr G. MacMile:** Migration.

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** The data will migrate across to the centralised system. That means that the traceability is established. The ongoing role and responsibilities of rangers for overall dog management and regulation continues; it remains the same. They will continue to respond to barking dogs, pet concerns and dogs getting through fences. All those sorts of issues will be ongoing as they have been currently.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is the minister’s view of the fee that is currently charged for a licence that it is to pay for only the maintenance of the local government’s register of the existence of the dogs, not to assist with the management of dog issues within the local government area? What do you think will offset the cost of the fees that the local government sector will lose?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** As the member is probably aware, when people register their dog currently they can register with a one-off registration for that dog. That is from memory. I am just thinking about my past dog that passed away. We are doing this for a centralised registration system. The reality is that rangers in the member’s seat of Moore and the shires or the councils around there will continue to respond to issues associated with dogs as part of their ongoing practices. It is a core business. This centralised registration system pays for that centralised registration system to be put into place. As I said, in my view, there will be very strong benefits for local governments in terms of ongoing controls, accessibility to data, traceability and response to issues that might cause concern.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I will tackle it a different way.

**The CHAIR:** Through the Chair, member for Moore.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Through the Chair, I have a further question. We have here the expense of the centralised system and there is only a very general understanding of the income from fees and fines, the sales of goods and services for the whole department. Is there a figure for the expected revenue inflow to the department from the fees that will be charged?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I might ask Mr MacMile whether he would like to make a response to that. Director general?

**Mr D. Ord:** Yes. I was just confirming that the modelling that was done does take in those fees and the net cost of running the central system is the appropriation. The registration fees are not intended to recover the cost of running the central system. Savings that will accrue to local government will obviously be that they will not be responsible for managing the registration of dogs. That saving could be accrued to other management of animals, as the minister has alluded to. It had been modelled, so it is a net appropriation. Revenue associated with the licence fees will not accrue into the budget until it is implemented.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is that modelling available now? I know that there was some concern from local governments that they had not seen the modelling. Is that now able to be released?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** I would need to seek advice. I am happy for Mr Ord to respond.

**Mr D. Ord:** We are not able to release the modelling at this moment of time because of procurement issues, but as soon as that has been completed, I will advise the minister that it is ready to be released.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Will the minister undertake to release the modelling when that has been done?

**Mr TEMPLEMAN:** If there are no commercial sensitivities or anything of that nature, I see no problem with that. As the director general has highlighted, there are some procurement issues associated, which the director general has highlighted. I have no problem with releasing that modelling when it is available for public release.

[2.40 pm]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Okay, thank you.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The member for Moore has picked up a very good aspect. We were told in the briefing that it is currently the business of local governments to register dogs. I actually was quite surprised to get an answer that there were three dogs registered in Balgo Mission. I was quite surprised that Halls Creek had three dogs there. Apparently 80 per cent of dogs are registered. I would imagine it is lower in Halls Creek. With the modelling that the member for Moore just talked about in terms of income generation of this new system, does the department have a rough idea of what percentage of breeding dogs will be registered? I guess it will increase over time. Is it close to 80 per cent? Only 80 per cent of all dogs are registered now. What is the likely modelling showing the registration of breeding dogs?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I think the member has touched on an interesting issue about remote communities and a general lack of capture, if you like, of the numbers of dogs there. This is not a new challenge, as he would probably be well aware. A centralised registration system will assist in, first of all, capturing that. We recognise that we will

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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need to work closely and collaboratively with remote communities. We recognise that. That is an important aspect that will be required. As the member is probably aware, there are voluntary organisations that have worked in remote communities for some time. Teams of vets and allied veterinarian experts go into remote communities and work with those local communities to sterilise dogs. From my understanding, that includes checking on the health and wellbeing of those dogs as well. Those activities will not discontinue. We would encourage that to continue. It is an issue that we are aware of. There are some sensitivities and issues around remote communities, and we will work closely and collaboratively on the implementation of the stop puppy farming initiative. We recognise that we will need to work closely with those communities.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** To get an answer to the question, given that there is an 80 per cent take-up of dogs being registered now, in the modelling that the minister will release when he gets the clearance, the take-up must have been worked out, because otherwise the revenue could not have been worked out. The government must have an idea of what the percentage take-up will be. I would guess that it will probably increase over time. It would be handy to know a rough idea of what capture it will get. We are going to get the information eventually.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy for Mr MacMile—I was going to call him Mr McGowan!—to respond, but, obviously, the aspiration is to capture in an increasing capacity as much as possible going forward. This initiative has been carefully planned and carefully considered. I would expect that we would be able to increase the capture over time. I do not know whether it is worthwhile putting a figure to that, but I am happy for Mr MacMile to make some comment, if that is appropriate.

**The CHAIR:** Mr MacMile?

**Mr G. MacMile:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, member. Certainly 80 per cent, I think I made reference to the South Australian centralised system that has now been operating for four or five years, and it has taken that time to get to around about 80 per cent. From some of the modelling, and even just anecdotally, we understand that there are several local governments where dog registrations are much lower than 80 per cent, unfortunately, so it will take time. Through a promotional campaign that will come with the launch of a new system, the community recognising that it is easy to use the system to keep their information up to date, and, as dogs that are not registered eventually die out, we will see a generational change of increased registrations.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Nedlands, you have a new question?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Thank you. Which one will I pick? The first dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 546 mentions a City of Perth inquiry report. Can the minister advise what departmental resources were involved in the City of Perth inquiry, and what cost to the department was—or a rough idea?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** If the member is referring to the panel inquiry, he would be aware that that is a judicial inquiry that was established through a decision by me back in November 2019—sorry, it was May 2018. Essentially, the panel inquiry is not an authorised inquiry. The panel inquiry is a judicial inquiry with an inquirer. In this case it was Mr Power who was engaged along with his team to initiate and carry out, under terms of reference, the panel inquiry into the local government known as the City of Perth. Previous to that decision, there were, as the member would be aware, back in the time of his government, issues that the department was responding to with regard to the City of Perth. Those resources, of course, would have been, as I said, responding to concerns that were being raised, and they were part of the department’s work. The cost for the City of Perth inquiry are well known. It cost \$7.5 million. That was an appropriation to a judicial process that the department, essentially, is not engaged in unless there are queries or questions about the department from the inquirer and their investigating officers. I think it is very important to make that differentiation between an authorised inquiry that is authorised and carried out by the department versus a panel inquiry that is very much a separate judicial inquiry undertaken by an appointed inquirer.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I asked the question in two parts. The minister has sort of addressed the second part. I was trying to get a breakdown of what the impact on department resources was. Separately, the inquiry, as the minister just said, cost \$7.5 million.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** So just dealing with that one —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It was \$7.75 million. I am just correcting that answer for Hansard.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Is it possible to get a breakdown of the different allocations of that \$7.75 million in terms of where it went? It did not all just go to the commissioner.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, if the member puts that on notice.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** If it is a question of notice, we will not get it in the time frame. Can I get it through a supplementary question?

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**The CHAIR:** Minister, what do you agree to provide?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is supplementary information that provides an outline of the breakdown of costs for panel inquiry—I want to make sure it is the panel inquiry—the panel inquiry into the City of Perth.

[*Supplementary Information No B3.*]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** So just to finalise that line of inquiry, who will be paying for those costs?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The government has always made it clear that under the act it has the capacity to recover those costs. That will be part of a negotiation, and, essentially, once the decision is made, an order to the City of Perth.

[2.50 pm]

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The City of Perth issue obviously went back to the previous government. Department resources were used—that is, the section that deals with inquiries in the normal course of business. Is that where the department would have incurred ongoing costs prior to the review, for staff in that section?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Those costs would have been part of the normal business; for example, inquiries, complaints and issues come in to the department about various councils and are assessed on their seriousness or whether any further information is required to be looked at. That is part of the business of the department. We do not allocate a dollar to every complaint. That is part of the department’s core business, so I do not think we would be able to say to the member that there was X allocation of officer time to the City of Perth prior to the panel inquiry being established.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have a further question on the City of Perth costs. At this point, has the \$7.75 million been paid by the government?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, it has.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Was that money paid from the minister’s department or from Treasury?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The director general.

**Mr. D. Ord:** The department paid for the inquiry. The inquirer and those parties assisting the inquirer were contracted through the State Solicitor’s Office, but we paid the incurred costs and the costs associated with setting up the inquiry, the headquarters and equipping it to perform its duties. In prior budgets, we received an appropriation towards the costs of the inquiry, which were in previous budget papers over the last two years. The department met, out of its own resources, any costs over and above the amount that we were appropriated by Treasury, and we will be recovering that as part of the total cost. We have costed those direct costs for the inquiry only from the time the inquiry started until its conclusion.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is the breakdown of the current or expected return located in any of the income statements or is it in some other document? Where in these documents does it state the return of the \$7.75 million?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** As the director general said, in previous budgets, there was an appropriation of \$4.2 million. The additional balance was met by the department, but the full recovery, as under the act, is able to be retrieved via an order from myself as minister, and those figures appear in the balance sheet. Mr Ord?

**Mr D. Ord:** It is a receivable on the balance sheet, so it does show as money owing to the agency.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Okay. Would a more detailed balance sheet show it?

**Mr D. Ord:** Yes.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** On that same point, when the allocation was put in previous budgets, was it allocated directly to the department as a separate item or was it allocated to service 1?

**Mr D. Ord:** It was identified as a separate item, from memory.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** That may explain why there is almost a \$4 million gap between the last two years’ expenditure and the forward estimates.

**The CHAIR:** Do you have a new question, member for Nedlands?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes, I do. The first item under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 546 refers to the Local Government Act review panel report. It is similar to the question about the City of Perth. Can the minister advise what departmental resources were involved in the Local Government Act review report, and how much did that cost to the department?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** As the member would probably be aware, the government has been reviewing the 1995 Local Government Act. The early phases of the consultation included an expert panel—sorry, not an expert panel;

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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a panel with expertise—from a broad cross-section of stakeholder representation varying from the WA Rangers Association, WALGA and LGPro, through to CCI et cetera. That was the early phases. The key focus of that working group, if you like, was to distil a whole range of issues associated with the existing act and current and future challenges for the sector going forward. That allowed and also initiated extensive feedback through a range of community consultation processes, be they by submission, be they by hearings or be they by meetings et cetera. I then appointed the Local Government Act review panel to essentially take a greater look at the information that had been collated in the first two phases. The expert panel comprised five people with varied experience, including elected representative experience, and an academic who has extensive experience in local government and the evolution of local government policy. It was chaired by the member for Balcatta, David Michael.

The panel essentially consolidated and distilled a lot of the information, issues and pertinent focuses into a report. The status of that report is that it is under consideration by government. That is because we are now focused on, in our second term if re-elected in March, effectively developing a green paper. As the member knows, a green paper or a green bill involves further consultation with stakeholders and further development until we have a consolidated bill to present to the next Parliament. That is the intention. The panel report, which canvasses a range of recommendations, will be considered by government. The director general and the department have had solicited and unsolicited feedback on the report by David Michael's panel, and they crossed issues ranging from the need for compulsory voting through to preferential voting, and through to a commissioner for local government. All of those issues are canvassed, and recommendations have been made. The government has not yet determined which elements we will take forward in a green bill, and some issues may be captured in election commitment policy.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** To get back to the question, the question was what resources were involved, and what was the cost? I understand and thank you very much for your answer, but it was also about the dollars and the FTEs.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Do you want to comment on that, Mr Ord?

[3.00 pm]

**Mr D. Ord:** The review panel began not long before COVID. We were managing the review panel within our existing staff allocation and appropriation resources. As a result of many other things not being able to happen, we in fact deployed staff onto the review, and, with the good grace of all who were participating, which included eastern states members, which we did online, we were able to complete the review. The only payments made, apart from normal staff wages—they prepared all the background papers for the review and research—were costs associated with the independent members. Those staff already salaried through their own institutions were not paid. I do not have the precise figure for the general cost but it would not be more than \$100 000 I would imagine.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The second part of my question was about the non-departmental costs, and Mr Ord has just mentioned that. Is it possible by way of supplementary to tell us who was the beneficiary of those? I understand the answer to the first bit, that you were trying to endeavour to use existing departmental staff to do the report. Can you say which branch did the review. It obviously was not the same people as those who did the inquiry. Was there another branch within the department that specifically did this particular review?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Can I just clarify, because the question was not very clear. For the independent members of the five-person committee, there was some remuneration for those who were able to be remunerated under the appropriate arrangements; for Mr Michael, of course, as chair, there was not. I think you want those figures. The figures relating to those costs have already been answered, in my understanding, in a previous question on notice. However, we will seek to find the answer to that question on notice and provide it to you —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Via supplementary?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. We will do that via supplementary, but that is specific to the panel.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** On the question about the officer costs, again, this is business of the department, so we will not be able to provide a specific “this is the cost for the staff”. We have policy people in the department, and their role is to inform on policy, and many of those were involved in the development of the papers and the preparation of information for the panel.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, could you just repeat for *Hansard* what you will be providing?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We will seek to provide supplementary information about the breakdown of costs for the members who served on the Local Government Act review panel.

[*Supplementary Information No B4.*]

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you very much. Go ahead.

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Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Just on the same area, page 546, under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, is it possible for the minister to provide a breakdown of the structure of the department, specifically those in the first item, the local government area, and of the different branches? We know that five to nine people work in the review section. I am interested in the branch that actually does this review.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That same information was provided to the select committee that undertook an inquiry into local government and recently handed down a report to the Legislative Council. That information is available in that context, and I would refer the member to that.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Further to that—

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Do some homework!

**The CHAIR:** This is still in relation to page 546—

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It has already been provided.

**The CHAIR:** The first item, about the City of Perth inquiry?

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** No. It is actually to do with the Local Government Act review panel report. Can the minister advise how many people work in the particular branch that is working on this section, because presumably the same people are working on a response to the report and also on developing a green bill or a review of the act. There might be three questions there, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Three separate questions. Go ahead.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The local government section has what is called “Strategic Initiatives”, which relates to the development of policy around the new act. That is the equivalent of 12.8 FTE. But again, I need to remind the member that there would be times when expertise might be brought across to inform specific elements of the review process.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Minister, my question refers to outstanding community assets that we all enjoy in our electorates. I am talking here about local public libraries. I have both the Dianella Public Library and the Inglewood Public Library. Can I refer the minister to page 546, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”?

**The CHAIR:** Happy.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN:** Happy? I am happy. It is a great library, Inglewood. The eleventh point on page 546 refers to the implementation of the WA public libraries strategy. Can the minister please explain what this issue entails?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. I have a particular interest in—as many people have—but also a keen concern about our ongoing support of libraries across Western Australia. The interesting fact is that during the COVID period, a number of our local libraries, sadly, were closed by many of our local governments, but we then saw a number of local governments, particularly with our State Library of WA, do some tremendous thinking outside the square and create initiatives such as the click-and-collect regime and mystery boxes of books and all those sorts of things. We cannot underestimate the importance of libraries, because there was a time, not that long ago, when there was talk about the demise of libraries because of the rapid evolution of technology. That has not been the case. In fact, our State Library has been experiencing an uplift in memberships. During the COVID period, 5 000, from memory, additional memberships took place. I think all communities now have an even greater understanding of the important role that local government and public libraries play.

The public library strategy, which the member is referring to on page 546, entails the ongoing strategic partnership between the state government and our public libraries throughout Western Australia, including, of course, the large number of local government libraries. It is the third state partnership agreement to be signed, and it is focused on the provision of library services. As the member may be aware, I appointed Hon John Day to chair the State Library board. He, the Premier, myself, Mayor Tracey Roberts, and Mr Jamie Parry, the president of LGPro, signed that in September. It maps out the collaboration going forward in how we deliver library services throughout the state. It is a very important strategy.

During the COVID period in WA, a community resilience scorecard study was undertaken. That collected responses from nearly 8 000 residents in 120 local governments in a four-week period during June and July. That was a critical period during COVID, as the member might be aware. That consolidated the understanding of the important role played by local libraries. That strategy will help guide us into the future with regard to library services. Library services will, of course, be challenged by the evolving technological changes, but, in terms of resilience, our libraries are particularly resilient institutions and very, very important community institutions.

[3.10 pm]

**The CHAIR:** Member for Moore.

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have a further question on libraries, and I have another question after that. I refer to page 557 and the first note under “Explanation of Significant Movements”, which I think is the explanation or refers to the situation that the minister has just outlined. Does this mean that the local government authorities have been gifted assets of around \$43 million, that being for the collection of books held in their libraries; and does that then mean that there is no longer sharing of resources between different isolated local government libraries?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** In terms of the gifting, I understand that is correct, and it is that figure that the member highlighted of \$43 million, or the value of the \$43 million asset. I might ask the director general to answer the second part of the question in terms of the logistics of what that means.

**Mr D. Ord:** Thank you. Yes, the book stock is traditionally depreciated over a three-year cycle, so obviously in passing over that asset value it is written down and then local governments achieve the funds by way of grant and continue to purchase the stock. This is part of a library management agreement that maintains support for regional libraries and the tradition of people being able to go to a library and order a book that is on demand. That is centralised through the State Library system. It identifies where that book is in the system and then makes it available to regional libraries. The interlibrary loan system continues. All that has happened is that instead of the state centrally buying the books for each local government, or a portion, progressively the state is becoming a lesser and lesser provider of those resources. That is why local governments sought to get it in the way of a grant so that they could match it with their own expenditure on library resources in a more efficient way. Centralised buying of books is today not as economically viable as it was in the early days. Libraries could literally buy cheaper from Amazon, I think, than they could from the central buying system. The interlibrary loan system continues. It is a question of where that library resource resides, and the libraries all committed to continuing to move it, because each library, whether it is metro, regional or remote, is potentially a beneficiary of the interlibrary loan service.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Further to that, in the future will there be no central support for the purchase of more books?

**Mr D. Ord:** Our larger metro libraries will largely purchase their own resources. For remote and regional libraries, there is a remote and regional library support program, and the State Library will continue to provide those services of purchasing if the remote and regional libraries require them. Many of them actually do like the library to make up a show bag, if you like, of materials for them because they do not have the expertise necessarily to put into looking at a good, balanced program. The library is very adept at also identifying Western Australian publishers and books—we have the nation’s only Aboriginal book publisher—and in making sure those sort of materials are incorporated and then circularised to communities. For instance, Indigenous literacy is in big demand. Sourcing the right kind of Western Australian content is really important to those communities. So, yes, where the system requires it, the State Library will continue to provide a centralised service.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is a fund established to enable that to happen? Is there a finite resource or an allocation each year? Is there a contestable system? How is it determined which of the small libraries can apply? At which level is there a cut-off to say they can apply or they cannot apply?

**Mr D. Ord:** The State Library gets its appropriation, as it did before, for the purchase of library materials. It now allocates that between the library system. That includes, obviously, an allocation specific for remote and regional. Those sums are then either acquitted by way of a grant or are identified for a programmatic response to the regions. There is also a working group underneath the Library Board, which has on it Public Libraries WA and a number of other people with expertise. That determines and works on how that distribution happens. It is done co-operatively and on a needs basis.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 549. The first item under “Service Summary” is regulation and support of local government. I am talking about the actual figures for 2019–20 and I guess also the estimate for the coming year. In the previous financial year, we had the local government statewide elections. Under the new mandated training system, local governments will be rolling out training. I think they have one year in which to complete their training. Is that correct?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is currently underway.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister please outline what tracking is taking place of the councils to ensure that the training is undertaken, and what resources are allocated to that? Is there any expense to the department in carrying out that requirement for training?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Under the universal training regime, any local government or newly elected local government member from the last election, which was 2019, would be required to carry out the training modules. There are five, from memory, and they cover issues around roles and responsibility, budgeting and finance et cetera. The requirement is for them to carry that out. We have been in discussions with WALGA about effectively the monitoring of compliance with that, so what percentage of elected members in the 2019 cohort have completed it.

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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It varies from my last figures. I think WALGA is updating. There was a request, because we have almost reached the anniversary, I think from memory, of that election of 2019. My understanding is that WALGA is updating and preparing and has had some discussions with its member councils about the actual numbers. From my last look at the numbers, they vary. There was certainly not 100 per cent take-up, but we are waiting on those figures. I understand, director general, that we are waiting on an update from WALGA on the latest figures.

**Mr D. Ord:** Which would explain what percentage of completed—

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Why are we waiting on WALGA for the answers there? Why is the department as the regulator not aware of that? Is that because WALGA is the sole training provider, or are there other training providers?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** No, it is not the sole training provider.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is the department actively monitoring the situation or—

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We are, remembering that WALGA ultimately was a strong supporter of the universal training regime. My personal view is that it is in the interests of all local governments that the universal training regime is carried out in good faith, because we want to see local government elected members charged with the latest and best information so that they can carry out their important role. We only need to see recent CCC reports and inquiries to know that there are concerns and issues about elected members understanding their role and responsibility vis-a-vis the role and responsibility of a CEO or a paid staff member of a council. So the training regime is an important one, and we are encouraging the uptake of that. The elected members whom I have spoken to who have completed the training—I saw one only the other day coming out of Parliament, actually, the member for Collie—Preston, and he said he was challenged about the training. However, he completed it. It was online. I would hope that, in good faith, people understand the reasoning behind having a universal system.

[3.20 pm]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Can the minister inform me how many training providers there are, and what steps were ascertained to ensure that the training was sufficient to meet the department's requirements?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** There are three. They are WALGA, and two TAFE establishments. The content, if you like, was devised within those five key themes or parameters. It was designed to be not overly onerous, but complex enough for a local government elected member to have an enhanced understanding of those five elements as they impact on them in their capacity as a decision maker. It is a competitive regime between those three providers, and there is choice. Local governments have exercised their choice of those three providers.

**Mr D. Ord:** I can add that because the content that they are providing was department content, they are providing the rates of enrolment and completion. Therefore, we have a direct ability to monitor the take-up rates. We are also being contacted by local governments which have members who for various reasons will not be likely to complete the training; and, if the reason is reasonable, we have been understanding of that. Given COVID, there are a number of people who were interrupted because they had to get on to other duties. They are clearly attempting to complete within the 12 months, and we think that in the circumstances of this year it would be reasonable to give some latitude to people who are nearing completion but have not quite completed. At this stage, the minister has indicated that members are overall pleased with the availability of the training, that it is available both face to face in regional and metro, as well as online, and that the content is relevant. It was focused heavily on the governance elements of being an elected member. There have been some suggestions that new units be developed to cover the role of local government planning, as members feel that further training in that regard would be advantageous. Therefore, further development of units might take place beyond this initial period of time. In terms of assessing the effectiveness versus breaches of the act or complaints to standards panels and the like, we will certainly be assessing whether people who have completed the training are less likely to incur minor failings of governance, which would obviously be the intent of the reform.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Madam Chair?

**The CHAIR:** Yes, minister.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Just for interest, the member for Nedlands asked about the costs for the review panel. I was aware that was actually a question from the member for Moore on 16 June—it was PQ 6222—and we have answered that. The total cost for the Local Government Act review panel was \$65 630.

**The CHAIR:** The member for Nedlands has the floor.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Thank you, Chair. I refer to page 549, “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”. My final question is on the first outcome, just to wind it off. I know it is a new effectiveness indicator, and it is always hard to come up with a service indicator for the first time. I would like the minister to explain how this actually measures the effectiveness of this service. I have worked at the Auditor General and assessed these myself and also had to—

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Mr Ord can probably answer—

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** This is one I think the minister might want to have another look at.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy for Mr Ord to respond to that probing question from the member for Nedlands.

**Mr D. Ord:** Member, it has taken two years to work with the Office of the Auditor General and to agree on this. The previous measure was actually related to the number of local governments that had an action taken against them. Of course, that rather encouraged the department to do nothing in order to meet the measure, which is a worry, or not.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Or not, correct.

**Mr D. Ord:** So, needless to say that was not considered to be necessarily a sign of effectiveness. For a substantial number of local governments, actions were taken in support of compliance. That is really related to the proactivity with which the Office of the Auditor General is seeking for us to work, in support of its function now of auditing local government. It is, of course, auditing performance and finance measures in local government. Its belief is that the department should be proactive in providing services in support of measures that it identifies. This 40 per cent was identified based on the audits of the last couple of years by the AG as being appropriate—if we could show that we were engaged with 40 per cent of the local governments in support of strengthening their governance and performance, it would indicate that we as an agency were doing our job. Clearly, if we were engaged with less—there are 137 of them—the concern would be that by not being engaged, we may be letting the sector down. So, essentially, that is how this number has been arrived at.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** The sentiment is right. The problem is the word “action”. It does not define what the action is. If the action is related to, say, an Auditor General’s report, that is probably a bit more defined. An action could be a phone call, which would be terrific. In fact, if someone rang up a local authority with a problem and it could be answered with a phone call, terrific. If it has to be answered through an inquiry, it is not so terrific. The action can be minimal, or great, in terms of effort, but the outcome we want is a good outcome for the local authority. The sentiment is heading in the right direction but I think it needs to be more defined. That is my comment anyway.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Mr Ord is keen to respond.

**Mr D. Ord:** The Auditor General is insistent that we evidence actions. In this case, we would expect that we would be able to document the action related. It might be correspondence entered into over a matter. We get a lot of people asking for advice on a particular part of the act, and we would reply in writing generally to such replies. There have been a lot of informal matters between the Department of Local Government in the past that were never recorded. That probably has not helped give the Auditor General comfort that the agency is doing its job. He does require us to actually establish that it is a formal action, and it would take many different forms, from an officer visit to an inquiry, a response to the integrated planning reporting, a response to annual reports—all sorts of matters—but they will have to be tracked and logged so that they can meet this KPI.

[3.30 pm]

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I refer to page 544, item 79, the Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip. I note that last year in estimates the minister suggested that it was expected that 300 000 to 500 000 people would visit the new Museum in its first year. The minister subsequently announced free entry for the first 18 months, which is appreciated and welcome. Given that we are living through the COVID pandemic and the associated restrictions, has that number been revised in relation to the anticipated visitors for 12 months? What are the numerical restrictions likely to be in both stage 4 and stage 5 restrictions for visitation to the Museum?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for the question; it is an important one. As the member knows, the new Museum, Boola Bardip, will open on 21 November and effectively under phase 4 restrictions. The projected numbers, of course, are influenced by the fact that the government has determined that admission will be free for the first 18 months, and obviously that will be monitored very closely, but influenced by any COVID-related requirements. The design of the new Museum actually does allow strong visitation numbers because of the nature of the footprint of the actual Museum itself. As members are aware, there are art galleries and large connecting spaces, so the capacity to deliver to a COVID-safe plan is within the consideration of the operation of the new Museum. I will ask the director general to make perhaps a comment about the ongoing review of potential numbers, but we expect that under a phase 5 situation there would be close to the expectation of those numbers that were previously recommended.

With the opening, for example, we have got a nine-day festival-related opening regime from 21 November to the end of November, and under the COVID safety plan has been designed to allow people to go through in numbers that will have them experience the galleries, but not in a free-for-all situation. We are going to monitor that over that nine-day period and we would expect that those arrangements in terms of numbers being carefully controlled under a COVID-safe plan, will continue up until certainly in towards Christmas. But of course if we enter phase 5 any earlier, then that opens up the Museum to even greater numbers. Bearing in mind as said, the footprint of the Museum is quite unique in that it is a space that can accommodate even under the two square metre rule, significant numbers

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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at any one time. But that has got to be carefully monitored over the period from opening, through to the next phase. I will ask the director general just to make a comment about the modelling of numbers under various scenarios.

**Mr D. Ord:** Thank you, minister. To manage the COVID situation we have put in a ticketing system for the new Museum. Even though it will be free, people will require a ticket to attend. Recognising strong public interest, we ran a ballot for the nine-day festival and we had over 75 000 people seek to take up that offer, which indicates that the numbers that we are predicting for the first 12 months we should achieve comfortably on the enthusiasm of people to come and see the Museum. The Museum will use a timed visit strategy to get numbers through, so although the numbers in the building have to fit the two square metre rule under phase 4, we are managing that through ticket allocations with a period and we will therefore get a number of visits through in a single day based on a periodic time-based ticketing allocation.

At this stage, we would be expecting the Museum, as I said, to meet its targeted numbers. The Museum is so large that the two square metre is probably pretty close to normal capacity in reality. The difference is obviously that we are going to manage ingress, egress, and the numbers of people in any particular gallery at any particular time through the flowthrough model we have arranged for the managing of operating in a COVID-safe way.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** What is the magic number under the two square metre rule and what would the magic number be if that rule was not there?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is a good question.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** It is also a fair question because you are venue managers.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I do not have the exact square metreage of the total footprint of the Museum including its open spaces and the sitting room down below.

**Mr D. Ord:** The Museum will have those numbers.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, the Museum will have those numbers. We are happy to provide that.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** So, can we take that as supplementary information?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Just an example, the city room, which is the large space that leads to the old jail, under COVID phase 4 can accommodate 500 under the two square metre rule. To answer the question of the member, I am happy to provide supplementary information with regard to the maximum occupancy of the Museum under modelling for phase 5.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** And phase 4.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Phase 4 and phase 5. We can provide that.

*[Supplementary Information No B5.]*

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** On page 559, under service 13 “Public Sites, Public Programs and Collections Accessed On-site” there is a list of full-time equivalent employees and between 2018–19 and 2019–20 that grew from 71 to 84, and then it grows significantly in 2020–21 to 127. Is that an indication of the additional staff required for the WA Museum, or is there another explanation for it?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Effectively it is all new Museum staffing, so those additional FTEs are to staff the new Museum.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Boola Bardip—the minister might pick where I might be coming from on this one. A long-term exhibit that has been held by the WA Museum is going to be enhanced and that is actually a plaster-cast model of a significant portion of the Parthenon Frieze. I think it is recognised as the most complete copy of the Parthenon Frieze that exists in one place. Thanks to the minister, who has provided both briefings and visits for me and the member for Mount Lawley and others, I know that that frieze has been worked on and has been looked after and improved. Can the minister or the director general outline the intention in relation to display of that frieze? How is it going to be displayed and what leverage is it likely to be used in order to attract more visitation to the Museum, perhaps in the future from overseas and interstate?

[3.40 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** To answer the first question, as the member is aware, the frieze features prominently in the Jubilee Building, which of course has been extensively restored. It is a heritage building, and it lines, if you like, the upper part of the Jubilee Building. It has been enhanced in terms of its display, and also interpreted, so there is an interpretation that is available for those people who come into the Museum. It will add to a number of exhibition assets of the new Museum Boola Bardip that we will be able to showcase to not only Western Australian and Australian visitors but international visitors when it is safe for them to come. It is also an important element

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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of the worldly aspect of some of our exhibition pieces that the Museum of Western Australia is custodian of. The member is right, it is an opportunity that can be exploited in the positive context for showcasing to international visitors in particular. Of course, given that it is obviously a strong Greek influence, it is an important element of our multicultural Western Australia. I want to highlight that the Boola Bardip is very much a museum that showcases the stories of Western Australia in all of its contexts, including of course the very rich Indigenous history of Western Australia, but also the celebration of the very multicultural nature of the Western Australian population, and the history of migration in our Western Australian history is very, very prominent.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Just on this issue —

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The member is very passionate about these.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Yes, we are.

We have discussed this issue before about the opportunity to leverage perhaps loan exhibits from other museums, particularly the many museums in Greece. Has any further work been done on that? I know it is a difficult time with travel, but again I repeat my offer through my capacity as president of the World Hellenic Inter-Parliamentary Association to assist with my contacts within the Greek government, and generally within those museum spaces, to enable an exchange where I think it is just as valuable as bringing pieces here to exhibit to move and exhibit our own wonderful history, including our Indigenous history internationally, especially at those very heavily visited museums overseas. So, again, has any work been done on that?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** One of the great advantages of the new Museum for Western Australia is, of course, that we have a temporary exhibition gallery in the new Museum that will be able to showcase touring exhibitions. Those sorts of exhibitions will be paid ones, where people will be able to go and see exhibitions that might be toured from the British Museum, for example, or other museums from Europe, or other parts of the world. Mr Coles, who is the director of the Museum, of course is a former British Museum curator, I think from memory, and so our Museum is within a network of international networks that look at the touring of major exhibitions that are of world class and world status. Yes, we would be happy to take up the member's offer as an ambassador of the Hellenic association that he represents.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Hellenism, yes.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am sure that we will announce soon the first of the temporary exhibitions for next year. But the scope for our Museum to showcase Greek artefacts, for example, Roman artefacts, or world Indigenous artefacts will be absolutely possible and part of the programming of the new Museum going forward.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Perhaps we will talk offline about that.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I know the member is very passionate about it.

In terms of the capacity of the Museum under phase 4—this is the same as for phase 3—the Museum is constrained by building and fire regulations which are not code-related, but are associated regulations. That total number is 2 500, so it is very significant.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** That is under phase 4?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** How about under phase 5?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Under phase 5 it is 2 500.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** It will be the same.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to service 3 on page 553, “Asset and Infrastructure Support Services to Client Agencies”. I have no idea what this section refers to.

It seems to be a new allocation. Could the minister explain the purpose of this support service?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** The department provides asset maintenance functions to the Culture and the Arts portfolio and the buildings it directly manages. A majority of the 64 buildings are heritage-listed so obviously there is ongoing asset and infrastructure services required to maintain those buildings. The department primarily delivers this service through the Department of Finance's maintenance service arrangement. The member may be aware that the department has recently taken on responsibility for additional assets in recent years, including the Perth Cultural Centre. Previously, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority oversaw the Perth Cultural Centre—that is now the department's responsibility and realm—and also the old Sunset Hospital in Nedlands. The asset and infrastructure support service maintenance programs continue to address issues on those sites and they include compliance, safety and functionality for their continued use. So that is what that refers to.

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Would the minister be able to provide a more detailed breakdown of the spending of that particular service area by way of supplementary information?

**Mr D. Ord:** We can provide it. Maybe I will answer the question. Yes, the asset maintenance division has that as the headline budget. Underneath that is a committee which has a various portfolio with the Perth Theatre Trust, the Art Gallery, the State Library, and the Museum on it, and of course we administer a range of buildings, places, on behalf of the minister. We have some 64 different buildings in the cultural portfolio. They establish an annual maintenance budget, so a strategic asset management plan is put in to Treasury every year and underneath that is the maintenance program. The maintenance is prioritised based on critical needs and then works programs are established under that.

As the minister indicated, we are part of the CUA through the Department of Finance, so there is a company that does small level property maintenance, minor electrical work, plumbing and the like, and then more major works, such as the replacement of particular pieces of equipment or a lift facility, something like that, or a membrane on a roof will be contracted out by way of tender through the maintenance division going to contract. So we can provide the budget.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to provide the member for Moore supplementary information that outlines the asset and infrastructure support services to the assets overseen by the department.

*[Supplementary Information No B6.]*

[3.50 pm]

**Mr Y. MUBARAKAI:** A final resting place for a loved one is a very emotional journey for Western Australian families. Page 546, part 2, refers to a combined review of the Cemeteries Act and the Cremations Act, and it is quite interesting. Could the minister please provide us with information about this project and its review process and what it entails for all Western Australian families?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am pleased the member asked this question. As he is aware, the department oversees through the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board a range of cemeteries, including Karrakatta Cemetery which, of course, has been utilised for a significant period of time. The current acts that oversee, if you like, issues around burial services and issues associated with a person's passing are essentially governed through the Cemeteries Act 1986 and the Cremations Act 1929. They have not been substantially reviewed since their passing through the Parliament. We do know that circumstances and issues, whether they be cultural, whether they be religious, whether they be the will of families, have actually changed over time.

In recent months I announced a review of the Cemeteries Act and the Cremations Act because there are elements of both of those acts that need to be carefully considered. The aim is that the legislation or the review will undertake some key issues—whether there is adequate regulatory oversight to support a private cremations industry, because there has been a move for private entities to move into that particular aspect of cemetery and cremation operations, and to ensure that regulatory oversight provides the community with confidence that cremations are conducted to the highest possible standards, because as the member said in his preliminary comments, these are matters that are very sensitive for people. When a loved one passes, obviously a family, that person's loved ones, are dealing with a very emotional period of their lives, and we need to have confidence that the highest possible standards are delivered to the families and, indeed, to the deceased. We also need to ensure that regulatory oversight and powers to provide for the creation, monitoring and enforcement of industry standards and codes of practice and mechanisms to protect consumers from unscrupulous operators also is considered.

We need to make sure that the existing acts are fit for purpose for modern Western Australia. We do draw on the experiences of other operations, both nationally and internationally, and it comes to that other issue which I know has some community sensitivity, which is around the renewal program which operates at this point in time through Karrakatta. A renewal program essentially is a program that extends the capabilities of Karrakatta to continue as a cemetery. In other words, it utilises space within the cemetery under a renewal program. Groups such as Saving Graves WA, Facebook organisations and entities raise this issue continuously with the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board, and have raised it with ministers of local government, current and previous. But we are actually reviewing the act now, and it includes that renewal program.

There are some implications if the renewal program was to be ceased totally, and those implications would effectively see Karrakatta as we know it closed. That is a reality of ceasing the renewal program. If we were to cease the renewal program as of today, unless someone has actually purchased a plot and that plot still exists or exists for their demise, there would be no further activity within that—it would become effectively a closed cemetery. There is still some room in the mausoleum aspects of Karrakatta Cemetery, but effectively that is what would happen. There are implications for that. There are implications in terms of jobs; there are implications for businesses that rely on the Karrakatta services to continue. I know this is a longwinded answer, but it is important to get this on the record: there are also

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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implications for, of course, heritage and historic graves and important gravesites, such as those men and women who served the nation in conflict. A memorandum of understanding exists between the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board and the Office of Australian War Graves, which is a commonwealth entity. It is a very important memorandum because there are very clear processes that are in place with regard to returned service personnel. Some of them in the past who may have been buried at Karrakatta have actually been relocated with the family's support to the Australian war graves site that exists on Smyth Road in Nedlands.

I hope that those people who are concerned—I do not have a gripe with them in terms of their concern—would take this review in good faith and that they would actually participate in the review in terms of the issues that they have concern about, because a lot of misinformation, I have to say, has been unfortunately heightened and, in fact, impacted on people's lives unnecessarily because there has not been clarity and misinformation has been put out there. The review is going to take place; it has commenced, and I am confident that the issues around renewal, the issues around how we sensitively and respectfully address issues around burial, cremations, going forward for Western Australia are done in that sensitive and appropriate way and that issues around cost and all those things, which are indeed important issues for people and for families, are considered as part of that review.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** I congratulate the minister on doing a review; it is a very good idea. It is an opportunity for people to voice any concerns. One of the concerns the minister touched on was the MOU for the commonwealth, which I have been advised means that the commonwealth will maintain war graves. I am not sure if that is what it says, but that is what I have been told. But an issue that I hope the review looks at is the ongoing maintenance of Karrakatta Cemetery and the graves. One component of that would be war graves. If they are actually maintained by the commonwealth, that would be terrific, so they will be looked after. But I guess the ongoing maintenance of headstones is an issue that will come up in the review. They are historic as well and I think a lot of people are having renewed interest in headstones because they are looking at their ancestry and looking at their family and they want to have a photo of the headstone. That is, I think, a renewed interest. I hope the review, which is a cost, looks at how we can keep all cemeteries maintained, including the headstones. There are some elements of Karrakatta where the headstones are very old and they are not looked after and there are trees growing through there and branches and shrubs. The review needs to consider the ongoing maintenance of the whole cemetery. Can the minister comment on that?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, I am happy to do that. As we know, and as has existed for a long time, the current arrangement for the time in which a plot is effectively owned and available is a 25 year —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Twenty-five plus 25, I think.

[4.00 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. Ultimately the argument is who pays or who should pay? If the member is suggesting that the government or the taxpayer should pay for everyone's ongoing maintenance of monument works —

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** No, I am suggesting the review should consider.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am not saying that is what the member is suggesting, but it does come back to this issue of ultimately who is responsible or should be taking responsibility. In terms of the gardens, grounds and those matters, the MCB continues to do that, but as we know, gravestones and monuments deteriorate over time. If that person is considered significant, then there is an issue about who ultimately should, in perpetuity, continue to uphold the state of that particular monument.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Like East Perth Cemetery, for instance—that whole cemetery is historic.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes, because it is a heritage-listed site and the National Trust is responsible. But I think there is an important debate that needs to take place about ultimate responsibility. One of the challenges is the enhanced interest in genealogy, in people seeking their family histories and all those sorts of things, and naturally a cemetery is a very important place. The MCB has a very strong presence in the digital area in terms of digitalising the records and/or the plots, if you like, of people which is then open and accessible to the general public if they are researching the family or seeking to find out where a loved one or a family member in fact rests. This is what I suppose particularly those people have been campaigning for, and in some ways I and previous ministers have been targeted. I hope that the passion is targeted towards a genuine participation in the review, and that it is done in a way that focuses on what are the solutions. But there are implications and, look, internationally when we compare what happens in Western Australia to some of the other countries. The member for Hillarys has Greek ancestry. It is interesting to look at what happens in the cemeteries in Greece, for example. Quite often, my understanding is, there is a removal of a lot of those remnant memorials and some places around the world do that regularly because once that time is up —

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Since the minister is asking questions instead of providing answers, that is not technically quite right, because prior to the removal, axiomatic to burial is exhumation of the bones and storage offsite from the burial plot.

**The CHAIR:** That would be the member for Hillarys asking another question.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I was goaded!

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I suppose the point I am making is that the approach to and perception and management of cemeteries differs, even within Australia. Other states and jurisdictions do it differently from how we do it here. Of course, the other thing is that even with renewal, Karrakatta will eventually reach finite capacity, which is why the Metropolitan Cemeteries Board is planning for additional cemeteries in other parts of, in this case, the metropolitan area. Sites are actively being pursued in the south east metropolitan area and further north, I think, in the north east area. It is a fascinating area.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** It is a grave area.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** Given that discussion, has any consideration been given to introducing some of the ways that other cultures deal with the need for burial, and then renewal of the site? Clearly, in my religion, burial is the preferred and customary option. For instance, families can exhume remains and store them elsewhere, usually adjacent to the cemetery, allowing the family to re-use a plot as a regular family plot with appropriate memorialisation. Is that something that could be considered to extend the life of cemeteries like Karrakatta in the future? I am not asking the minister to commit on the spot, obviously.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I think it is very open for the review to consider those alternative ways of extending, dare I say, the life of a plot. I think the review is very timely. It will give us an opportunity to reflect on and question a whole range of issues associated with what is a significant part of the life cycle. I want it to be a review that engages all aspects. Australia is multicultural. The current act essentially does not take into account more modern methods whereby people want to, for example, be returned to the soil with a tree. I have seen some interesting models proposed that use the human body to nurture a tree. There is a whole range of things for which the act is essentially not fit for purpose. Yes, I am sure we could consider the member's suggestion in this review process. I just hope it is done in good faith.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** It is a suggestion rather than a recommendation.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I look forward to the member's submission.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have no understanding about the situation at the Art Gallery of Western Australia, but an article in *The West Australian* on 18 October pointed out that a significant percentage of the collection is being stored offsite in rented accommodation, so to speak. It also reported that there is some concern about the risk to the collection, and referenced the art gallery's annual report. Has work been done to minimise the risk to the collection, and is there any move to seek a long-term solution to that situation?

[4.10 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to comment, and I am sure the director general will be able to provide some additional comments. We have a substantial state collection. It is an asset to the state and it needs to be appropriately and safely stored. Currently, a significant part of the state collection is stored within the confines of the art gallery itself. That is not necessarily ideal, but it is safe, because, as members will be aware, the gallery, by its very nature as an A-class gallery, is a storehouse because it is an exhibit house. Our state collection is safe; however, the department, the director general and I as Minister for Culture and the Arts recognise that it is highly desirable to find appropriate long-term storage facilities outside of the gallery, because that would open up the space in the gallery that is currently being taken up as storage.

In terms of progressing an option, ongoing work is being done on that. The options will be subject to business cases and a submission to Treasury and ultimately to government. I want to reassure members that the state collection is safe; however, we recognise that we have a requirement for more adequate future storage. We have looked at some options, including the storage facility for the Western Australian Museum, which is out in Welshpool. There is some potential to use that facility, as a lot of the artefacts and assets from there have now gone to the new Museum. I will ask the director general to add to my comments, if he is able to.

**Mr D. Ord:** Thank you, minister. One of the KPIs in the *Budget Statements* is around the art gallery maintaining its standard of storage. That relates to the conditions in which art is stored, because whether it is stored onsite at the art gallery or offsite, it has to fit within that parameter. We meet that outcome annually, so we are ensuring that the artworks are kept in an appropriate A-class gallery and maintained to the highest standards. When it was built, the art gallery was provided with storage for its collection, but that collection has grown significantly to nearly 19 000 objects. As a consequence, we are using some spaces that were previously used for exhibitions for storing works. We have a plan to undertake a new storage solution for the art gallery and we have completed a business case for that. A previous

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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government purchased the site at Welshpool for the holding of state collections. Of course, we have had to use that site to hold the whole of the collection that was previously in the Perth Museum. An opportunity to potentially utilise some of the Welshpool collections area for art gallery storage will become available once the new Museum opens and a significant amount of the collection is moved into Perth. In the following budget, we will be able to put forward a business case taking into account the fact that we will be able to progress a storage solution of that type, so we will certainly be in a position to bring such a proposition to government. In the meantime, as the minister said, we are maintaining the collection in appropriate storage.

Some of the Auditor General's reports on the matter related to the gallery's ability to deal with the ongoing maintenance of the collection, and the recommendations made by the Auditor General around a more organised program of maintenance of the collection have actually been put into effect. Although these matters were picked up by the Auditor General some 18 months or so ago, they have already been largely addressed. The final part of the recommendations is to provide long-term adequate storage facility for the collection; however, certainly, at the moment, we are confident the collection is appropriately stored and secured.

**Mr P.A. KATSAMBANIS:** I refer to page 544 and "Delivery of Services" in particular the line item for Perth Theatre Trust. I note that there was a significant increase between the budget allocation and the actual spend for the Perth Theatre Trust in the 2019–20 financial year; it was up 26 per cent from 9.2 million to 11.6 million. There is then a further increase in the current year of about nine per cent to 12.7 million, but there is a significant 40 per cent reduction in each of the out years. Can the minister explain that increase and what it relates to, and why there is a significant decrease in the out years?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to do that. As the member is aware, Perth Theatre Trust operates a range of cultural institutions, and, of course, whether it be His Majesty's Theatre, for example, or the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia, those institutions were impacted by COVID. The increase in the actuals was due to the supplementary funding received by the trust to cover the loss of own source revenue, because, obviously, during the COVID pandemic, there was a significant loss of own source revenue. At that time, all those venues were closed, and even under phase 4—not 4A, which we have just moved to, which increases the capacity to 60 per cent—the two-square-metre rule was imposed, which meant that those venues were operating on vastly reduced numbers, which, of course, impacts on revenues. The pandemic response has been delivered, which is why there is an increase. As members are aware, when audiences are restored back, Perth Theatre Trust will again have a revenue stream. The budget estimate for 2021 includes additional funding to cover the expected loss of own source revenue during the pandemic. It is very much related to COVID-19. As we move out of that situation, the revenue streams that Perth Theatre Trust relies upon are expected to recover. Member for Dawesville. Sorry, Mr Ord.

**Mr D. Ord:** Yes, thank you. I am very proud to have been elected; thank you, minister! The decline from, if you like, \$9 200 to \$7 500 reflects that from 1 December this year, the new Perth Theatre Trust operating model will come into effect. That is essentially creating a not-for-profit representing all the resident companies. It will operate His Majesty's Theatre, the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia and the Subiaco Arts Centre, similar to the way that WASO and WA Venues and Events operate concert halls. It has been a very successful model. Revenues that would normally accrue to the trust that are actually company revenues—they come into the state books and get paid out again—are not reflected. This shows the actual appropriation for managing and/or owning those venues on behalf of the government.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Just for clarification, I refer to page 544 and the overall allocation of funds to deliver services. I guess my question fits under either under the item "Western Australian Museum", or the item "Library Board of Western Australia". I refer to the allocation of funding for the Royal WA Historical Society, which is a library and museum that can hold a substantial collection of heritage artefacts, books and essential Western Australian history. I would like a general comment from the minister on what sort of support the government is providing. That is not the only museum; there are all sorts of museums all over the state. There is the Western Australian Medical Museum. I note from page 545 that there is also an allocation of \$6 million for a holocaust museum. Could the minister explain how other museums might get an allocation of funding; and, in particular, any support that the Royal Western Australian Historical Society in my electorate could get in the future.

[4.20 pm]

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I will make some general comments, and then the director general may wish to conclude on this item. When we came to government, one thing we did through the Western Australian Museum was fund a program of digitalisation and essentially capturing the collection of agencies throughout Western Australia, whether they be small museums or collection entities in rural towns or larger entities in perhaps regional cities or regional places. There has been an ongoing program to assist in the training of volunteers and also to assist those entities to capture their artefacts and assets digitally. That delivery continues to be progressed. Essentially, that means that if a collection agency has migrated its assets onto a digital portal, anybody anywhere can access this program and find out what sort of artefacts might be in the Norseman Historical Museum, for example. There are some very, very

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Tuesday, 20 October 2020]

p128c-146a

Chair; Mr Bill Marmion; Mr Templeman; Mr Donald Punch; Mr David Templeman; Mr Simon Millman; Mr Shane Love; Mr Yaz Mubarakai; Mr Peter Katsambanis

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impressive museums in WA; for example, Wagin has a remarkable village-style museum that has a whole range of collections from that area. That is one way in which the WA Museum has sought to assist those collection agencies. In terms of direct funding, there are opportunities through other funded agencies such as Lotterywest to assist organisations such as the Royal Western Australian Historical Society, which is on Broadway in Nedlands, from memory, and which I visited early on when I became Minister for Culture and the Arts. There is also an allocation of \$150 000 for a pilot for the WA storage grants program in the 2020–21 financial year, and this may inform a broader initiative in the lead-up to the 2020–29 bicentenary. I understand that in 2019, the Royal Western Australian Historical Society developed a feasibility study and business case for the redevelopment of its existing facilities in Nedlands and that this received some Lotterywest support, so that organisation has already accessed some support.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** It is ready to go.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I have seen its collection and I am impressed.

**Mr W.R. MARMION:** Yes, it is fantastic.

**The appropriation was recommended.**