

Extract from Hansard

[ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES A AND B SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION — Thursday, 26 May 2016]
p739b-742a

Ms Janine Freeman; Ms Lisa Baker; Ms Rita Saffioti; Mr David Templeman; Ms Simone McGurk

Division 45: Commerce —

[Supplementary Information No B65.]

Question: Ms J.M. Freeman asked for the specifics of the staff reduction in labour relations since 2013–14 and whether 27 staff have gone.

Answer: The budgeted FTE for the Labour Relations Division (LRD) in 2013-14 was 98.3. This figure includes a component for corporate support, which is provided across the department. A list of the classification and job titles of positions that have been removed from LRD since 2013-14 is attached. This is a list of positions where employees took a severance package and the positions were subsequently abolished. The only exception to this is the Compliance Director position that has been abolished but the employee is still employed by the Department. This list does not account for employees who have resigned and who may not have been replaced.

Classification and job titles of positions that have been removed

ENHANCED VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PROGRAM 2013-14		
JOB TITLE	CLASSIFICATION	TENURE
Receptionist	Level 1	Permanent part time
Senior Education Officer	Level 4	Permanent full time
Labour Relations Adviser	Level 4	Permanent full time
Senior Education Officer	Level 4	Permanent part time
Labour Relations Adviser	Level 4	Permanent full time
Senior Industrial Inspector (Broome)	Level 5	Permanent full time
Labour Relations Adviser	Level 5	Permanent full time
Compliance and Education Officer	Level 5	Permanent full time
Senior Industrial Inspector	Level 5	Permanent full time
Senior Labour Relations Adviser	Level 6	Permanent part time
Senior Labour Relations Adviser	Level 6	Permanent part time
Senior Labour Relations Adviser	Level 6	Permanent full time
Principal Labour Relations Adviser	Level 7	Permanent part time
Principal Labour Relations Adviser	Level 7	Permanent part time
Principal Labour Relations Adviser	Level 7	Permanent full time
Manager Education and Advisory Services	Level 8	Permanent full time
Principal Legal Officer	Specified Calling Level 5	Permanent part time
TARGETED SEVERANCE SCHEME 2014-15		
Knowledge Coordinator	Level 3	Permanent part time
AGENCY EXPENDITURE REVIEW 2015-16 (AS AT 30 APRIL 2016)		
Receptionist	Level 1	Permanent part time
Wageline Services Team Leader	Level 6	Permanent full time
Compliance Director ¹	Level 9	Fixed term full time ²

¹ Employee still employed with the department.

² Senior Executive Service Contract.

[Supplementary Information No B66.]

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Question: Ms L.L. Baker asked: What advice has been requested by government of the department concerning the gender pay gap and pay equity?

Answer: Since the closure of the Pay Equity Unit on 30 June 2015, there have been no requests by Government to the Department concerning the gender pay gap and the pay equity unit.

[Supplementary Information No B67.]

Question: Ms J.M. Freeman asked: Can the parliamentary secretary explain why the income is in continual decline?

Answer: The Department of Commerce - Labour Relations Division (LRD), to which the table on page 513 refers, does not have any significant, directly attributable income. The income that it does have is sundry in nature, such as LRD's staff contributions to government vehicle schemes. The figures for income in the LRD table on page 513 also include a proportional allocation of general miscellaneous revenues received by the Department that is not otherwise attributable to any specific division. In much the same way that indirect costs of providing each service, such as corporate costs and other corporate overheads etc., are notionally allocated proportionally across services, so too are non-service-specific revenues. Such revenues may include refunds for prior year insurances, or recoup of salary for Departmental corporate staff seconded to other Departments etc. As such, they may vary noticeably from year to year.

The variation is most observable for services such as LRD which have no significant sources of its own specific income. The variation does not arise out of any specific decision of Government in relation to LRD.

[Supplementary Information No B68.]

Question: Ms R. Saffioti asked: On what date were the investigations into plumbing work at Elizabeth Quay started?

Answer: The Department of Commerce - Building Commission Division's plumbing inspectors conducted an initial inspection of the regulated plumbing work at Elizabeth Quay on 10 February 2016.

[Supplementary Information No B69.]

Question: Ms R. Saffioti asked: What were the total fines for the eight failures to issue notices of intention to conduct work and have those fines been paid?

Answer: The Department of Commerce - Building Commission Division issued fines to the three plumbing contractors on the Elizabeth Quay project, for three Notice of Intention infringement notices to the total value of \$900, that have been paid in full, and three Certificate of Compliance infringement notices to the total value \$1500, that have also been paid in full.

[Supplementary Information No B70.]

Question: Ms L.L. Baker asked: Has there been an occasion in the past three years when the Building Commission has checked the pipes at Fiona Stanley Hospital, particularly in relation to water recycling? If they have been checked, has there been an occasion on which they have not been compliant with Australian standards?

Answer: The Department of Commerce - Building Commission Division carried out inspections at the Fiona Stanley Hospital site at various stages of the project. One rectification notice (expiry date February 2017) was issued in regard to the WaterMark certification of the pre-filtration equipment in the plant room serving the main water supply to the hospital.

[Supplementary Information No B71.]

Question: Ms J.M. Freeman asked: for the number of WorkSafe staff who took redundancies and for information on the classifications and titles of the jobs made redundant.

Answer: From the 2013-14 financial year through to the present time, six WorkSafe staff have taken redundancies.

Position title	Classification
Officer	Level 4
Manager Audit and Special Investigations	Level 7

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Education Policy and Projects Officer	Level 5
Business Support Officer	Level 2
Review Officer	Level 2
Support Officer	Level 1

[Supplementary Information No B72.]

Question: Ms J.M. Freeman asked for the number of workplace occupational health and safety representatives and how many have been accredited or authorised for the past three years and as a proportion of the total workforce.

Answer: The number of safety and health representatives registered with WorkSafe for the past three years, and the proportion of the total workforce that represents is as follows;

Year	No. of representatives	Total workforce	Percentage of total workforce
2013	10,140	1,325,045	0.77
2014	8,889	1,336,790	0.66
2015	7,604	1,352,157	0.56

[Supplementary Information No B73.]

Question: Mr D.A. Templeman wanted to know how many retirement village owners or villages are currently under investigation by the department for alleged breaches of the act or other acts.

Answer: The Department of Commerce - Consumer Protection Division has 12 current investigations against 11 different retirement village operators. These investigations cover a range of issues and are being examined under the *Retirement Villages Act 1992*, the *Retirement Villages Regulations 1992*, the *Fair Trading (Retirement Villages Code) Regulations 2015*, the *Australian Consumer Law* and the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987*.

In addition, there are three open complaints where allegations are being assessed for potential breaches of retirement village or fair trading legislation as minor compliance issues and a further four consumer complaints are subject to a conciliation process.

The above matters in total relate to 15 separate retirement village operators.

[Supplementary Information No B74.]

Question: Ms S.F. McGurk asked for supplementary information on whether any of the 16 agencies receiving funding gave advice to the bushfire victims in Yarloop or Esperance in any of those other situations.

Answer: The Consumer Protection Division of the Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection) does not have this information readily available and so has approached the service providers directly.

Consumer Protection has been advised that at least one person in the South West was provided with tenancy advice in relation to the Yarloop bushfire. The advice involved a private rental contract and was provided in the context that the town of Yarloop was effectively closed down.

Tenancy WA established a separate dedicated helpline for tenants affected by the bushfires. Via this helpline, three people were assisted on seven separate occasions. The advice these people received primarily related to:

- rent free periods (if any) / rent reduction;
- urgent repairs;
- restoration of services / utilities;
- termination for frustration due to premises being destroyed or rendered uninhabitable; and
- resulting bond disputes.

Additionally, in partnership with Legal Aid, Tenancy WA updated and revised Legal Aid's existing fact sheet on natural disasters and tenancy issues with information relevant to the situation.

[Supplementary Information No B75.]

Question: Ms J.M. Freeman asked for an explanation of why there is a drop in the budget figure for the sale of goods and services from \$6.2 million to \$261 000.

Answer: As noted under the table at the top of page 522: The moneys received and retained under the net appropriation provisions are applied to the Department's services as specified in the Budget papers.

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As the member has noted, the 2014-15 budget had previously anticipated \$6.2 million receipts under this line item. This particular line item includes the Department's receipts from its drawdown on the Rental Accommodation Account (RAA) in reimbursement of the Department's cost in meeting its obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act 1987* (the Act). The funds available in the RAA rely on income from interest earned by the fund. With historically low interest returns to the account in recent years, the Department is proactively monitoring and managing the future sustainability of the balance of the interest funds held in the account. Whilst the Department incurred the necessary costs in undertaking its functions under the Act during the course of 2014-15, with the approval of the Treasurer, the Department was able to forego seeking reimbursement for that year, and therefore bore the costs internally.