

**Division 5: Governor's Establishment, \$6 049 000 —**

Mr S.J. Price, Chair.

Mr M. McGowan, Premier.

Ms E. Clark, Acting Official Secretary.

Ms R. Hamilton, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr J. Kingston, Acting Chief Finance Officer.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. 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 be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The Premier may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the Premier to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the Premier's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 31 May 2019. I caution members that if the Premier asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

I give the call to the Leader of the Opposition.

[4.40 pm]

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I refer to page 86 of budget paper No 2 and the first paragraph under the heading "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". For the first time, the government is expanding the role of the Governor to include state advocacy and other activities that advance the state's future. I would like to explore this a bit. When was that decision made? Who will choose the focus of that advocacy and those activities to advance the state's future? Who sets the key performance indicators for them? Who, in fact, oversees those activities? We are puzzled about how this will affect the separation of the role of the Governor from the executive. We would like to explore, and I think it is important to explore, whether the Governor will now be taking on more executive-type functions rather than his vice-regal roles and other roles within community groups. When was the decision made to expand the role of the Governor, as mentioned in the budget papers, to include advocacy and other activities? Who determines the focus of that advocacy? How do we assess whether it is being done adequately? Indeed, what are they?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The decision to ask the Governor to take on an enhanced role was mine. I wanted the Governor of Western Australia to have an enhanced role to promote the state, given his profile, international connections and expertise. This follows on from what other states have done—Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland have done this. The New South Wales Governor, who is about to become the Governor-General, earlier this year officially visited India to promote New South Wales' strengths in education, technology and food and beverage, and hosted a range of meetings with wine importers and potential trading partners for New South Wales. Last year, the Governor of Queensland did the same thing in China. He promoted Queensland trade, business, science, research, education and cultural ties. The Governor of Victoria did the same thing in India to promote Victorian education, health, liveable cities and education partnerships. He hosted a range of events in that regard. The Governor of Victoria did the same in Israel, Hong Kong, North America and South America. All statements on this are about promoting industry in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Each of those states does this and Western Australia has been a bit slow to get to this point. When I asked the Governor to fulfil the role, I requested that he undertake a similar role to the Governors of other states. His priorities are available online. They include WA defence industries; rare earths and battery minerals trade; cultural development; tourism and international students; agricultural and rural industries; and the Indigenous community. That is on top of his constitutional, civic, community, ceremonial and other duties.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Who decided his priorities?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It was during discussions with the Governor that we discussed any interests that he might have in promoting Western Australia. My recollection is that we had a number of discussions about areas in which Western Australia needed promotion and where his strengths might lie. As a former federal education and defence minister, obviously international students and defence industries were important. Western Australian rare earths

and battery minerals opportunities for Western Australia were no-brainers. A range of things like that were developed jointly between him and me. Personally, I think it is a wonderful role for the Governor.

I told the anecdote—I think it might have been on radio—about how the British royal family does this all over the world. Not only do they cheer for British sporting teams against Australian sporting teams, but also when they go overseas, they support British industry over that of other countries, including Australia. That is the promotional role of the royal family. They have found a role that is designed to support British industry.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I am pretty sure it promotes the commonwealth more broadly.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I give the member an anecdote. When I was in Oman and Dubai in 2007 as education minister, lobbying on behalf of Western Australian TAFE to win a major educational contract there, the ministers I met with said to me that it was great that I was there because they had just been talking with either Prince Andrew, Prince William or Prince Edward, who had been lobbying on behalf of a British company. I was thinking that I might have been a bit out of my league. That is what they do. That was 12 years ago. If the British royal family can do it, it strikes me as a bit strange that the Western Australian Governor could not do it. If the New South Wales, Victorian and Queensland Governors are doing it—I have given dozens of examples of how they are doing it—why would Western Australia’s Governor not be doing it?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** How will his advocacy activities differ from that of ministers? Ministers are doing exactly the same thing on exactly the same issues here, in Canberra and overseas, and taking the government’s line, of course. How do you differentiate between the Governor advocating in exactly the same areas as ministers? How do you differentiate between the activities of ministers, who are pursuing government policy, and the Governor, who is pursuing advocacy for the state on the same issues?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is in exactly the same way as New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and Britain do.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I am asking what the Premier is going to do. We are not in New South Wales or Britain.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We live in a complex world and all sorts of people are lobbying for their countries and jurisdiction all over the world. The more people of prominence who are supporting Western Australian industry, jobs and opportunities, the better. If a minister promotes defence industries, as Minister Papalia does, that is great. What a great combination, having a former defence minister of Australia, a former ambassador to the United States and Governor of Western Australia promoting Western Australian defence industries. The Minister for Education and Training and I have been overseas to promote international students. Why should we not use the talents of the Governor to do the same thing?

I went to an event at Government House—I doubt that this has happened before—to which the Governor invited new international students. The Leader of the Opposition was invited, by the way. There was a huge function for those students and their visiting parents and families, inside the grounds of Government House, with singing, a barbecue and, unfortunately, no alcohol. It was a tremendous welcome for students, who will then go away and say, “My goodness! I’ve come to this amazing place where you get invited to Government House to see the Governor and Premier.” That is fantastic! Why would we not do that?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Because the Governor is just one person—he has activities other than his vice-regal stuff. Past Governors and this Governor are very active in community organisations. He is the patron of many different organisations and has a responsibility to represent the government around the state. I am concerned about how just one person—he has only 24 hours in a day—will be able to take on this new, often time-consuming role and not diminish his roles and service in his other fundamental roles in the Western Australian community, particularly given that ministers do the same advocacy for the state as part of their functions.

[4.50 pm]

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I think the Leader of the Opposition will find that he does all those things. He is rarely home; he is out doing ceremonial and community events. He seems to love it. Most people, after a long public life, want to stay home and watch telly, but this Governor wants to get out there and do important community events, ceremonial events and Executive Council, and host investitures. I have been to a range of events at Government House to which opposition members have also been and he has gone out of his way to hold events to acknowledge significant people. When the veterinarian diver, Craig Challen, won Australian of the Year, the Governor held a marvellous event, including a bunch of opposition people. He does that sort of thing all the time, in addition to his advocacy role. He is a capable person; why would we not use him?

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I have a further question about the Governor’s expanded role. Has the government set key performance indicators for that role? The Premier is saying that the ballroom, the grounds and the facilities are being expanded to help him in his new expanded role. Obviously, he will have an increased budget to travel around the world and sell the ideas that the Premier spoke about. Are there any KPIs in respect of defence issues and tourism, as the Premier mentioned, to measure this expanded role? Obviously, there is a cost to taxpayers

associated with the expanded role. Is there an outcome the Premier wants to get, and how will the Premier measure that outcome?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The government does not put KPIs on the Governor. That would be unprecedented. The Governor's priorities are available on his website. The things he is promoting, his daily program, the number of events and that sort of thing are available on his website. Since he has been Governor, he has hosted 187 functions —

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I am talking about his expanded role; not his general role as Governor, but his expanded role. Have any KPIs been set out so the government can measure the time and effort he is putting into that and how it may affect his other duties?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I answered the member: no. That would be unprecedented. The member referred to expansion of the Government House ballroom and grounds. There has been no expansion of the Government House ballroom or grounds. The Government House ballroom has been used for functions and events by Governors going back 100 years. It is not unusual for functions and events to be held there; I have been to functions and events there with Governors Jeffery, Sanderson, Michael, McCusker and Sanderson mark 2. It is not unusual for functions and events to be held there. What was unusual was the use of Government House grounds for a huge event to which international students were invited. I might also add that on Anzac Day, the Governor held a function in the grounds for anyone who wanted to come; I do not think I have seen that before, either. All these people—veterans and their families and the like—were there in the Government House grounds for a gunfire breakfast. It was a really positive development.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** With regard to the Governor's expanded advocacy role, I do not think the opposition doubts the importance of that role, as the Premier has pointed out, including in other states where Governors have played a similar role. But I am keen to understand whether, as part of this advocacy role, the Governor is entitled to have any opinions. The Governor is, of course, the representative in this state of the Queen. As we know and as Buckingham Palace reaffirmed in 2016, the Queen, our sovereign, remains politically neutral in all matters. Would the Premier expect that the Governor also remain politically neutral, as a representative of the Queen?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I would expect that every Governor has had opinions, but the Governor's role is not a political one. I do not believe that the promotion of the defence industry, battery minerals, trade, cultural development, tourism, international students, agricultural and rural industries and the Indigenous communities is political. That is just something we should all do.

**Mr S.A. MILLMAN** interjected.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** As it would be; if the member for Mount Lawley had cared to listen, that is exactly what we were expressing.

Further to that, I am keen to understand: if the Governor or any Governor were to express an opinion on a particular political issue whilst occupying the office of Governor, would the Premier expect that to be contrary to their role?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The only time I can recall that happening was under Governor Jeffery, back in the mid to late 90s, when the member for Dawesville was in primary school. He expressed some opinions on single mothers that might have been perceived to be political, and I think he regretted it. I understand what the Constitutional conventions are and I think the Governor is abiding by them.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" on page 86. The Premier said this is about expanding the Governor's role and talking about defence and tourism. Can the Premier outline whether the Governor would be going out to lobby on behalf of the state, or would he be trying to increase a defence presence here in Western Australia? Would that be for a naval base or for an army base in the north west of Western Australia? What is the Governor's role in this sense—is it to promote defence? What exactly would he be promoting when it comes to defence—can the Premier elaborate on that? I think it is important to know. Will he be lining up the government's objectives to lobby the federal government to increase the naval presence in Western Australia, or will he be looking at other ways to increase a defence presence here, such as a military base up north—in Exmouth, Karratha or Port Hedland—or any other sort of base that we might need in WA, given that our resources hold the WA and national economies strong?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** My understanding of what he has devoted himself to is defence contracts for Western Australian suppliers. He has held a range of dinners, if you like, with defence contractors and potential purchasers from overseas—that sort of thing. He has held functions and events to bring them together and to promote Western Australian contractors so that our industry can get a fair hearing. For instance, he has brought local suppliers together with Lürssen Defence—which builds offshore patrol boats, predominantly in Henderson—to make sure it meets and engages with local contractors in that regard. We just want to make sure that they get to Western Australia from Adelaide—because the first two are supposed to be built there, which is ridiculous—as soon as possible and that supply chains and the like are in place for it to undertake its work here, so that hopefully

we can have an industry that exports boats of a similar nature to other countries in the region. He is bringing contractors and potential customers together, and that is important. I think that is what he is focused on.

With regard to the issue of further defence assets in Western Australia, I have not asked him whether he has worked on that. He knows a little bit about it and no doubt he has conversations with people, as we all do, about things, but I do not know whether he has advocated in that regard.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Can the Premier explain the Governor’s tourism role and what he is advocating for in tourism—is it more spending in the regions or more spending in WA in general? Can the Premier expand on what his role is in tourism? Is it just hosting barbecues at Government House for international tourists? Can we find out what his role is in tourism?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The function I went to—bearing in mind that he has held nearly 200 functions—was not for a group of international tourists; it was for a group of international students. He was making them feel welcome in Western Australia so that when they go home, they will promote Western Australia. I understand that he has travelled around all parts of Western Australia, as a Governor should, met with the tourism industry and talked up local tourism opportunities and initiatives. Again, I do not have exact details, but I know that he is interested in supporting the regions.

[5.00 pm]

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I am keen to understand more about the role of the Governor as part of the “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”. Was a particular model decided upon in consultation with the Governor? I realise and appreciate there are no KPIs because that would be unprecedented. I also realise and appreciate that the role the Governor plays is moving into a new, more modern era, as is the Royal Family more generally speaking. Is the model used for our thirty-third Governor something that has been looked at in other jurisdictions? Have any parameters been set? Has it been suggested to the Governor that we want his role to be like that of the Governor in New South Wales, or is the model more “loose”—that is probably the wrong word—or based on a less-framed conversation with the Governor at the time about their role in serving the state and the Queen?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Over time I have noticed things. As I told the member, the role of the Royal Family in promoting Britain stuck in my mind. There I am promoting Western Australia, and our Royal Family is promoting other jurisdictions—so obviously that stuck in my mind. It is a bit like when the royals come out here and cheer for the British and Irish Lions against the Wallabies—it sticks in your mind. I am aware that other Governors have undertaken these sorts of roles over time and been prominent advocates for their states. I thought it was appropriate that that start to occur here. It is not unprecedented in Western Australia. From memory, Mr McCusker and Kerry Sanderson both promoted areas of interest. Kerry Sanderson was very keen on trade, being a former Agent-General for London and a former CEO of Fremantle Ports. She was also very keen on conservation, which I do not regard as a political issue, but some people might. I remember Malcolm McCusker making very pertinent speeches about various social issues during his term as Governor. He also promoted philanthropy—that is, high net-worth individuals donating to charities. It is not unusual for a Governor to do things. It is just that this Governor is taking up some of the more economic issues on behalf of the state.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** My concern, for what it is worth, is about someone who represents the sovereign having an opinion on a political matter and expressing those political concerns whilst holding the office of the Governor. That is my concern.

**Ms A. Sanderson** interjected.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** That is fine, but on 26 October, in an interview with former Deputy Prime Minister John Anderson, the Governor suggested that the fuel excise should be increased to cover off on the lack of petroleum reserves in Western Australia. Taking into account the Governor’s expanded role, I am trying to understand whether advocating for the fuel excise to be increased is advocating on behalf of the Governor of Western Australia or is it —

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Where was it?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** It is a podcast on John Anderson’s website.

**The CHAIR:** Member, you are straying a bit from the budget.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** This is about the Governor’s role.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** What is the budget line?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I am referring to significant issues impacting the agency and the Governor’s role.

**Dr A.D. BUTI** interjected.

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**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Yes, it is. I appreciate that often members of the government intervene like this. I support the role of the Governor advocating more for Western Australia. I am trying to understand what happens when a Governor expresses an opinion on a political issue and whether that is a policy position reflective of the office of the Governor or the individual. Does the Premier have a view on whether that is core to the role of the Governor as part of his expanded role in advocacy for the state of Western Australia?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Does the member have any other examples?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** No, I do not.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** So in a podcast discussion with John Anderson, the Governor said something about increasing the fuel excise?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Yes.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** Is that it?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I have not delved into it—I can, but I have not.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** But it is important enough to raise at estimates.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morley!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I will take the member back a little bit. Did the member express concern when a former Governor advocated for conservation initiatives or greater philanthropy from high net-worth individuals? Does the member think that is a problem?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** That is not a policy issue. That is a separate issue.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** Prince Charles advocates for the environment.

**The CHAIR:** Member for Morley!

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We are not allowed to talk about meetings with the royals, but I know that Prince Charles has some strong views on a range of things. If that is the member's best example —

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** That is the only one that I have.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** If the member's only example is a podcast that, to be fair, is pretty dated—the member is probably the only person who has ever listened to it—and in which the Governor talked with John Anderson about the fuel excise —

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Yes.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** All right, we have noted the member's point. I am sure that the Governor will take it into account.

**Ms A. SANDERSON:** A killer blow!

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** It is not a killer blow. I am just trying to understand the Governor's position.

**The CHAIR:** Can I just remind members that we still have division 7, part of division 15, and the Lotteries Commission to go, and we have 55 minutes left. I understand that this interrogation has gone on for a considerable while.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Further to that, our point is this: a whole raft of people are advocating on behalf of the state for the issues that the Governor has identified as his priorities—ministers, the Premier, representatives overseas and probably heads of departments—and fair enough; it is a large allocation of that. It is easy therefore for a Governor to stray into policy discussions, but that is up to the Governor to decide. My concern is that he represents and is the patron of 128 different community groups. The previous Governor was patron of 157 groups—a large number. In my discussions with previous Governors that I had involvement with, mainly when I was in Executive Council, they said that being a patron of those groups kept them very, very busy. They had no time for advocacy on issues, particularly overseas. It seems to me that the decision is up to the Governor and it should be his preference, but he —

**The CHAIR:** Is there a question coming?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes. How will the Premier ensure that the Governor's role of being a patron for 128 core groups in the Western Australian community is not diminished by his efforts in being pulled into other advocacy functions that are already heavily addressed?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am sure that the Governor will manage that. I can tell the Leader of the Opposition from experience that the Governor does not want for a work ethic, and, as I said earlier, if the member was listening, he looks to engage and meet with people and be involved in events. He seems to love people. When many people retire, they want to withdraw, but not him. In many ways we are very fortunate to have someone with that ethos in that role.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Tuesday, 21 May 2019]

p58b-65a

Chair; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Vincent Catania; Dr Tony Buti; Amber-Jade Sanderson

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**The CHAIR:** Members and Leader of the Opposition, I point out that 12 questions have been asked on this issue.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** That is okay. A policy change is an important issue.

I refer to page 87 and the table under “Asset Investment Program”, in which there has been a substantial increase in a couple of the items. Under “Completed Works”, there has been a substantial increase in funding for the Government House restoration refurbishment project, including the vice-regal suite but, more importantly, the representational guestrooms. Can someone tell me what they are, who uses them and what the substantial investment was for?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** From memory, in 2017 under the former Governor, the Governor’s establishment came to us and said that the building was ageing—I think it is about 160 or 170 years old—and was in severe danger of burning down because of the electricals and the air conditioning, and roof tiles falling off and killing someone. The entire premises had also not been refurbished in many years and was dated and old and needed improvement. In 2017, the government allocated money to that ahead of any decision to appoint the current Governor to the role. That work has gone on over the last couple of years. The Leader of the Opposition has been to many functions at Government House and he will have seen it ongoing over that time. It was necessary, in light of what I have just advised the Leader of the Opposition. That is what we were advised. Past governments have done various things. I remember the last government, which the Leader of the Opposition was part of, did some refurbishment to put a lift in.

[5.10 pm]

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** For the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the Queen.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes, bathrooms and the like. I remember the Geoff Gallop government redid the ballroom in the early 2000s, which is a marvellous community asset used by everyone. It is a funny thing: members would be amazed how many people go through that place and use it. It is being used appropriately for many events and functions, far more than it was used before.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Comparing the estimates for the roof repair and replacement in the last budget, there has been a substantial increase in the cost of the roof repair and replacement. Can the Premier explain what gave rise to that?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I will let Ms Hamilton answer that question.

**Ms R. Hamilton:** Previously, it was a staged project. We decided to do it all in one rather than staging it over a number of years, so we brought the funding forward from the out years.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** What is the representational guestroom refurbishment, and who is going to use it?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is the rooms upstairs. The building itself is a large building and has all sorts of rooms throughout it. They were very tired and full of old carpets and old furniture and looked in many ways a bit like a storeroom, to be honest. The last time any work was done was 25 years ago, so there was a refurbishment of the rooms upstairs. I do not have the exact answers on whom the rooms are used for, but I do know that when the royals visit, that is where they stay—any royals.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Is it the intent that, other than the royals, people who do not come often use those guestrooms?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is available for whomever the Governor invites. Sometimes it is heads of state, dignitaries and people of that nature.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Is that the room the Premier stayed in when he stayed overnight?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is what you are getting at! I stayed one night at Government House. That is your issue. It is a bit like your crown on a poster. That is where you are at.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I am exploring the issues. That is what we are here for, Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Governor invited me and my family a number of times to stay during, I think, the Christmas holidays, and we stayed for one night. It might have been late January or something like that.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I note that \$1.4 million will be spent over 2018–19 to 2022–23 as part of the Governor’s expanded role and advocacy. Can we get an understanding about the increase in the staff allocation that supports the Governor as part of that role—perhaps just job titles and the like? I am trying to understand the FTE increases and who they are—not names, obviously.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The increase in budget per annum is half the increase in budget under the last government. The operational budget was going up on average by four per cent a year during the term of the Barnett Liberal–National government. The recurrent budget is going up by two per cent a year under my government. It is half the increase that was in place when the member for Dawesville was in office. The Governor has two positions—a project officer and an executive services officer—to support his activities. There are two new positions to support the

Governor's priorities—a project officer and an executive services officer. One person has filled a vacant position. The staffing arrangements in comparison—FTE and the like—are exactly the same as the Governor had in 2016–17 and 2017–18. It is exactly the same number of staff as during the last year of the member's government. In 2011–12, there were 33 staff. The staff number in 2019–20 matches the staff number in 2016–17 of 34—it is exactly the same. In 2011–12, there were 33. It is roughly the same. There were obviously some vacancies and the Governor has filled some of them.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I have records. The Premier is right: the number of FTEs in 2019–20 will be 34, in 2011–12 there were 30, and in 2016 there were 31, so there has been growth. According to the *Budget Statements*, there has been growth. Although there is growth in capital expenditure, there is no growth in recurrent expenditure for the management of the Governor's establishment. But each year, there has been substantial growth in support to the Governor for his constitutional, statutory, official, ceremonial and community roles. Indeed, the growth in expenditure has been about 12 per cent a year. There has been substantial growth to accommodate, I assume, his additional roles and responsibilities, which come at additional cost for functions that the Premier has enumerated in great detail. There has been a substantial increase in expenditure to support the Governor.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** To reiterate, the FTE budget in 2011–12 was for 33 staff; in 2016–17, it was 34 staff; and this year, it is 34 staff. It is roughly the same over time. The number moves around by one or two people. The budget itself is going up very modestly across the forward estimates, and that is not unusual. It is going up across the forward estimates by less than it did when the Leader of the Opposition was in office. I realise that he is trying to score a political point here, but I think it is inappropriate to try to do it in relation to the Governor of the state, who cannot defend himself.

[5.20 pm]

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** We are on estimates and the Premier is sitting there —

**The CHAIR:** Is this a further question?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes. The Premier just said that the budget is not going up.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I did not say that.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I am looking at the line item “Effective Support to the Governor” on page 86 of budget paper No 2. The figure was \$1.479 million in 2016–17 and now it is \$2.024 million. Over that period, that is nearly a 50 per cent increase in the allocation to support the Governor. That is a fact. The Premier is basically in denial. I am looking at it in the budget paper.

**The CHAIR:** Is that a question or is that a rhetorical question, Leader of the Opposition?

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I am trying to get the Premier to concur with the reality of what is in the budget papers. I am unsure why he is saying otherwise. We are not necessarily arguing against increasing the allocation to the Governor, but it is a reality. If we cannot agree that the budget papers are accurate, what are we doing? There has been a substantial increase in the support for the Governor over the two to three budgets of the McGowan government—that is a fact—and an increase in the number of FTEs to take on the expanded roles that the Governor has chosen and the government is funding. The Premier is saying otherwise. Anyway, we can move on; we are not dealing with reality.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am happy to answer that. The Leader of the Opposition verbalised me. I said that modest growth in the budget is not unusual. I did not say it was not going up. Modest growth in the budget is not unusual. Everyone else heard me say that. There was modest growth in the budget across each of the years that the Leader of the Opposition was in office. The Leader of the Opposition also said there are more employees than before. No—back in 2016–17, when he was in office, there were 34 staff there; this year, there are 34 staff. The Leader of the Opposition is trying to score some sort of political point here. His arguments are fallacious.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** The Premier has not allocated substantial additional funding, as indicated in the budget, to take on the Governor's additional roles; that is, advocacy and other activities to advance the state's future. Under “Services and Key Efficiency Indicators”, funding for the item “Effective Support to the Governor” goes from \$1.584 million in 2017–18 to \$2 million in 2019–20. That is a substantial increase in that section of the budget. We are trying to make sure we are talking about the same thing here. We can move on. It is what the Premier has submitted to Parliament. We can deal with that reality.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Leader of the Opposition came out with a very convoluted sentence that was full of double negatives. In any event, there is a modest increase in the budget to support a Governor who is proactive on the part of Western Australians. It is similar to budget increases in past years; in fact, it is smaller. We are lucky to have a person who is prepared to be so proactive, who is so high profile and who is so respected around Australia and the world. It is such a benefit to Western Australia to have that. The Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have experienced some of the events and functions at which the Governor has promoted Western Australia, and he is well

**Extract from *Hansard***

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Tuesday, 21 May 2019]

p58b-65a

Chair; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Zak Kirkup; Mr Vincent Catania; Dr Tony Buti; Amber-Jade Sanderson

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received. He hosted an event to acknowledge Julie Bishop's career in federal Parliament. He has done a range of those sorts of things. I have seen the Governor in photographs at these events with the Leader of the Opposition and Mrs Harvey, the member for Scarborough, and others. I do not think I have seen the member for Dawesville there.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Not too often, Premier.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** He has drawn the line! The Governor is a widely respected figure who is doing a great job on behalf of Western Australia. We are lucky to have someone of his capacity in the role.

**The CHAIR:** In light of the fact we have been getting repetitive and there are two divisions left, I intend to put the question.

**The appropriation was recommended.**