

Division 1: Parliament, \$64 984 000—

Ms L.L. Baker, Chair.

Mr P.B. Watson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Ms K.M. Robinson, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr R. Hunter, Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services.

Ms E.L. Ozich, Chief Finance Officer, Parliamentary Services and Legislative Assembly.

Ms P. Traegde, Deputy Executive Manager and Director, Member and Operational Support, Parliamentary Services.

Ms B. Corey, Director, Parliamentary Information and Education, Parliamentary Services.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Good morning, members. 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.

Mr Speaker 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 Mr Speaker 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 Mr Speaker's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 1 June 2018. I caution members that if Mr Speaker 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.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I refer to page 37 of budget paper No 2. There are a lot of spending changes throughout the various areas. This one is a bit different. I refer to the item "Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination". It is a positive; usually it is a negative. Can that be explained?

The SPEAKER: I refer the question to Ms Ozich.

Ms E.L. Ozich: Could the Leader of the Opposition please repeat the question?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: On page 37, under spending changes, the third line item is "Salaries and Allowances Tribunal Determination". In 2018–19, the budget estimate is \$19 000. In other places the amounts are usually negative in this budget. This is not a complaint; it is just a statement of fact. Why is that a positive when everything was frozen?

Ms E.L. Ozich: We do have the frozen cuts in the budget. The Leader of the Opposition is seeing a very slight increase there. What happens is that members' claims may change. We map the history of the claims that are put in by members. They can change from year to year. Each year we also have an increase in the rate of allowances paid for base accommodation, which is based on the tax determination. For example, if a member goes to a particular area, one year they might claim 10 nights and another year they might claim 12 nights. There can be these slight increases, even though overall the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal is not increasing them.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There is an underlying decrease, but on top of that, which is nullifying it, is an increase in allowances. Did the SAT deal with allowances also?

Ms E.L. Ozich: Yes, SAT deals with allowances, but the rate for one of the allowances—the base accommodation allowance—is based on the tax determination. It can be \$347 per night for a particular town, but that may increase over a number of years.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker, I will stay on page 37 and refer to the total cost of services. I want to understand whether that incorporates costs for committees. If that is the case, I will have a supplementary question to follow.

The SPEAKER: Ms Ozich?

Ms E.L. Ozich: It does. It includes all costs.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Could we have an outline of the costs of the Procedure and Privileges Committee inquiry into the member for Darling Range? Could we get a breakdown of those costs, if possible?

The SPEAKER: There is no real extra cost, because this is part of the full-time job of the staff member who was involved in the committee. There was not any extra cost for the committee. The only thing was the hours the committee worked, under a lot of pressure. I would like to congratulate the committee and the staff—they did an outstanding job. There was no additional cost to the Parliament. I will just ask the Clerk to speak.

Ms K.M. Robinson: The Procedure and Privileges Committee is a little different from other committees in that it is not set up full-time like the other committees. For example, the principal research officer to that committee is the Sergeant-at-Arms, so she has other duties as well. The PPC comes together when it has meetings. Obviously, her work would continue, as it did for the last five months that she has been working on that inquiry. We have not assigned hours to that committee. Obviously, the committee incurred costs with such things as morning and afternoon teas, working lunches, the cost of printing the report, and overtime for the principal research officer. There were no other costs like other committees have.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In that case, as the Clerk has alluded to, do we have an understanding of the quantum of overtime and hours worked that were dedicated specifically to this inquiry? We are trying to get an understanding of this for the Parliament. As Mr Speaker said, this was quite a significant inquiry, and committee members were under significant pressure. I am trying to understand what that looks like in terms of a breakdown of hours, overtime and things like that. Do we have an understanding of what that looks like?

The SPEAKER: Clerk?

Ms K.M. Robinson: We could give a broad overview. For example, the Deputy Clerk and I do not get overtime, so our hours would have been given to that inquiry as well. We also had a barrister, Philip Urquhart, who provided some information as well. We will try to work out a rough approximation of the costs and the hours.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Can we get that as supplementary information?

The CHAIR: Can I just confirm what will be provided as supplementary information?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Could I have a go at that?

The CHAIR: Yes, Leader of the Opposition, you may.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The PPC is a special committee in a sense. Even though it is a standing committee, it does not get regular briefs, such as the Economics and Industry Standing Committee does. Could we be provided with information on how many man and woman hours were put into this inquiry, whether any travel was undertaken—I have no idea—whether there were any communication costs, and whether any outside research or advice was obtained—I guess the committee would have gone to the State Solicitor's Office or somebody like that for legal advice? Could we get a good picture of not only the price but also the inputs into the committee, by hours?

The CHAIR: Let us clarify. Mr Speaker, can you just put on the record what will be provided?

The SPEAKER: We will look into the number of extra hours and any costs involved.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: It is not just the extra hours, Mr Speaker. Unlike certain of the standing committees, which have research staff allocated to them on a permanent basis who service the committees, as I understand it the Procedure and Privileges Committee is ad hoc in the sense that it responds only to briefs. Therefore, the people who are assigned to that committee do other things. Economists call that an opportunity cost. It is not like the other standing committees, which have a standing group of researchers. What is the total number of hours put into the committee by the different types of people? The cost of that would be very helpful.

[9.10 am]

The SPEAKER: Yes. Just adding to that, we had only one researcher and she did all the work. If there are medals going around, she should get one. We will work all of that out for the Leader of the Opposition.

The CHAIR: So that everybody is clear, particularly Hansard, I think you should indicate one more time what you are agreeing to provide.

The SPEAKER: We are agreeing to look at the total cost of hours and any other incidental costs to the committee.

[*Supplementary Information No A1.*]

Dr M.D. NAHAN: In terms of the efficiencies put through to the government generally—most are itemised here—has that impacted the committee process at all in the amount of money allocated to it or the functioning of the

committee process? Other than wages, which are itemised in the budget, have there been changes to the allocation to the committee processes, standing and otherwise?

The SPEAKER: Is the Leader of the Opposition talking about the other appropriation?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: No. In the various line items under “Service Summary” are just three basic areas. I am trying to identify where any cuts have been made to the overall allocation to the committee processes of the Legislative Assembly, other than wages that went to the staff who service them.

Ms K.M. Robinson: At this stage, not, but going forward it could be a bit of an issue about whether we get a lower appropriation. With salaries we have been locked into the number of FTEs in terms of how much money we will get for the salaries, and that could prove to be a little difficult if another committee is set up that we have to staff. For example, with the joint select committee, that has to come out of our budget, so that has really put a drain on our other services and will obviously constrain what we can do with that money for committees.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There is a bucket of money for the committees and if there are special inquiries that are costly, that leaves less for everything else. We have two special committees: one is the privileges committee that we have discussed already and the other is the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices. I saw that there were 80 public meetings, which is a rather rigorous schedule. That must have had a very large impact on the residual pool, if you like, for the rest of the committees. I take it from that that there was no specific additional allocation of money for the end-of-life choices committee and that it came out of the pool for committees altogether.

The SPEAKER: Yes, it did. Does the Leader of the Opposition want to know how much it cost?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes.

The SPEAKER: The figures to date are as follows: staffing costs for the principal research officer, \$145 000; staffing costs for the research officer, \$105 000; staffing costs for overtime, \$60 000; advertising, \$8 500; and printing, \$2 500. That is \$322 000. We had an extra level 5.3 for four months at a cost of \$44 000, and a consultant for \$6 000. Expenditure to date is \$301 703 and anticipated cost is \$372 000.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That does not include the wages to the Legislative Assembly staff.

The SPEAKER: It does.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: If the Speaker could provide that type of information for the Urban privileges committee, that is the type of breakdown we are looking for.

The SPEAKER: The one that I just gave you?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, that is the format of the breakdown I am seeking for the Urban committee.

The CHAIR: There was no supplementary information in that conversation; it was just referring back to the previous question?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes. A further question: what is the total committee allocation? What is the bucket of money?

Ms K.M. Robinson: Our operating amount, for example, for 2018–19 is \$6.040 million. That is our operating cost, so that would be salaries for all the staff and whatever is left from that is what we have to run the chamber, the committees and those sorts of things. Obviously, we have to make sure that there is enough money for notice papers, overtime for staff who work on sitting nights and all the different costs that we have. We have to find the money within that \$6.040 million.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: There is an allocation for the committees. What is the total amount and how much has been eaten up by the special inquiries, the privileges committee and the end of-life-choices committee?

The SPEAKER: We will take that as a supplementary question.

The CHAIR: I think it is pretty clear, but can you clarify exactly what the supplementary information is that you will provide?

The SPEAKER: We will provide the total amount for the committees out of the total amount that we are allocated.

[*Supplementary Information No A2.*]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Just so I can better understand, there has not been an expanded allocation to the Legislative Assembly in that case as a result of the Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices? Has the Legislative Assembly had to entirely absorb that?

The SPEAKER: We had to absorb that.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Has there been an impact on any other services that have been delivered as a result of that committee’s operation? If so, what impact has that had?

The SPEAKER: We have had to be a bit more stringent with committees that want to go overseas, because, obviously, it is not a bottomless bucket. We had to knock back one of the committee's requests for an overseas trip. We are being very prudent with our money.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the provision of infrastructure and facilities on page 43 of budget paper No 2. Works are being undertaken at the front of Parliament House for offices for staff. How is that project going? What are the time lines and are there any issues in relation to that? I am also keen to understand how the provision of infrastructure in the courtyard is going and what the total cost is. Are there any ongoing issues with maintenance costs and the like?

Mr R. Hunter: I go firstly to the questions about the fountain repurposing. One of those questions was: how is the project going? The project is going very well; it is on time, on schedule and on budget. We have allocated over a three-year term about \$2.7 million to that. That included the establishment of universal access toilets, which are located on the northern area of the grounds, and also the repaving and sealing of the forecourt where the flags are. That is included in the \$2.7 million. The project is going well. We anticipate that we will occupy that in about August next year. We need to be out of our leased accommodation across the road by 17 December 2019. There will be 27 people in it, essentially finance and library staff, so a bit of a reallocation of staff there. It had been our hope that by relinquishing our leased accommodation we would be able to retain the savings from our current lease costs, which were in the order of \$308 000, but are actually a little less now.

Unfortunately, the government has been very clear that we cannot retain those funds. Our intention to save money and reinvest it in the building was thwarted by a rejection of our proposal to retain those funds. Notwithstanding that, because we attempted to get funds through capital investment, we had two negative things happen to our 2018–19 budget. One is that there is a streamlined budget process that the member would be familiar with, and that streamlined budget process would have allowed us to have a \$161 000 incentive payment, if you like, if we did not ask for money. We asked for money. We put up 21 business cases asking for money to improve Parliament. Those were noncompliant, which means that they did not make it to the Expenditure Review Committee. As a consequence of that request, we lost \$161 000. In addition, in the accommodation savings realised by the renegotiation of the lease, we lost another \$77 000. Parliament, and Parliamentary Services in particular, was already struggling for money for capital investment and is now down about a quarter of a million dollars as a consequence of attempting to improve it.

[9.20 am]

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In relation to the 21 business cases, can the Speaker give us an understanding of what they covered? I am certainly happy for Mr Speaker to table the titles of them.

Mr R. Hunter: We cannot table the document in estimates, but I am more than happy to refer to those projects or provide supplementary information. I need to put my glasses back on for a second and then I can give members a list of those projects. I will go through the projects by heading and value. Obviously, our highest priority right now is the fountain repurposing project at \$2.7 million, which is totally self-funded with no additional funds. That is from our \$1 million capital a year over three years. We put up a business case for external public toilets to the tune of \$200 000 and another for the server room relocation. The IT server room is in leased accommodation across the road and that relocation would cost \$200 000. A business case was made for roofing repairs and replacement of insulation on the eastern side, where water leaks into not only the Aboriginal People's Room but also some of the offices on the north eastern side, for \$415 000. Electric panel and circuitry replacement, because we have had a number of near-miss fires, would cost \$70 000; fire suppression and server room fire suppression, \$2.1 million; air-conditioning master plan, \$2.79 million—does the member want me to keep going?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: If that is okay. I think it is of interest for many of us here in relation to safety and security of the building.

Mr R. Hunter: I will speed it up a bit. Business cases were made for chamber audio system, \$300 000; financial management system, \$500 000; replacement of division bells, \$250 000; courtyard walls refurbishment, \$300 000; stonework restoration of the building facade, \$265 000; Legislative Assembly committee rooms broadcasting upgrade, \$200 000; replacement of the windows in the 1964 extension, \$900 000; internet protocol telephony, \$150 000; information technology infrastructure replacement, \$200 000; security infrastructure replacement and upgrade, \$4.2 million; Hansard recording system, \$80 000; master antenna television, which is the internal TV, \$100 000; replacement of office doors and timber restoration, \$828 000; and members' offices refurbishment, \$800 000. By the way, members' offices refurbishment is our last priority. To put that in a more succinct statement, we have about \$23 million of expenditure over the next 10 years and we are \$13 million short of being able to achieve that.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I understand, unfortunately, by the sounds of it, a lot of these business cases are for maintenance projects and they were essentially knocked back by the government. Can the Speaker give us an understanding of the

security upgrades that would have been possibly flagged by Parliament? I imagine that is a relatively high requirement given the nature of this building. Can I have an understanding of what that might have entailed?

Mr R. Hunter: Madam Chair, I am not sure exactly what the question is.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: What would the \$4.2 million set aside for security upgrades have funded if we had received that funding from the government?

Mr R. Hunter: I will talk in general terms about security because, obviously, this is not the forum for being specific. Essentially, when we look at security, we look at three aspects. One is surveillance activity; we keep an eye out for things that are going on or may be a threat to Parliament or people coming to Parliament. That is the people aspect of it. The infrastructure aspect of it is door control systems, monitoring with cameras and swipe cards et cetera. Then there is a response capability, which is how we deal with an incident if an incident were to occur. For those things to come together, we need a fairly vigilant system of checking people before they come in, making sure that they are not carrying weapons or anything potentially harmful, and being able to respond in the case of an emergency. Parliament is wanting primarily in its response capability. Without going into too much detail, we have a fairly good system of vigilance in monitoring, and forensically we can go back and look at cameras and see what has happened, but the key thing is to have a response capability. Our system, which is fairly overt, relies on the goodwill of the WA Police providing protective security officers, but that is the extent of our response capability, and we really need a closer look at that.

When we say \$4.2 million, it sounds like a big investment, but some of the other Parliaments have advanced their security systems considerably to allow for more rigour around the screening process before people enter Parliament, and we would like to see a bit more done in that space.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: We have a planned or desired capital works program for Parliament of \$23 million over 10 years of which \$13 million is short.

Mr R. Hunter: Yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: What happens if that \$13 million is not spent in a suitable time? I assume that this is a heritage-listed building and we have certain criteria to keep it up. Is that a relevant factor in some of these investments?

Mr R. Hunter: Yes, it is. It is certainly a factor in maintenance issues. Heritage is an important part because everything we do has to go through the Heritage Council. We can make minor changes in the chambers and within offices, but if we are starting to look at windows or doorframes or changing the facade, it has to go through the Heritage Council, which has worked with us extremely well. The issues that are likely to encroach on our ability to provide good services to members are things such as the leaky roof. After the 30 November sitting last year, we had a leak up in that corner. It was leaching down the wall, but it was a Friday so everyone had gone and no-one noticed it. We waited for it to dry out and we painted it. The Leader of the Opposition's former office used to leak profusely through the roof.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That is water, not words!

Mr R. Hunter: We had a bucket on the ground catching that water. That eastern facade is particularly problematic. At some stage, the investment has to happen, because without it we will see a depreciation in our services. We have to reprioritise. As much as I am loath to do this, when we cannot meet our operating costs and keep the building in a functional and pristine condition, we need to look at other things, such as whether we delay a staffing appointment so that we can spend the money on fixing a leaky vent, such as the \$8 000 we spent on the vent above the Aboriginal People's Room. It makes an impact. We are fortunate that we can prioritise things fairly quickly, but right now the air conditioning in some of the offices on the first level, eastern side, has failed. The air conditioning has failed in the office of the Leader of the Opposition in the upper house and a couple of those offices along that corridor. There is no air conditioning whatsoever, which is okay because it is mild right now. However, we cannot fix those offices without dropping the ceilings. The existing air conditioner is from 1996 and uses a two-pipe system with an old kind of gas. The investment for that tranche to do that corridor is about \$480 000.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: That has been a problem for a while.

Mr R. Hunter: It has been a big problem for a while.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: I had a room there. To clarify what Mr Hunter said about the accommodations outside, for a while there has been debate about shifting staff around and into new accommodation. It was largely an expenditure-saving exercise. I understand that the project has been put on hold, to a large extent, from what Mr Hunter said. What would have been the savings if we had had the investments to make the change?

[9.30 am]

Mr R. Hunter: I can only talk for the Parliamentary Services Department, but our lease costs plus outgoings were \$308 000 a year. The proposition to the government was that we would like to retain that \$300 000 because we

were going to relocate people into the repurposed fountains. We get only \$1 million a year, so that \$300 000 was quite significant, but as I earlier advised the answer was no. The impact was that we had to relook at our priorities to establish the bare minimum maintenance needed, and we are basically crossing our fingers and hoping that nothing happens.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: This year there has been a substantial increase in security guards around Parliament House.

Mr R. Hunter: Yes.

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Does the Parliamentary Services Department have to wear those costs, or who covers those costs?

Mr R. Hunter: No, they are not our costs; the WA Police Force is currently funding protective security officers. The original concept was that 40 officers were to be deployed across a number of sites, including Dumas House, Curtin House and Parliament House, but that has now been scaled down to I think 14 or 16 officers. At this stage we are not paying for them; I hope we will never be billed for them. They have certainly added some value in the way of a physical deterrent. There has not been an incident when they have had to pull out their weaponry or do anything too serious, but they are vigilant and keep an eye on the ground. We are grateful for that and we are grateful that we are currently not paying for it. If we had to pay for it, we would be in trouble because we would not then be able to meet some of our other costs and expenses.

The CHAIR: I remind members that there are two divisions in this hour, so members need to let me know when they are ready to move on.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I have another question on the courtyard. I would like to understand how those costs are going and whether there are any maintenance issues.

Mr R. Hunter: On the courtyard, we have coined the phrase from *Field of Dreams*—“If you build it, they will come.” For a long time, we were a long way short of having an appropriate function space. “Function space” sounds a bit glamorous, but considering that a lot of people come here, we needed a place to convene, whether for a minister hosting a particular event or a parliamentary event such as World Bee Day. We put up what some people might consider to be that fairly gaudy canopy, but it was what we could afford. People started to use the courtyard to a much greater extent, but they also noticed that it was almost like a sauna on sitting days—I say “almost like a sauna” because I am being gentle with the words. Consequently, we got extended use—a little like a pool blanket—of the courtyard area, but once people started moving into that space, there were complaints about the heat, and no doubt there will be complaints about the cold when it gets a bit more wintry. There have been mitigations to try to prevent those things, but it is taking some time because we are learning as we go. We have installed some fans to circulate the air, obviously. We have installed a vent, which members may not yet have noticed, and a second vent will be installed. That has made quite a dramatic difference to the airflow. We have a couple of air conditioners that look like Daleks that circulate some cool air. So we are extending the period of use, although it has not achieved exactly what an atrium over the top would have achieved. As to the associated costs, the Daleks cost us \$3 200—about \$1 600 each—and the fans, installations and venting was about \$10 000. The original cost of the courtyard canopy was \$77 000, and putting on the further costs we are probably getting close to \$100 000.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is the courtyard paving and things like that all finished and done? Are there any issues with that?

Mr R. Hunter: It is almost a bit like a waterbed because the membrane was settling.

The SPEAKER: Do not try and sleep on it!

Mr R. Hunter: I am assured that people cannot fall through them. They sit on a buzon, and as the buzons settle onto the membrane, they adjust a little. So from time to time, depending on where we stand on the paver, people might feel just for a second a sense of falling. That will be quickly eliminated by the fact that it will stabilise. So it has a little movement, but we are adjusting it. It is a constant process, and we will do it again in the winter recess. I am happy that it has improved from where it started, but I think it will be a continual thing.

The appropriation was recommended.