

**Division 5: Governor’s Establishment, \$8 057 000 —**

Ms A.E. Kent, Chair.

Mr M. McGowan, Premier.

Mr S. Kennedy, Acting Official Secretary/Chief Executive Officer.

[Witness introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

I give the call to the Leader of the Opposition.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I take the Premier to budget paper No 2, volume 1. On page 86, under the heading “Spending Changes” is “Government House Additional Security Contractors” with an allocation in this budget year of \$465 000 and nothing in the out years. Could the Premier provide an explanation for that cost? I presume that is in addition to normal security at Government House.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** As was publicly revealed, there was a break-in at Government House. A person went into the house at night and was discovered in one of the bedrooms by one of the Governor’s family members. That was quite a dramatic event. That resulted, in part, in additional security being put in place there. The second thing relates to the very regular major protests down there by some members of the anti-vax movement, which has resulted in increased security at Government House. It is not continuing because it is subject to review in the future; for example, when the protests die down, whether it is required will be subject to review.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I cannot see anywhere in these budget papers, but perhaps the Premier can point out where the cost of security is noted in general. We have an additional \$465 000 for this financial year. What is that in addition to? What is the normal expenditure?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is in the overarching ordinary budget of the Governor’s establishment, and I will let Mr Kennedy explain how that works, without compromising any security.

**Mr S. Kennedy:** The security at Government House is largely covered internally, so it is part of the normal staff structure, which has a security component. We have a number of rangers who provide 24 hours’ observation, if you like, of the site. That is covered in the general appropriation for salaries.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Was the additional \$465 000 a new contract or has someone been taken on?

**Mr S. Kennedy:** That amount is being used for an additional security person, effectively, to provide more than one person onsite for 24 hours. That additional amount covers the additional person.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the Premier advise whether a tender process was run to award the contract for those additional services?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The advice I have is that it was not an additional tender, but an extension of an existing arrangement. I am trying to remember the term, but there is a standing group of contractors; perhaps it was from that. It was obviously required quite quickly, because the break-in was quite a dramatic event, if you knew all the circumstances, which should not happen at Government House. As the member may or may not know, some of the protests around Government House have been quite extensive and regular. For some reason, the protesters seem to think the Governor should intervene, sack the government and change the policies of the government. That is what some of these people think and that is why there is extended security around Government House.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I understand it is a serious issue. I am just seeking details about the additional services. Was the contract extended to a current provider?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The advice I have is that it was an existing provider of some description and some sort of existing arrangement was extended. That is the advice I have.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 87 and note service 1, “Effective Support to the Governor”, and the shift in the number of full-time equivalent employees from 12 in 2020–21 through to 13, and then achieving 18 in 2021–22. I do

not really understand the explanation there. Can I get clarity around why this number has changed? There does not seem to be any reason for it, given one would have expected fewer functions, events et cetera at Government House.

**Mr S. Kennedy:** Effectively, that represents a change between the two services. The member will see that the first service is effective support to the Governor and the second service is management of the Governor's establishment. At some point in the last couple of years, staff and resources have been reallocated to better reflect the services provided by staff to suit those services. In that case, it has gone from 12, as the member said, to 13 and then to 18, but that is offset by a reduction in the staff allocated to the other service. Overall, there is not really a net increase; it is a reallocation between the two.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The best way of looking at it is the table at page 87 that shows effective support to the Governor has gone from 12 to 18 over time. But over the page under "Management of the Governor's Establishment", which is the property, it has gone from 25 down to 20.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Further on effective support to the Governor, is this the area that would normally provide for events and receptions at Government House?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is around the program of events, functions, celebrations and speeches. The Governor is extremely proactive and makes a lot of speeches and has a lot of events. I cannot remember the number of events I have been at with him in the last week, but he has unflagging energy for these sorts of things. The number of events held there is quite large. I remember there was one the other night to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Perron Institute. I also remember a great one, earlier this year or maybe late last year, with all the police officers to celebrate the finding of little Cleo. The Governor is very proactive in holding these sorts of events, which is a good role and a good use of the facilities, particularly the Government House ballroom.

[3.20 pm]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Would it be possible to provide a table or list of the events that were forced to cancel during the pandemic period of, say, the 2021–22 financial year?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I do not know exactly. Is the member asking for the events that were cancelled over two years?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Over the 2021–22 financial year.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Which events were cancelled over the current financial year?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I do not know whether there are any protocols here. It is a very unusual question of a very unusual agency. I request that the member put that question on notice and I will find out whether there are issues with providing that information.

**The appropriation was recommended.**