

**Division 50: Chemistry Centre (WA), \$8 454 000 —**

Mr J.M. Francis, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Science and Innovation.

Mr P.J. Millington, Chief Executive Officer.

Mr R. Blakey, Director, Business and Corporate Services.

Ms S.L. Lau, Media and Communication Coordinator.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** I give the call to the member for Armadale.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I refer to the “Other expenses” line item in the income statement table on page 587. Firstly, what does this line item account for? Secondly, what is the reason for the line item’s increase from the 2011–12 budget of \$520 000 to the 2011–12 estimated actual of \$1.894 million? Thirdly, what is the reason for the increase in this line item from that forecast in the 2011–12 budget of \$564 000 to the revised forecast of \$1.975 million in the 2012–13 budget? Fourthly, what reason accounts for the increase in the forward estimates for this line item when compared with the forecast stated on page 597 of the 2011–12 budget papers?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I ask Mr Blakey to provide that information.

**Mr R. Blakey:** If the member looks at the line item “Supplies and services”, he will see that the 2011–12 estimated actual is \$2.719 million and the original budget was for \$4.507 million. There has basically been a reallocation from supplies and services through to other expenses. As to the actual composition of that, I cannot recall exactly what goes in there, but there are a number of individual expenses such as electricity and various sundry expenses that are not covered by those other headings. Basically, the reason for the difference between the 2011–12 budget and the 2011–12 estimated actual is a reallocation between supplies and services and other expenses.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I understand that sometimes it is not always possible to give an answer to a question, but is it possible to follow up and maybe get a bit more clarification on that? We got part of an answer.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We will provide by way of supplementary information further information about the reason for the reduction in other expenses from 2010–11 to 2011–12, and then the further increase in the out years.

[*Supplementary Information No A16.*]

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** We are running out of time, so I will give this as a two-part question to give the minister some liberty. Is the minister able to provide us with some breakdown of the costs involved in the Chemistry Centre’s various types of testing—for instance, it provides drug testing to the Navy—with all the various threshold activities that it is involved with? Also, can the minister give us some forecast of the centre’s ability in the detection of synthetic drugs and where it is moving in the future on that aspect?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Generally, the Chemistry Centre operates on a fee-for-service basis, so I will ask Mr Millington to provide some additional comment on that. But on the issue of —

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** On the issue of the detection of synthetic drugs, where does the centre sit now and what is its future ability or capacity?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Certainly, the Chemistry Centre is at the forefront of research and development and the commercialisation of testing for a whole range of synthetic drugs. It has been doing an outstanding job, as I observe, in that area. I ask Mr Millington to provide some additional information.

**Mr P.J. Millington:** With respect to the first question, we have a price list for internal use that is set every year. Obviously, as we work on a commercial basis, we have some latitude to vary the prices for commercial clients, often depending on the complexity of the test, which might be more complex than the initial request illustrated, and also the volume of testing. They are the parameters that we work to.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I presume some of that is commercial-in-confidence, but is there any possibility of requesting supplementary information to try to obtain some harder data on that aspect?

**Mr P.J. Millington:** We have some published price information and I am happy to supply that as supplementary information.

[*Supplementary Information No A17.*]

**Mr P.J. Millington:** With respect to the synthetic cannabinoids, the way we go about it is that our leaders in that area peruse the international literature within their sphere of expertise and try to predict on the basis of what is happening in Europe and the United States, where most of these drugs originate, which ones will come to Australia. They then have to invest time and money into acquiring the standards for those drugs—these are the registered standards—and then developing the methodologies to be in a position to test them when and if they

appear in Western Australia. If I could give the member two examples quickly, we knew that Kronic, which we had been hearing about, was coming on the radar about four or five months prior to it hitting Western Australia. We had already spent public money in purchasing the standards, so that we were off and running when it hit Western Australia. The current drug of choice is something called bath salts and I will not go into the scientific name for that. Again, we saw that coming about four or five months ago and we already had the tests in place. I will not predict what is coming in the future because I do not want to give certain people a heads-up!

**The appropriation was recommended.**