

Division 6: Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, \$1 077 000 —

Ms J.M. Freeman, Chairman.

Mr C.J. Barnett, Premier.

Mr S. Kennedy, Acting Executive Officer.

[Witness introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: We had the Chairman's statement previously. Please try to keep the questions short. Member for Cannington.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Thank you very much.

I refer to the first dot point on page 99 of budget paper No 2, which makes reference to determining the remuneration paid or provided to holders of certain public offices et cetera, which includes members of Parliament. I draw the Premier's attention to an answer he gave to a question recorded in an article in *The West Australian* of 1 June 2015. The Premier was asked whether he thought politicians should not get any more than the rate of inflation, and he replied that he did and that any rise in salaries for politicians would be in line with the public service at large. I wonder whether the Premier can clarify that; my understanding is that that is not in the legislation. When we dealt with the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal's legislative basis through the last set of public sector reforms, we excluded politicians' salaries from those changes. I just want to see whether my memory is correct and that it is true that politicians' salaries are not tied to the public sector wages policy.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Politicians' salaries are determined by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal, along with those of a number of other positions. The state government, as distinct, its policy position and its submissions, reflect what I said—that any increases to politicians' salaries should be in line with public sector wages policy, which is basically the consumer price index. That is the government's position; the member is right if he is implying that SAT is independent and can determine as it wishes, but the government's position is quite clear. I would hope that the Labor Party, similarly, would support that—or has it suggested an increase for Labor members?

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: I understand the Premier's words now are "should be in line with the public service at large". Was it a reporter's error when the Premier was reported as having said that politicians' salaries would be in line with the public service at large? Was that an error by the reporter or something?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: That is a pedantic or semantic point.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: "Would" and "should" are different things; they do not mean the same thing.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I can see why the member does not get interviewed very often, if he is that stodgy in his responses.

The CHAIRMAN: Premier, please answer the question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I have answered it.

Mr W.J. JOHNSTON: Can I confirm that the comments that were attributed to the Premier in *The West Australian* of 1 June 2015 were wrong?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: No, the member cannot confirm that at all. I have answered the member's question.

The appropriation was recommended.

[5.10 pm]