

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2014–15 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 15 AUGUST 2014**

SESSION ONE

**DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
AND
PARLIAMENTARY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

Members

**Hon Ken Travers (Chair)
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)
Hon Martin Aldridge
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Rick Mazza**

Hearing commenced at 10.33 am**Hon BARRY HOUSE****President of the Legislative Council, examined:****Mr NIGEL PRATT****Clerk of the Legislative Council, examined:****Mr NIGEL LAKE****Deputy Clerk of the Legislative Council, examined:****Mr ROB HUNTER****Acting Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services, examined:****Ms ELMA OZICH****Chief Financial Officer, Parliamentary Services and the Legislative Council, examined:****Ms KATHERINE GALVIN****Acting Deputy Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services, examined:**

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Can I ask each of the witnesses to confirm that they have read, understood and signed a document headed "Information for Witnesses"?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: Witnesses need to be aware of the severe penalties that apply to persons providing false or misleading testimony to a parliamentary committee. It is essential that all your testimony before the committee is complete and truthful to the best of your knowledge. This hearing is being recorded by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at the witness's request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the committee values your assistance with this.

For the benefit of members and Hansard, I ask, starting with you, Mr President, that each of the witnesses state their full name and the capacity in which they appear before the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: Do any witnesses wish to make an opening statement?

The PRESIDENT: I will just make a brief opening statement, Mr Chairman. Thanks very much to the committee to present the Legislative Council and the Parliamentary Services Department to your committee. Just very briefly, in terms of the Legislative Council, this year, of course, we have seen the transition in leadership from the former Clerk, Malcolm Peacock, to the current Clerk, Nigel Pratt. That has been very smooth in my estimation and has worked very well. From my perspective, the chamber activities have continued to operate smoothly, with legislation getting a good hearing, a good debate and, from the government's perspective, passing in satisfactory times, but with several committee investigations along the way. The committee work, from my

perspective, has also been very diligent and productive. In general terms, can I just record my thanks, appreciation and congratulations to all the staff associated with the Legislative Council. Similarly, for the Parliamentary Services Department. As you are aware, there is a wide range of services. Over time, I have been able to compare how our Parliament operates to other parliaments both in Australia and elsewhere in the world. I think that we come out in extremely good terms from all of my observations. We have the ongoing challenges of an ageing heritage building with continuing needs as far as the capacity of this institution goes, in terms of the building itself, for accommodation, facilities and function spaces. Given those constraints, I think our staff do an absolutely fantastic job, but we continue, as Presiding Officers, to pursue better outcomes for all of those things in terms of the Parliament. Thanks, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: Thank you. For the benefit of members, my intention is just to allow members to ask questions regarding either the Legislative Council or the Parliamentary Services Department, but if members want to focus on the Legislative Council first, then we will move to the Parliamentary Services Department. I am not going to make that as an exclusive decision and there may be a number of issues where you want to cross over between the two.

My first question is with respect to the controlled grants and subsidies on page 50. I understand that the role of the CPA rotates between the Council and the Assembly. Can anyone explain why there is such a variation in our annual fees for the CPA? Last year, it was \$115 000 and this year it drops to \$67 000 and then it jumps again. I would have thought it would be a more continuous ongoing figure. Could someone explain that for us?

Mr Pratt: I think you have the figure of \$115 000 for the last financial year and a lower amount for this year. My understanding is that the budget for this financial year was set when the CPA was managed by the Legislative Assembly, and that budget was accepted as a result of anticipated lower activity in that financial year on this financial year.

[10.40 am]

The CHAIR: How is the CPA grant determined? I assumed that we just paid an annual membership fee to be members of the CPA. Is it that they set a different fee every year for us? I still do not understand how it rotates.

Mr Pratt: The fee for members is the same, I understand, Mr Chairman. It is a grant by government and based on a budget that is submitted.

The CHAIR: How much do we actually pay to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to be members? What are the annual costs to the WA Parliament to be members?

The PRESIDENT: It is an individual payment made by each member. Out of the 95 members of Parliament, all but about six, I think, are members of the CPA. The annual grant from government, to my knowledge, has not changed at all, really, over the years. Our affiliation fees, as a jurisdiction, to the CPA worldwide has not changed at all either, except that the executive committee that I am a member of recently, at our last meeting, took a decision to increase the fees by a CPI amount. In terms of the actual figures that you are quoting, I cannot shed much more light on that except that nothing has basically changed in terms of the structure of fees and payments.

Mr Pratt: I can possibly shed some light. I think the payment that the WA branch makes to international CPA is around £8 000, I think—around \$A20 000—and that is a payment made by the branch. The membership fees of individual members do not go anywhere near covering that cost. That gets paid to the branch to cover some of the activities of the branch. So that is the way the payments work.

The CHAIR: So, what would that \$115 000 that was allocated to the CPA last year have been spent on? That is more than £8 000, even with exchange rates.

Mr Pratt: Sure; and that is a grant, Mr Chairman, that is provided by government, so that would pay for the travel of members to attend various conferences, both nationally and internationally, and to also host conferences and members from other Parliaments coming to the Western Australian Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Just in terms of hosting, can I give you an example of that. Next Wednesday here in this Parliament we will be hosting a lunch for Sir Alan Haselhurst, who is the chairperson of the executive committee of the CPA worldwide; he is coming to this Parliament. The Western Australian branch executive members have all been invited to that lunch, plus the members right across the whole Parliament who have participated in CPA conferences or seminars in the last year or so. That is one example of —

The CHAIR: No, no, I am not questioning the work of the CPA—do not get me on wrong on that; I am just trying to understand the funding of it, because it strikes me that what I am hearing is that the CPA operates as its own entity, and so, obviously, how it accounts. But if, through the Parliament, we are making a grant, I assume we would be requiring then, as the Parliament, for the CPA to acquit that grant to the Parliament. That would be normally how a government department would have a grant to a third party in some way acquitted. So, is the CPA required to acquit their grant to us?

The PRESIDENT: At the AGM of the CPA every year, there are audited accounts tabled at the CPA AGM. So our role as a Parliament is virtually to receive those moneys and administer the payments, and it is self-funding; it cannot be anything else. We do not contribute from any of the other departments of the Parliament into the CPA's operations.

The CHAIR: I understand that, but the way I am looking at is that the CPA is a body that is not a part of the Parliament. It is a collection of the members of the Parliament —

The PRESIDENT: That is right.

The CHAIR: — who have established an independent organisation, and through the Parliament or through the Department of the Legislative Council, the government provides a grant to that body. Now, if that was any other organisation, I would have thought, if it was the Department of Parks and Wildlife providing a grant to an independent outside organisation, there would be a requirement on an annual basis for that grant to be acquitted. I am asking whether that is a requirement. Part of the problem here, I think, is that there is this sort of mixture of the people who will be acquitting it who are also, obviously, members of Parliament; but in terms of ensuring that we meet the same standards that we would expect of the public sector, I would have thought that there would be some sort acquittal process back to the Department of the Legislative Council, and I am trying to understand if that does occur.

The PRESIDENT: There is an honorary auditor. For years, Max Evans has performed that role for the CPA, and his audit certificate is tabled at the AGM of the CPA. But I understand what you are saying. In a sense, the Parliament just administers the moneys in and out, but it is a self-contained fund.

The CHAIR: Yes. Again, an incorporated association would be required to get independent audits, but that would be part of their acquittal process to the body that provides the grants. I have to be honest; I am a stickler. One of the reasons I think it is always important that we have hearings of the Legislative Council at our estimates hearings is that we should be ensuring that we are meeting the same standards that we would then be applying to the rest of the public sector. I am still trying to get the answer to whether or not there is a formal acquittal process between the Parliament and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association for their annual grant. If not, maybe it is something that I could suggest that the Clerk might want to take on board for our next hearing, if that is possible.

The PRESIDENT: In his capacity as the honorary secretary —

The CHAIR: No, in his capacity as being the CEO of the body that provides the grant. This is part of the conflict. The Clerk is the receiver of the grant but also the giver of the grant, but I would still expect that there should be some formal audit trail of the fact that the grant has been given and then acquitted. Now, I accept that there is a difficulty when you are both the person you are giving the grant to and in your capacity as, effectively, the CEO of the department, the person authorising the grant.

Mr Pratt: Mr Chairman, I am the Clerk of the Legislative Council in relation to the management of the appropriation that is provided, both under the appropriation act and the standing appropriation under the Salaries and Allowances Act 1975, that provides the appropriation to enable the payment of members' salaries and allowances. In relation to my role as the honorary secretary of the CPA, that is a separate matter. It is convenient that it is shown as a grant in our budget papers because it is money. Essentially, we are acting as a conduit for the activities of the CPA, but in that role, as Mr President has indicated, those accounts are audited, and all the acquittals from those funds are audited by a professional auditor.

[10.50 am]

The CHAIR: I understand that, but if you were the head of the Department of Parks and Wildlife and you were giving a grant to a third party organisation, you would still require an annual acquittal of that grant, I would expect, and that would include audited statements. I am just surprised that we do not require the same thing. I would certainly urge you to have a look at that. We do not want to spend much more time on that. Unless there is any other final comment, I might move on to other questions.

The PRESIDENT: Let us not leave that hanging with some sort of question mark over all that. There is a full, open, audit process of those payments that are made in and out of the CPA account. That comes back to the Parliament because it is tabled at our CPA AGM and all those conditions are met with full probity.

The CHAIR: I am not suggesting any impropriety. Please do not think for a moment I am suggesting impropriety. I am just making the point that if the CPA is a separate body to the Parliament, if it was any other organisation, there would be an expectation that there is an annual—my understanding of government agencies, when they make grants, is that there is some formal acquittal process. I have no doubt that the CPA would be able to meet that acquittal process if it was put in place. My point is that it is my view that that should be the case.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In some cases, it can be—it has been in the past—as simple as the fundee sending a copy of the annual report including the audited statements to the funder and the funder examining the audited statements and saying, “Yes, that money has been acquitted in the way in which we intended it.” Sometimes it is as simple as that.

The PRESIDENT: I do understand the question and I am sure our finance department acquits that to Treasury in a full and open way.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Mr President, I think you would be aware of the issue—it is listed as a significant issue in the Department of the Legislative Council budget papers—relating to the Joint Standing Committee on Audit's legislative review of the Auditor General Act 2006. There is a requirement in that act for a review after five years, which was some three years ago, and you would be aware of the committee's work to try to get that audit underway. Is there any update on being able to secure the funds necessary in order for the Joint Standing Committee on Audit to undertake that review?

The PRESIDENT: In short, yes, there has. There has been a request to Treasury that was flagged in this year's budget papers and perhaps the Clerk may be able to elaborate a bit more on that.

Mr Pratt: I think Ms Ozich has this.

Ms Ozich: We will be applying for funding for the audit committee within this next month.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: That would be part of the midyear review process, so we would find out as part of the midyear review whether that application has been successful?

Ms Ozich: Yes. In fact, I think we were anticipating asking before the midyear review rather than to wait for that.

Mr Pratt: We were.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Thank you for coming along today. I want to focus on something slightly different and point out at the rear of the room we have the honour roll for the war service of former members of this place. In the context of the 100 years commemoration of Anzac this year and next year and the following years, are there any events or commemorations planned around members of Parliament who served in either the Great War or subsequent wars?

The PRESIDENT: The short answer is yes and there is quite a bit of detail that I am sure Mr Hunter or Kat Galvin can elaborate on. In terms of the honour boards at the back, I have been aware for some time that one former member, Hon Reg Davies, has a request to be recorded in a Borneo overseas placement as well as his Vietnam and I understand that that is being attended to. There are several things being planned in terms of this Parliament's acknowledgement and commemoration of World War I association. For the actual details on that, perhaps I can hand to Mr Hunter first.

Mr Hunter: First of all, the date to note is that there is a Heritage Days coming up in October and there is considerable work being undertaken in researching some of the history that relates to the Parliament and previous members who have served et cetera. That work has been undertaken extensively. We will be hosting a day, which is on the Sunday, which will be an open day to the public, allowing the public to come in and view display boards, see some of the history. The work is currently being undertaken; it is quite extensive. I think it is in October. I will let Kat Galvin talk about some of the details to it, but it is going to be quite a remarkable day.

Ms Galvin: Perth Heritage Days is scheduled for 19 October, so we will be open for about six hours on that day. Hansard, the Library and Education are currently undertaking fairly extensive research. That involves looking at members who served while in Parliament during World War I and World War II. There is about 17 members and, unfortunately, two deceased members, so we will be focusing quite heavily on those. We are also looking at other issues such as key legislation and just some general information from around that time. We are developing displays, so that will be formal displays for the Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council and for the foyer. We are also looking at some website information as well around the members who served and linking through to bibliographical information from our members' historical database. We are also in the process of identifying—we have got one member who we believe is still alive and we would like to approach him in relation to participating in that day. The only other thing is I have a meeting with Heritage Perth on Monday just to look at some static displays.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Terrific. Is that member who you mentioned is alive a member who served in World War II, is it?

Ms Galvin: Yes, that is correct.

The PRESIDENT: Can I add that this brings into focus some changes to the structure of Parliamentary Services that we have made in this Parliament to, firstly, have a communications manager. The person appointed to that role in the full-time capacity is Belinda Corey, but she is currently on maternity leave. The person filling in in that role is Kat Galvin at the moment. In conjunction with other changes in this Parliament has been a restructuring of the education unit to be administered across the whole of Parliament not just, as previously was the case, by the Legislative Assembly. Those two things have really come together superbly with an example such as this—our links with World War I and II and other overseas service that Australian

parliamentarians and their families have been involved in. Another example was a function that we held recently to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the eastern extension to Parliament House. The work that the people in the communications unit, headed by Kat Galvin, and the education unit, headed by Sarah Smith and others, has been outstanding, in my book, creating historical information and pulling together functions, events and links with the Parliament. That is one major plus over the 18 months of this Parliament's operations, which has seen some changes in our structure.

[11.00 am]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: From my perspective, I should point out that I have only been here a very short time, but I have noticed the escalation in the work of the Parliamentary Education Office and just the displays generally. Even the pull-down screen where people can have photographs taken out in the courtyard just in itself adds a little bit of colour and lustre to people visiting. Keep up the good work.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In relation to that matter, have the researchers been requested to look into the contribution that women may have made in service, say, through nursing, or whether there were any women members of Parliament who had seen service in a whole range of activities, whether at the front or here at home? Is there any focus on women?

The PRESIDENT: As an inclusive thing, yes, but perhaps if there is any detail, Kat may be able to elaborate.

Ms Galvin: At the moment education is looking at staff members who are here who also served, and also more general information as well. Some of that may well be picked up in that, but I will certainly take it to education as something to look at. We have done a recent call for information on some ideas as well in relation to research topics.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Who did that call go to?

Ms Galvin: At this stage I have just gone out to the Parliamentary History Advisory Committee and managers. We have met with the Governor's Establishment as well.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I wanted to go to accommodation spending in the budget. That is at pages 50 and 52. Basically, it is telling us that accommodation expenses are expected to fall in this year's budget based on the actual expenditure last year. It is on page 50 under "Cost of Services". The fourth line item down is "Accommodation". It shows the actual expenditure last financial year. There is a significant drop to this financial year's budget. Then it seems to fluctuate. Can I get an understanding of why accommodation expenses are expected to fall?

Ms Ozich: Sometimes items classified in our P&L might vary. There is an error in the 2012–13 year in that an item included in "Accommodation" should be in "Supplies and services". If you look at the line above, you will notice that that is disproportionate to the following years. Some building project works were provided by Parliamentary Services Department and they should have been classified as supplies and expenses but were put into accommodation. That is why that variation occurs between the years.

The CHAIR: What was that? Do you know what the work was?

The PRESIDENT: My recollection is that it probably relates to the stonework that had to be —

Ms Ozich: Most of it was to do with the air conditioning. The air conditioning was a large portion of that. There were some security upgrades. There was recarpeting of the northern corridor. There were various smaller projects but the bulk of it was in air conditioning.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What are the current plans in terms of how the accommodation budget is to be expended? Are there plans for any new movements or refurbishments?

The PRESIDENT: Can I just say up-front that accommodation, as everyone knows, is a problem in this building. Simply, the complexity of the whole Parliament has outgrown the current spaces that we occupy. As a Parliament we lease five spaces in buildings close to Parliament House and around West Perth for committee activities, housing of administration, housing of library functions and so on. We are continually looking at that. We are continually presenting to government requests for solutions. The major solution that we are all chasing, of course, is a new building. Because of the heritage values of this building, we would not be allowed to interfere with its structures. We are seeking a new building next door, probably as the first stage where the current car park is, to accommodate a range of parliamentary services associated with how we operate. That, in turn, would free up more space in this building for members' accommodation. At the moment I am acutely aware that quite a few members are housed very poorly in terms of the comparative housing of other public officials around the city. We are continually trying to address that. We are trying to do it within the current economic climate, which is restrictive. We are trying to work with government as cooperatively as we can, always with the major project in mind, but in the unlikely event that we will get the millions of dollars required for that in the current climate, we are trying to do our best to free up a few options to achieve better outcomes for everybody.

The CHAIR: I have a couple of questions on that. Within the two budgets, maybe more Parliamentary Services, there are the spending changes, which are listed on page 58, for the continuation of the security upgrade at Parliament House. Then on page 61 we have two line items, "Works in Progress" and "Completed Works". The first thing I am trying to understand is: is that continuation of security upgrades part of the asset investment program or is it purely recurrent expenditure; and, if so, what do the ongoing security upgrades entail?

Mr Hunter: Perhaps I will answer the question about the \$267 000 first. In 2010, we were successful in getting some money from Treasury to upgrade our security. The amount that we sought at the time was \$250 000, and that was given to us in our recurrent budget, not as part of our capital. It was given to us on a one-off basis, which was a funny thing to do, but it was a one-off recurrent. In the subsequent year it was withdrawn. In the subsequent year it was withdrawn again. We never saw the money again. Effectively, we put infrastructure and personnel in place on the basis of expecting to see \$250 000 recurrently, and that was not achieved. That then started to eat into our overall operating budget, giving us a little bit of heartache across all our business units. We made a subsequent request to Treasury again, saying, "This is really starting to hurt us. We cannot maintain the security that you supported in 2010." We were successful in getting that bid. A total of \$267 000 was then given to us for this financial year and for future years.

The CHAIR: Is that for security personnel rather than physical —

Mr Hunter: That is correct. We are probably at the end of our infrastructure path in terms of our security at the moment. Any further steps will be quite costly, which requires an offsite processing area, a bit like what New South Wales Parliament does, and that is an unlikely outcome considering the financial climate. Our infrastructure is probably at an end. This is really about personnel.

[11.10 am]

The CHAIR: I am trying to understand the difference between the works in progress and completed works. The budget for that is \$14 million, which at \$1 million a year I suspect is going to take us another 10 years to complete. I am trying to understand what that infrastructure and equipment asset refurbishment and replacement program entails.

Ms Ozich: That \$14 million is the total estimated cost of the program to date plus the expected budget for the next 10 years. That is where that figure comes from.

The CHAIR: Are there actual works associated with that money or is it just an estimate? So, we know what we are doing.

Mr Hunter: Yes, we know what we are doing.

Ms Ozich: We know what we are doing.

The CHAIR: How far out do we know what we are doing?

Mr Hunter: We have got a strategic asset management plan that goes out 10 years. Treasury require that we submit each year, and update each year, a strategic asset management plan which shows how we acquire our capital funds, which, in our case, is \$1 million. What we do is we put that out to them. We look at it each year. We revisit the priorities and establish whether that is going to be continuing as a priority. At the moment, we probably see something in the order of about 70 per cent of our capital funds being directed towards air conditioning, stonework and window restoration because the building is deteriorating, and probably the other 30 per cent in sort of general upgrades to areas such as the kitchen, the server, fridges, cool rooms and things like that. We set that out, and then occasionally we will be able to reprioritise that; depending on what our financial position is at the end of May, we might be able to include a few other projects, but that is essentially it. A million dollars does not get us very far.

The CHAIR: It strikes me that that is more ongoing maintenance and holding a position—things like the windows and the stonework. Are there things where we could get a one-off grant that would actually then be on a net-present-value basis far more financially efficient in terms of maintaining this building rather than doing an annual patch-up job, for want of a better term? Have we done that work?

The PRESIDENT: We agree with you; we make that request every year. It has been a little frustrating that we have been allocated a million dollars by Treasury and they say, “You incorporate your maintenance requirements that are capital-type items into that million dollars.” Our requests for individual grants to cover some of the major items have fallen on deaf ears up to this point.

The CHAIR: Have we got a business case for how you could do a major refurbishment of the physical infrastructure of the Parliament that would then result in lower ongoing maintenance costs, so on a net present value there is actually savings to government over a 10 or even potentially a 20-year lifespan?

Mr Hunter: The way that we tend to approach it is that we become aware of what the critical issues are for the Parliament. At the moment, we have got around about \$11.5 million worth of outstanding capital works, which are unfunded, including a sagging roof, leaking roof, courtyard deterioration, stonework and air conditioning, which goes into about \$7 million over 10 years. We know what the building condition report is telling us. We know what the funding is going to achieve, and unfortunately it falls a long way short of being able to do that. As Mr President has noted, we have made numerous requests for funding for specific things. We have also argued that if we can get that money now, we can have longer term savings, but we have not been successful with the bids at this stage. We have a very clear understanding of what our priorities are. Unfortunately, some of those priorities are not very visible, because those things when they are getting fixed—stonework, for example—do not look any different to most people, but it achieves some savings in terms of restoring the stonework, less deterioration, less water leakage et cetera. We are very clear what we need, but we have been very unsuccessful. I thought, based on the way that we have made arguments before, we had been fairly convincing, but obviously unsuccessful with it. It is a very frustrating thing.

The honourable member’s question about accommodation, for example, and Mr President comment about members’ accommodation being poor, we have got 69 per cent of our members in shared accommodation. Previously, I heard a comment that there has not been any refurbishment of members’ offices for 15 years, which is probably true. Some rooms have been done; some minor changes have been done. There is no program and no funding to upgrade members’ accommodation because we simply do not have the money. What we do is we take that out of our maintenance or our faults. We have \$250 000 a year to deal with all building maintenance, which is very minor, and \$250 000 to deal with faults. Each year we are really pinching money from different places to try

and meet the costs that we experience. Last year I think we were at around about \$600 000; we had \$500 000 for it. It is a very, very difficult challenge for us.

The PRESIDENT: But in answer to your question, Mr Chairman, it does not stop us asking in terms of packaging all those things up to Treasury. When the Speaker and I appear before the EERC we always make that case up-front. We make the case, firstly, in terms of the major master planning exercise that we need in terms of accommodation for this institution; secondly, in terms of this building, capital requirements that you are talking about, plus ongoing maintenance; and then specifically we go into but quite heavily on some individual requests. For instance, we have had several meetings with relevant ministers and the Premier about trying to improve our function spaces by getting some covering of the courtyard—if not all of it, perhaps partially. Those discussions are ongoing and we push our case as hard as we can.

The CHAIR: I get that the politics of spending money on Parliament House is not always the easiest. But it strikes me that if we are clearly spending more money on trying to maintain the building and you can clearly demonstrate in a very public way that spending \$5 million tomorrow to fix all the windows and the stonework will mean that we do not over the next five years spend \$10 million, I think that is something. Have we got that list of projects—I think you talked about \$11.5 million? Can we have that as supplementary information?

Mr Hunter: Certainly, we can take that as supplementary.

[Supplementary Information No A1.]

The PRESIDENT: Just harking back to the eastern extension, where we recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its completion in 1964. It was interesting to note that that project was achieved, ultimately, with total bipartisan support and media support and community support. It was introduced initially by Premier Bert Hawke and then consequently followed through under the premiership of Sir David Brand, with media support all the way. That seems to be the way that we ultimately achieve these major project needs.

The CHAIR: I think no-one complained about the northern wing either when that was done.

The PRESIDENT: We are acutely aware that the northern enclosure of the building was the last significant capital funding applied to this building, and that was the last opportunity we had to improve members' accommodation. We are earnestly working on our next opportunity.

The CHAIR: I am happy for this to be supplementary. The completed works—building refurbishments and the upgrade—can we get a list of what the \$1.986 million was spent on?

[Supplementary Information No A2.]

The CHAIR: What is the \$1 million for this year going to be spent on?

The PRESIDENT: The big ticket item is the stonework, which I think is going out to tender about now. That is in the range of about \$700 000, which sounds extremely high to most people, but it is a heritage building and that sort of work, even though we get very little result for our ultimate work in that most people do not really notice the difference too much, is very important for the integrity of this building.

[11.20 am]

Mr Hunter: The \$700 000 or thereabouts is actually stonework and window restoration. We have timber sashes from the eastern façade going up to the library. Currently, paper is stuffed in there—you do not get to see it because it is at the top level—and it has been puttied up. Some of our best windows are just a very thin veneer of paint, so that is causing us a great deal of problems in terms of leakage, and it also has some climate issues in terms of being able to keep us nice and cool and warm et cetera. So, the window restoration is actually a really big part of the stonework restoration project, and we are trying to get some economies of scale by bringing those two projects together,

because both revolve around scaffolding and quite a lot of inconvenience. This summer we anticipate that we will have scaffolding across the eastern side, doing up all the stonework and the remaining parts of the windows, which is the biggest portion. That will probably take us through till February. We will have the scaffolding off the ground by the time the Parliament resumes, but it will still be on the second level, doing the library work. That is the biggest portion; that is about 70 per cent of our \$1 million.

The other things that we are looking at are that we have problems around our refrigerants that work in the members' bar and strangers' bar—those refrigerators there—and also the first-floor servery. There is a project underway this financial year to fix those things up. The condition of those fridges particularly was noted in 2006. It has taken us this long to get to it. Again, from a member's perspective, you probably will not notice any difference. What we will see are some great improvements in our efficiency, particularly our energy use, because we will be upgrading those fridges and the two compressors that drive those fridges. We are also replacing a servery on the first floor just outside this chamber to give that a bit of an improvement. It has actually got a broken fridge in there that has not worked for some time, so we are going to change it so that we have a better HACCP standard in terms of our health standards and operating environment. That is another \$107 000 in terms of the cost. It still leaves a couple of hundred thousand dollars remaining, so we have also got the upgrade, which I imagine you have started to notice, in terms of the furniture and carpet that will be through the members' corridor and the dining room in December. That project will run into around about \$190 000 to \$200 000.

The CHAIR: What is wrong with the existing carpet? I cannot see what is wrong with it. I have looked. I could take you to my electorate office—I am not complaining about my electorate office, but the quality of the carpet in my office is nowhere near that standard.

Mr Hunter: That is unfortunate for your electorate office, because the carpet is problematic for us for a number of reasons, particularly in the high volume areas. Mr Chairman, you noted that there was a sort of preventive maintenance strategy in terms of taking a whole-of-building approach. The carpet cleaning that we do on those carpets, particularly in the dining room and the corridor, is very extensive. It is not cheap to do it; we do it regularly. Essentially, when members leave the Parliament and go into a recess, we will reassess it and we will have to re-clean it. The carpet—I would have to check this number—I think it was about 16 years ago that it was laid. The high traffic areas have really shown signs of wear. The current batch of carpet—that carpet we ordered some time ago—the company that created that carpet for us no longer exists. What we decided to do was to replace the carpet. The entire carpet, which is a fairly big area—so it is the dining room, the corridor, the members' bar, the strangers' bar and the two corridors that lead up to the President's and the Speaker's corridors—is around \$59 a metre, and the total project cost is just under \$60 000 to buy the carpet, and then the installation costs will be around \$50 000 to do the floor repairs that are needed under the joists and the floors, particularly at the Council end where there is some sagging in the floor. We are looking at probably just under \$100 000 to replace the carpet. The carpet actually informs the chairs, because the carpet was chosen before the chairs, so what we are seeing now is a fairly insipid blend of brown and brown, if you like.

The CHAIR: I have heard it said in not such polite terms!

Mr Hunter: What we did with the carpet specifically—the Parliament is obviously a place of significance and our civic connection really needed to be emphasised by having something that looked a little better than it currently does. A closer examination of the carpet will reveal that it is pretty grotty. In just that area, we have picked up a couple of things. One of them was that the 1904 carpet design has been incorporated into the new design, and we have also picked up the kangaroo-paw and the native bird, which will appear on the carpet as part of the design.

The CHAIR: In Legislative Assembly blue, I note.

Mr Hunter: Yes. It has some red, or some beige.

The CHAIR: Did Hon Alanna Clohesy have a question on the carpet?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I wanted to check that the current refurbishment program that you asked for was as a supplementary.

The CHAIR: I asked for the \$11.5 million—that strategic plan. What is the member seeking?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I was concentrating on another issue at the time.

chai: Mr Hunter has, I think, gone through what the \$1 million has been spent on this year.

Mr Hunter: In this financial year.

The CHAIR: I do not know that there is anything —

Mr Hunter: That is the extent of our projects. There are some minor things, but that is the extent of the \$1 million.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Except that there are other proposed refurbishments.

Mr Hunter: I beg your pardon; you are quite right. There is the APR—the Aboriginal People's Room—extension. The Aboriginal People's Room extension is carryover funds from last year that we are allocating to that particular project. As we get to the end of each financial year, our \$1 million is acquitted very easily, as you can understand, but some of the funds that we can carry over we can then allocate to projects that we prioritise based on our needs in the Parliament. In the case of the Aboriginal People's Room, as Mr President had quite rightly pointed out, we have a fairly significant shortage of function space. Our argument is that we bump in marquees on numerous occasions during the year to either compensate for heat or compensate for weather in the courtyard. That might not always be the Parliament's cost, but it is the public purse cost in bumping those marquees in to host functions. So we were looking for an alternative function space that would accommodate a larger group—something that gave a good outlook to the city and to the river, and that was the location that was chosen. It was also an opportunity to increase the Indigenous representation within the Parliament and create, I guess, a fourth area within the Parliament—if you look at the library and the two chamber departments—which would be quite magnificent for the civics. The project is about—at this stage we have put about \$125 000 to it, and that will include the carpeting of the area and a concertina door that will go between the two rooms to allow an extension to a big room or bringing it down to two smaller rooms that can be used for meeting rooms. Those funds were actually funds that we held over from last year with the intention of being able to do this in December.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How was that determined as a priority for refurbishment over, for example, roof leakage or other items that are on that list for the need for refurbishment?

The PRESIDENT: Can I just shed a little bit of light on that. For quite a while we have had quite a few complaints from members and elsewhere about the function area, or the foyer area that is effectively used as a function area outside the Aboriginal People's Room. It is really the only internal covered space that we have in the building. It is a very uncomfortable area in terms of space and very uncomfortable in terms of cleanliness and air conditioning. We got a quote for air conditioning that was ridiculous—half a million dollars or something like that to air condition and just freshen up the air in that space.

Mr Hunter: Six hundred thousand.

The PRESIDENT: We then searched for a few alternatives, and that is how the extension to the Aboriginal People's Room came up. It was relatively simple and cheap by comparison to knock out a few walls, incorporate the existing air conditioning and enhance at the same time our function space and our Aboriginal people's display area. So, we elected to go down that channel, and at the same time it will free up a few other meeting rooms around the building that we can then

incorporate into member's accommodation. That was how the priority of that particular decision was decided.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The six members' offices on the ground floor where the air conditioning is a major problem, where the air conditioning is connected, will that problem be solved by the refurbishment in the Aboriginal People's Room?

Mr Hunter: The ground floor?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: If part of the decision-making about refurbishing the Aboriginal People's Room was about air conditioning, will all of the other air conditioning problems that exist in the building, including the row of six offices on the ground floor that have major air conditioning problems associated with them, be solved by a new air conditioning solution being proposed for the Aboriginal People's Room? Are they linked?

Mr Hunter: They are not linked.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Will they remain a problem?

[11.30 am]

Mr Hunter: The short answer is, yes, they will remain a problem in the short term. The air conditioning project was originally rolled out over 10 stages. It has now been extended over 12 stages because we had to break it down to into parcels that we can afford. The wing you are referring to was actually the next stage—stage 3—so that would probably have been one of our priorities. We had to choose between stonework restoration and windows, or air conditioning. Part of that third stage —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Or the Aboriginal People's Room.

Mr Hunter: Or the Aboriginal People's Gallery air conditioning, which was quite extensive as well. So, probably what we will see—it really depends on how our priorities shift, because we are only doing stonework on one side of the building and obviously we have four sides to the building—is that we will probably alternate between air conditioning and stonework for, unfortunately, the next 10 years until we can resolve it. The question you asked earlier in regard to why was the Aboriginal People's Room a decision as opposed to fixing the leaking roof, essentially it is because we do not have enough money to do the whole project. The roof project is about \$400 000; it is the valley that you see in the tiles on the top that is causing a sagging problem, and then there is some associated work in terms of some leaks and some walkways that need to be done—that is \$400 000. We cannot parcel that work up into smaller components, so it really becomes a matter of how much money do we have and where can we put this money where we are going to get some value out of it. That is how it came about. The decision process is always the Presiding Officers, in consultation with the Clerks and the head of department about the priorities, so even though Parliamentary Services is responsible for managing the projects and the funds, it is always a decision that is made by the Management Executive Committee, which is the Clerks, the head of department for PSD and the two Presiding Officers. That is how the priorities are determined.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So within that refurbishment, what are the plans to accommodate Hansard?

Mr Hunter: That one is a little bit more complicated. We have been working that, and I know Mr President will have some things to add to this. So what we are doing at the moment is we are working with Hansard to try to come up with some solutions. We have looked at some modifications to their floor to see if we can accommodate them within that area, which is —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: On the second floor?

Mr Hunter: Yes, exactly right, but also some accommodation in other parts around the Parliament because we are freeing up a little bit of accommodation, for example, down in the Parliamentary Services area.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So splitting up Hansard?

Mr Hunter: Yes, which is not ideal, and we are very empathetic to that argument. We have been working very closely, and Kat has been working very closely, with the Hansard Manager to try to resolve some of those issues. Our last preference would be to split them up. So at the moment it is still very early stages, and we do not have a lot of time, given that we are sort of heading towards the summer recess, but we are working towards getting some solutions that are going to work. It is in our interest and in their interest to keep them together, so that is what we will be trying to do.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So how much focus has been given to the ease of passage for Hansard staff to the chambers?

Mr Hunter: Considerable.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: One of the concerns, obviously, is splitting Hansard up, in terms of efficiency and their capacity to work together as a team, which is very important to their work, but the other part is their ease of access to the chamber under the tight time pressures.

Mr Hunter: Yes. A considerable amount of energy has been—we have spoken about it, and we have tried to come up with some ideas around how we can manage that. We still have not been able to solve it, unfortunately, but we are working through it.

The CHAIR: Sorry, can I just clarify: are you saying you have taken the decision to expand the Aboriginal People's Room that will dislocate Hansard, but you still do not know where you are placing Hansard?

Mr Hunter: We know where we —

The CHAIR: That is my interpretation of what you said; I just want to understand if I got that right.

Mr Hunter: No, that is not the case. What we are doing is we are revising our original decision about where Hansard would be located, given that they have made a fairly compelling argument that it would be counterproductive to separate them across floors. Originally, Mr Chairman, what we had proposed to do is to relocate them into equivalent accommodation but on different locations within the building, which is counterproductive to the way they operate.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Hunter: Our initial assessment of that decision was—until we heard further information—that we thought that would work, but having had a chance to have lots of consultation with Hansard, it is evident that it does not work that way. That may seem like a failing on our part, but until you actually know the machinations of Hansard in terms of what they do on a daily basis, it is not easy to understand.

The CHAIR: But surely they were consulted before you took the decision to split them?

Mr Hunter: Well, we actually thought we had the information right. It is a fairly sensitive issue around, I think, the Parliament, but I think what is important for this committee to understand is that we are putting a lot of time and energy into making sure that the accommodation for Hansard is appropriate, and, as much as we can, keep them together. Now, we have an option to, sort of, try to squeeze them into that space—that is not a very good option; we have an option to relocate them across floors—that is also not a very good option. But we are trying to work through what is the best way we can do it. At this stage we just do not have a solution.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Will the project go ahead if a suitable solution for Hansard has not actually been arrived at?

The PRESIDENT: Well, that will be a decision we will have to take in conjunction with advice we get from the Parliamentary Services Department at the time. At the moment we are on track to extend the Aboriginal People's Room in the summer recess, but all these other factors have to be considered. They will, and are, being considered in constant consultation and negotiation with Hansard, so we certainly will not do it without being inclusive. We will not do anything without being inclusive. So, yes, there are some difficult things to work through; all of those have the overlying financial constraints over all of us, so we have to do it within those parameters. But we have to also try to take every opportunity that we may have to improve facilities and accommodation in this building, because it is the only option we have at the moment.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How many times was the Aboriginal People's Room booked and used in the last winter recess for functions?

Mr Hunter: I would have to take that on notice because I would not have that information.

[Supplementary Information No A3.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How many functions do not happen because we do not have sufficient function space? What are we missing out on if we do not do this?

Mr Hunter: Again, I will take the number on notice, but I can answer —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: And the type.

Mr Hunter: Yes. It is a reasonably stressful period for catering when we are coming up to a courtyard function, because there are a couple of things that happen that are not ideal. For example, if a function is booked in the courtyard and our nervous catering manager starts watching BOM to see if the weather is going to change or something like that, or it is too hot or too cold, then the last-minute strategy is to try to put people into colonnades, corridors or the members' dining room if that is available. That entails an enormous amount of work for catering staff, and we just had a function last week where we moved all the tables and chairs out on the Friday, and we put all the tables and chairs back on the Monday. There is a lot of manual work involved in that, and there is a lot of time and energy put into that. So it really depends. That decision, by the way, for that function was because we were worried about it raining on the day, and of course it did not rain on the day but we did all the work anyway.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I am pretty aware; I have been through that myself. But what my interest is, is the type and range of functions and the number of functions. What is the Parliament not able to do without that refurbishment? I think you were going to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: I might make that as a separate A4 because I think you asked for the winter recess, which was A3. I will make that one A4.

[Supplementary Information No A4.]

The PRESIDENT: We may have some data on that in terms of requests, but I am aware, as a Presiding Officer, that I get sometimes not formal approaches but informal approaches from a wide range of groups and associations that would like to be hosted at Parliament House, on a cost-recovery basis—of course they understand that. As a Presiding Officer I have to say I would like to be able to open up this building to the people more. It is the people's place, and I would like to have more groups and individuals being able to access Parliament, so that the wider community are more aware of what the parliamentary institution is all about.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Would it not be nice if they could walk up from the Terrace?

The PRESIDENT: It would be fantastic! I would love to see a public campaign, even led by the opposition, to get the government to commit some funds to these projects.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I suspect the government is in a position to make decisions, are they not?

[11.40 am]

The CHAIR: If you let us be involved in the decision-making, we might be involved in the advocacy, Mr President.

Mr Hunter: Can I just qualify that supplementary information? Rather than providing anecdotal information, because some of the information we may not be recording, what happens when someone looks to book a function is that we tend to tell the organisers how many people they can have. For example, the Australian Red Cross was here earlier in the year and they wanted to have 110 people in the Aboriginal People's Gallery. That has a capacity of 80, and if we put a stage in there, it has a capacity of 60. So what we do is we start shaping the events to fit our rooms. What happens is that the event will continue, but it will be scaled down. In the case of some of the larger conferences, we just turn them away, so it is not necessarily a function that is diverted.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I understand; I have also been involved in trying to plan some of those events.

Mr Hunter: Yes. We tend to determine how many as opposed to who, because that is something for the Presiding Officers to decide, based on our capacity and whether it is a sitting or non-sitting day et cetera.

The CHAIR: We will make that all part of A4.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What Aboriginal representative organisations have been consulted in the refurbishment of the Aboriginal People's Room—in particular on the way in which Aboriginal artefacts are displayed?

The PRESIDENT: The Parliament has an art advisory committee, and there certainly is some consultation continuously with providers of work in the Aboriginal People's Room, and people who may wish to display. We have a Parliamentary Services Committee which is an advisory committee of members to the Presiding Officers, and which meets about four times a year. This issue has been canvassed at that meeting and we have undertaken—the Parliamentary Services Department, the Speaker and me—that we will be engaging in some consultation with Aboriginal members of Parliament and other members of Parliament representing the Australian Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the National Party and the Greens. We have to have a bit of a plan first before we have something to consult about! We are at that stage in quite a lot of areas and we will be doing some consultation with all of those groups in the next few weeks.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In the original development of the Aboriginal People's Room, Aboriginal people's representative organisations were significantly involved in the development and conceptualisation of the room, particularly the glass panels. The glass panels hold significant value particularly to Aboriginal people, but to others as well. What is going to happen to those glass panels in the refurbishment?

The PRESIDENT: Nothing.

Mr Hunter: They will remain.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The original concept is owned by Aboriginal people; will those same organisations be consulted?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, they will be.

The CHAIR: I have a couple of questions arising out of those questions. You were saying that you will replace other meeting rooms when you open the extended Aboriginal People's Room—so which meeting rooms are you talking about?

The PRESIDENT: I do not actually have a map in front of me, but we will do and have been doing a full assessment of meeting rooms that we have available and their usage. For instance, there are a couple of meeting rooms available for bookings in the Parliamentary Services Department area and

upstairs near the area that used to be the telephone switchboard area. We will hopefully be in a position to reassess whether we need those meeting rooms with the extra space created by the Aboriginal People's Room extension.

The CHAIR: The reason I ask is that it is my experience that I do not need big function rooms. My first and foremost role in Parliament is to be a parliamentarian. I do meet people here, and it is nice to have functions, but that is not where the priority is. Small meeting rooms for four or five people are actually more useful to me than a large function space, so your comment that we might lose meeting rooms to create a function space rings alarm bells for me. You are going to create one new meeting room, potentially with a division down the middle; how many meeting rooms are we likely to lose across the rest of the building to accommodate that?

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps "lose" was the wrong term to use; it is a rationalisation, really, and what we are planning for the Aboriginal People's Room is for it to be a flexible space.

The CHAIR: From what I understand, it will be flexible in the sense that it can be one or two rooms.

Mr Hunter: If I can answer the question, Mr Chairman, the number of meeting rooms that we have now, there is a fairly high occupancy of them on sitting days, and obviously less on non-sitting days. The larger rooms—for example, the Parliamentary Services conference room and the Aboriginal People's Room—are well patronised and have high volumes of use. They are the only rooms that can take more than 14 people.

The CHAIR: With all due respect, there are two others that I can think of—the Legislative Assembly committee room and the members' lounge, and that one is not made available to members to use in that way.

Mr Hunter: I am referring to the Parliamentary Services rooms that we have responsibility for. The idea would be, not in terms of rationalisations, that there are a couple of smaller meeting rooms. We would envisage losing only one meeting room to create a bigger meeting room; that is it. The net meeting room position would be the same, but the gain would be that we would have a larger-sized meeting room, which is part of the APR extension, with the versatility of tables that we can fold up and from which we can exit fairly quickly—and ergonomically designed, so that we can turn it into a function room should we need to.

The CHAIR: If we are only losing one meeting room to create a bigger meeting room and we have a fixed space, where does that additional space come from? Is it loss of members' offices or loss of Hansard workspace?

Mr Hunter: At the moment, it would be a loss of Hansard workspace, to be quite frank. We had proposed to relocate them to space within the Parliamentary Services centre, or perhaps we could use the loss of the meeting room, for example, and convert that into a space that we could use for Hansard reporters. But as I have already mentioned, that is not ideal; that is what the early concept started with. At this stage, we will not be proceeding with that until we come up with an appropriate solution.

The CHAIR: So we are losing office space to effectively create a function room? Someone is losing office space; someone has to lose something.

Mr Hunter: Okay, I hear what the Chairman is saying.

The CHAIR: Can I put a suggestion to you? If you are looking for space that is underutilised in this building, I would suggest the room sitting outside the chamber. It may require redesigning the building, but that is a space that is significantly underutilised at the moment for what is available.

The PRESIDENT: Is the Chairman talking about the members' lounge or the corridor?

The CHAIR: The members' lounge.

The PRESIDENT: If a request is made by any member to use the members' lounge, it will be considered.

The CHAIR: I have been advised in the past that it is not available for meetings.

The PRESIDENT: I have used it, as President, for meetings and delegations, for instance. If the Chairman, as a member, or any other member, wanted to use it for those purposes, I would certainly be very happy with that.

The CHAIR: Can I suggest, though, that that might be a space that could be used to create the expanded function centre—you would then be getting the best of both worlds.

The PRESIDENT: We will take that suggestion on board.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I have a different view than that expressed by the Chairman. The one thing I find about this place that is really limiting in my role as a member of Parliament is the inability to have larger groups than five or six people meet. In particular, it would be useful whilst parliamentary sittings are occurring—which would rule out the use of the members' lounge especially—to have the ability to have such spaces where you can have minor catering such as tea, coffee, biscuits, cakes or whatever the case may be, rather than a sit-down meal. If you are looking at creating more flexible spaces that can be used as meeting rooms, can be used as rooms for morning or afternoon tea or supper, and can be used by small groups and larger groups, I would actually welcome that. Obviously, we know the place is space constrained. We know we struggle to accommodate everybody as is but if there can be an arrangement that you are looking at and it is going to result in more of those flexible function spaces being available, I for one would welcome it and I know I would speak for at least a significant number of my colleagues who have discussed this issue with me.

[11.50 am]

The CHAIR: There are a couple of final questions that I have. When the Aboriginal People's Room opened, my understanding is that the air conditioning was built specifically to accommodate the artworks in it so that it was climate controlled, and there was actually a restriction on food and drink in that space because of the artworks that are involved. How is that going to be managed in this new function centre?

The PRESIDENT: We are very conscious of that, and you are quite right. That was the provision in the establishment of the Aboriginal People's Room; so, it is a given in anything we do in that space that that climate control has to be maintained for the artworks that are there.

The CHAIR: And food and drink? Originally there used to be sign up there about food and drink.

Mr Hunter: The original position in the Aboriginal People's Room, the climate control issue, still remains. The art that we first had in there was actually on loan from the Western Australian Art Gallery. It was not our art, so we took some extra precautions around protecting that art. Since then, or subsequent to that, because in reality people do want to have refreshments when they are having a meeting in a large room, we have allowed for that to happen. We generally do not use it as anything other than a tea and coffee-type of room, and we have some very clear instructions and protocols around where we serve from; it is basically at the centre table, so we do not see a lot of people walking around at this point. We will be taking some additional steps in terms of the catering provisions. If we proceed with this extension, we will be taking some extra provisions. The artwork that would be intended for the extension of the gallery and also for the Aboriginal People's Room, part of those artworks will come from Edith Cowan University on loan. Once those things have been ratified and we know exactly what we are doing and how we are going to hang the art, where it is going to go, we will put some protocols in place around that. But, you know, we have many areas within the Parliament, including the Aboriginal People's Gallery currently, where we have these large groups gather and it is very, very hard to control food and service into those areas; in

fact, deliver service into those areas. There are some real restrictions, so we are hoping that this is going to actually solve some of that.

The CHAIR: I am thinking about the functions that currently occur in the courtyard. I am not sure how you would actually translate those into an area that is also an art gallery. If you think about the ones we have had recently, the potato marketing, the fishing industry, the Royal Agricultural Society, tourism, how would they then be transposed into an area that has precious artefacts within? I mean, I do not know how you use that space to replicate the functions that you are trying to move out of the courtyard.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think we are looking at transposing those larger functions groups. The answer to that, of course, is to get some covering over the courtyard so that we have an all-weather opportunity to host groups. But there is a pretty strong demand for these smaller-type groups that we are talking about for maybe 20, 30 people.

The CHAIR: My final question then is: are there formal guidelines for use of those rooms? Is there a form of guidelines on policies on charging; and, if so, can we get those as supplementary information? Do they exist? That is my first question.

Mr Hunter: I am not sure I understand what the question is; charging for what?

The CHAIR: For functions. If a member or someone wants to use Parliament House, what is the policy on charging them and how is that structured.

Mr Hunter: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, there is a clear-cut policy and protocols on that. We could get them to the committee.

[Supplementary Information No A5.]

The CHAIR: My understanding has always been that political parties are not allowed to use it for fundraising. How is that monitored and policed to ensure that it is not occurring?

The PRESIDENT: You are quite right. When I became the President about four years ago, the Speaker and I, at the request of several political parties, not just one, decided that we would allow one function per year that was hosted by a political party, but it was not to be used for fundraising. In the monitoring of it, the catering services provide quotes for various things and it is on a cost-recovery basis along those lines.

The CHAIR: Is it basically just an honour system then, that members do not use it for fundraising?

The PRESIDENT: I suppose to a certain extent there is some trust involved. But if we saw a function or if I saw as the President a function being promoted at a cost that was well in excess of the costs that the Parliament would be charging, then I would certainly bring that to account; and I guess the ultimate responsibility for that lies with us, yes, the Presiding Officers.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: In relation to this, what was the function in the Parliament dining room last Friday evening?

The PRESIDENT: I can answer that. The Liberal Party took up the option to use Parliament House for one function per year, and that was their function per year.

The CHAIR: Do you know what they charged for it?

The PRESIDENT: No, I do not offhand, but I remember seeing it because I actually had to pay the fee myself. It was not exorbitant.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I have just a couple of small questions on a few different areas. Mr Hunter said before in an answer that 69 per cent of MPs are in shared accommodation in the Parliament. That number seems lower than I had expected. I understand that the President, the Speaker, the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition and probably a few others get their own

offices, and I know that a few of our colleagues are in offices that are that small that they cannot share, but 31 per cent of MPs having their own offices seemed like a high figure. Could you perhaps expand on, I guess, the officeholders who perhaps are entitled to their own office?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Mr Hunter: The two categories would be members and officeholders. Officeholders would be entitled to an office anyway, so of those members who are not officeholders, 69 per cent of them are in shared accommodation.

The PRESIDENT: Officeholders are the President, the Speaker, the Deputy President, the Deputy Speaker, the parliamentary Whips, the parliamentary secretaries. That is some I can think of off the top of my head; and the Premier including the Leader of the Opposition of course, and the deputies, the Deputy Premier and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: Excluding those parliamentary officeholders, that 60 per cent applies to the remaining members. In fact that exacerbates, I guess, the reason for me thinking that it is a high number. I know all of our members share offices and all of our ministers share offices. Of that remaining amount, 30 per cent of non-parliamentary officeholders do not share an office. Is that as a result of their offices being much smaller or some other reason?

Mr Hunter: Probably both of those things, one of them being small offices that you have identified already, particularly in the inside corridors where they have what I think are colloquially referred to as dog boxes without windows. They do have ventilation, despite what they say, but there are some fairly poor accommodation offices in those internal corridors, inappropriate for a member of Parliament in our view, but also the fact that there is a portion of members who are in shared accommodation. So in some cases, a party may decide not to allocate an office to a member and keep it as a meeting room or something else. That has all been factored in to those, but I would be happy to check those numbers, because that number I quoted off the top of my head without actually referring to something, so I would be happy to check and confirm for you what that percentage is.

[*Supplementary Information No A6.*]

[12 noon]

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: There was a circular issued on Monday of this week on our return to Parliament and it mentioned the Parliamentary Services Department annual members' survey. In that circular it noted a couple of areas where there has been a theme over many years in relation to feedback by members of Parliament to the department. One was obviously in relation to inadequate accommodation, which we have canvassed extensively today; the other was in relation to the split of services between the Parliament and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. With those results that you collate, is there any way of indicating the number of members who highlighted that as a significant issue? I do not think the survey was couched in those specific terms; it was probably optional feedback that you were getting in that survey process. I guess the reason why I ask you is that given the extent of the services and funding that is provided to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in terms of members of Parliament, there is no such survey or feedback process that the department undertakes with members of Parliament. So, the feedback that you are getting about DPC is probably partly as a result of nobody from that department actually asking us about the services that it provides.

Mr Hunter: The numbers in the survey—quite often it is free-form text that you are referring to and not everybody identifies themselves in terms of who the member is. In terms of numbers, we can certainly get that information and say that X number of members have indicated that they are unsatisfied with accommodation or IT or the split with DPC et cetera. It is not a new phenomenon; it has been happening, certainly, for as long as I can recall, which is going back about 16 years now. It has been going on for some time. I think we started doing these surveys in about 2004, so for at

least the last 10 years there has been that sort of perennial issue about IT services, the split between DPC and the lack of appropriate IT and accommodation. It is something that we anticipate every time we do a survey and we cringe at the fact that we cannot do anything about it, by and large. But there is certainly a pattern. That memo that you are referring to is the memo that I wrote, but it may not just be that I was referring to just this time; it is just something that happens continually.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: So it is probably not something that you could provide me further information on because I do not think it was in the form of a specific question. It was not: are members happy with the split of services between the Parliament and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet? It was more optional feedback that was given.

Mr Hunter: To be honest what tends to happen is that we would probably have to unpick some of the passages or the paragraphs that entail a whole lot of other topics at the same time. Members, and staff for that matter, when they get the opportunity to have free-form text, they will write on various issues and they are all-inclusive—“We really need to do this, this and this.” So it will take a little bit of a unpicking and I am not sure how much value that will add for the answer to your question. We could certainly give you the numbers, but it will not be an easy task.

Hon MARTIN ALDRIDGE: I will not ask for it, but perhaps if it is a perennial issue—and it is something that I know all of our colleagues have challenges with from time to time—it is something that you could consider in a future survey, particularly given that you are the only ones asking us what we think. By and large I think myself, and I think I can speak on most of my colleagues’ behalf, are very happy with the level of services provided by the Parliament and we would encourage more and more services offered by the Parliamentary Services Department and their relevant departments.

One last question: I have only recently become aware that there seems to be an arrangement whereby federal members of Parliament have access to the state Parliament House and its function areas and dining room et cetera. Is that a longstanding agreement; and, if it is, are there reciprocal arrangements with the federal Parliament?

The PRESIDENT: Yes, I understand that is the case. Federal parliamentarians often use these facilities—the dining room facilities, sometimes meeting facilities. Certainly, committees of the federal Parliament often use our committee rooms and I am required to okay that from time to time. Yes, they get a better deal than we do, I think!

The CHAIR: So yes to reciprocal or just yes to the Feds have access?

Mr Hunter: It is reciprocated by most of the Parliaments. We are one Parliament that insists on a credit card and a PRR account before you dine here though, because we want to make sure we get the money.

The CHAIR: Maybe as supplementary information, can we ask what we are entitled to in a reciprocal sense? I think you will find in the commonwealth Parliament that they do not give us any recognition, even in terms of a pass into the building. If you want to attend there to visit senators, you are treated like a normal citizen.

The PRESIDENT: I would be interested in the written word on that too.

Mr Hunter: They may have changed that.

The CHAIR: I am not so fussed about the dining room, but even if you can demonstrate that you are a state member of Parliament, they require you to be treated as if you were any other citizen of the country in terms of access into the building, let alone access to the dining room or anything like that.

[*Supplementary Information No A7.*]

The PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, it is a pretty widespread issue between the Feds and the states.

The CHAIR: If we can maybe get what you are aware of in terms of what we are entitled to under reciprocal arrangements as A7.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It will not take you long to inform us of what our entitlements are in the federal Parliament.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: One of my questions that I forgot to ask when we were talking about refurbishment is: what is the expected patronage of the Library cafe over a 12-month period?

Mr Hunter: I guess we can start off by saying that officially we open it on Monday. Early indications are, if this week is any indication, the patronage has been very good. We have not officially opened it, but by word of mouth people have found their way there and members are beginning to take guests there. The feedback has been very positive. What we are going to do is go for the next three months with the cafe operating over sitting and non-sitting periods and we are going to examine what happens in the non-sitting periods, which will be the timing, if you like, when we would probably see a decline, and we would need to determine whether or not it is viable to keep it going. At this stage there is seating, I think, for eight people, so it does not have a big volume capacity, but we expect it to be fairly popular. Anecdotally, I have had a fair bit of feedback from members already who have said, “Hey, that sounds good, we’re going to go up there”, and I have said, “Well, you might just want to check that there is no-one else there.” So I think it will be quite popular.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But you have not done any projected kind of —

Mr Hunter: No, but what we did do, when you are looking at doing something like this—again, bringing connections back to people so that they can take the civics to somewhere that is a nice part of the building. What we did do is we worked on the basis that we were not going to invest a lot of money, which I would have anticipated would be a question from this committee, to get this established. We have done it on a shoestring budget.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It was going to be my next question.

Mr Hunter: Okay.

We have done it on a shoestring budget. We are basically using existing furniture and cupboards and things like that. What we have had to do, though, is install plumbing and that really was something that we could not avoid. That landing as you go into the Library had a water cooler, but it was a traditional water cooler. We have a sustainable water-cooling system, which is basically scheme water chilled and filtered, rather than replacement of bottles et cetera. With that one there, because of the location, we were never able to include the reticulated—if you like, or the scheme water—water cooler. That is something we thought was too cost prohibitive to do for the water cooler, but in conjunction with having a Library cafe, we were able to do the plumbing because then we could plumb the coffee machine as well.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What was the budget on the establishment of that?

Mr Hunter: We anticipated that the budget was going to go somewhere in the order of around about \$15 000. I think at the moment with our stocks, the benches, the works and the plumbing works, we are probably at around—I will just check this—\$12 500.

Ms Galvin: We have got \$10 500, half of which was pretty much plumbing and the other fittings. We have just got a couple of thousand more to come in in relation to other things for catering and some displays we are doing for the opening.

The CHAIR: The budget was \$15 000, so you are expecting to come in under budget, but pretty much on budget.

Mr Hunter: We will come in under budget on that. What we expect in terms of ongoing costs is basically recovery; we do not expect there to be ongoing expenditure related to this. We are basically using our existing staffing to go up. It is a self-service facility for a start.

[12.10 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: And an honour system, I understand.

Mr Hunter: Yes, which might be the only time that we would have costs. Other than that, it should be paying for itself.

The CHAIR: Ye of little faith!

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I was just going to comment on the quality of the coffee, so you may as well take that on.

The CHAIR: What happens if the honour system does not work?

Mr Hunter: That is really part of our review. We need to make sure that it does, and then we might need to have another look at how we charge and that might mean we take a booking and say, “If you would like to have a coffee up there, Mr Chairman, we are happy to take your booking and perhaps we can send you that account. If you cancel within 24 hours, we send you an account” or something. I do not know; we have not considered that. We have some hope that there will be fairly good patronage and fairly good honour shown by the patrons who use it.

The PRESIDENT: It is experimental. I do not shy away from that, but it was an opportunity that we wanted to embrace. It was suggested from various quarters around the Parliament. There are aspects of it, like the honour system and the quality of the coffee and the actual facility —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The quality of coffee is frequently discussed in Perth social scenes, so why would this be any different?

The PRESIDENT: I hope that we can resolve and address all of those things as they come up. As Rob said, the initial indications are that people have embraced it. I have got to say the Library has embraced it extremely well. We hope it will add an extra sort of facility and player to the Parliament.

The CHAIR: Is the seating actually in the Library?

Mr Hunter: Yes.

The CHAIR: So are they allowed to talk when they are in there?

Mr Hunter: It is encouraged.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Where in the budget under “Expenses” is there expenditure for art services or art or acquisitions or depreciation of current art? Maybe this is easier: what is the budget for this financial year for the acquisition of new art work?

The PRESIDENT: While the Clerk just finds that figure, we have what used to be called an art acquisition committee; now it is called an art advisory committee, so it has broadened its functions a little. It is operated on contributions from the departments towards an art acquisition fund. I believe that the Legislative Council has contributed \$20 000 to that in this current financial year. Is that correct? It comes under the category of “Other expenses” on page 50. There is no separate line item for it in the budget papers. But we have contributed from the Legislative Council \$20 000, as has the Legislative Assembly, and that has been used to purchase three art pieces this year.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Can we get a list of what those art pieces are? That was on the advice of the art committee, was it?

The PRESIDENT: The art advisory committee, yes. We will get you a list of those three.

Mr Hunter: I think there were four, because we haggled very hard to get a fourth piece.

The PRESIDENT: That is right; yes, we got a good deal.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Are they currently hung in the Council?

Mr Hunter: Some of that hanging was happening last week. I believe that we have just put some outside the Aboriginal People's Room, in the gallery. We have relocated some of the internal art and then put some of the new art up there as well.

[*Supplementary Information No A8.*]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Is it the art advisory committee that makes recommendations on the placement of art work?

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Who made the decision to place the six portraits of women members of Parliament who are labelled as firsts in their various capacities outside the men's toilet in the corridor?

The PRESIDENT: That was a decision taken jointly. The Presiding Officers assume ultimate responsibility for that, but we took all advice from the Parliamentary Services Department in general and from the art advisory committee as well. In conjunction with other things happening around the building, we were restricted for space. We certainly took advice also from the education unit, which conducts tours of the building. We wanted to have that women's display area incorporated as one group of photographs and art work. As it was, it was wrapped around a corner, which was difficult and not ideal.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So was that the reason it was moved originally—it was wrapped around a corner—because it was still displayed as one installation?

The PRESIDENT: Also, with the relocation of the reception facilities to the ground floor, combining it with the Parliamentary Services facilities, we had to relocate the major painting of the original Legislative Council from 1832, and that space was the only space really available to hang that painting.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So that is the original up there?

The PRESIDENT: The Owen Garde painting of 1832?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: There are a couple of other copies of that around.

The PRESIDENT: No; that is the original. There are some copies; there are some prints.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So the reason they needed to be relocated was reception services had moved and there was a need to hang a painting of the first Legislative Council.

The PRESIDENT: That was one reason. There are all sorts of other reasons about maintaining open access through that space, because that is the busiest area between the two houses and outside the Premier's office and so on in the whole building. We wanted a space where the education office could gather their school groups or whatever it may be to explain the women's portraits and the women's gallery, if you like.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So instead of having school groups gather in that larger open area, we now have them gather in a much smaller corridor located outside the men's toilet.

The PRESIDENT: I have heard only positive responses back from the education people that it does not interfere with the flow of foot traffic as much as it did.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Would members of Parliament and staff know who to complain to about large groups of students standing outside the men's toilet if they were able to complain to them?

The PRESIDENT: I think they would assume they complain to whoever they can find.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: But to a decision-maker? I doubt it.

The PRESIDENT: But the ultimate responsibility lies with myself and the Speaker.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Where is the seventh portrait in that group of photos?

The PRESIDENT: The seventh portrait?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The youngest member of the Parliament.

Mr Hunter: Jaye Radisich?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Jaye Radisich; correct. Where is it and why is it not part of the display?

The PRESIDENT: The art advisory committee did discuss this and there were a couple of them removed from that gathering. I think the basic reason is that it was not considered an unassailable first. Somebody like Edith Cowan is indisputably the first woman member.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So being the youngest woman member of Parliament is not an unassailable first?

The PRESIDENT: There could be another younger member at some stage. There was another one taken out of the gathering as well, I think.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It has been 14 years and it kind of has not been, has it?

The PRESIDENT: Was there one of the first woman Attorney General? If there was not, there was talk about it anyhow that that was inappropriate too because it was not an unassailable first.

[12.20 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: To whom would someone request that the portraits be relocated to a more accessible spot and a less offensive spot outside the male toilets? I have been standing looking at the portraits with some members of staff and others and have seen directly into the men's toilet when the door is open. That is not acceptable and it is not respectful to the number of women "firsts" displayed in the portraits.

The PRESIDENT: The matter has been discussed widely, but if you were still concerned, put your concerns through the Presiding Officers.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: That has been done; but I will move on. What proportion of what is currently displayed in terms of portraits right across the Parliament are of women members of Parliament and in other leadership roles and what proportion are of men in leadership positions and other roles?

The PRESIDENT: We might have to take that on notice, I think.

[*Supplementary Information No A9.*]

The CHAIR: I have a couple of quick ones related to page 62 for Parliamentary Services. The restricted cash is normally the twenty-seventh pay. I am trying to understand this. The 2012–13 actual was 308; the budget for 2013–14 was 305, the actual was 308; you expect 308 this year and obviously the pay is made next year and you still have 19. I am trying to work out, firstly, why over a three-year period the amount of cash held for restricted cash has not in any way varied. I would have thought it should be growing. Why is there a continual 19? What is that 19? Then again, why does the restricted cash not start to re-accumulate in the out years?

Ms Ozich: The reason why you see a lot of repetitive numbers in the forward estimates is the way that they are created, which is usually just a copy of the prior year's figures. Then at some point Treasury does an incremental adjustment for CPI increases or wage increases et cetera and then the figures start to change. Having said that, once a year we have an opportunity to go in and revise these figures to see if they still make commonsense with the trends that we are seeing. We are about

to do that process now with the new forward estimate coming in. Yes, it should be that it dips down if it is used and then it starts to, the year after that, gradually increase again.

The CHAIR: My confusion, though, is if you then go to page 51 for the Legislative Council restricted cash, it does actually have that increase leading up to the year in which it is paid, although it then drops to zero. There seems to be a different approach taken between the two departments—is that right? If that is the case, surely there would be a standard Treasury process for this.

Ms Ozich: Yes. There is a standard process across all of government, but, as I said, we will be reviewing the balance sheets, which this is, and adjust it in this next cycle because these figures are prepared once a year. The forward estimate is just automatically populated, and from time to time we have to go in and change these figures. We have only got a chance to do that once a year.

The CHAIR: I still do not understand in terms of the history. I can understand that in terms of going forward across the forward estimates. I am not sure I understand how, historically, we can have two quite divergent approaches to the way in which we record restricted cash. How does that occur to get us to a point where the approach in the way in which we deal with restricted cash is different?

Ms Ozich: It is not different, the way that we deal with restricted cash.

The CHAIR: The way we record it is different, though, because one accumulates and the other does not.

Ms Ozich: Yes. They both are created in the same way and every year there is an expense that occurs in both of the departments which changes the figures. You are talking about the forward years. I said that the process was that each time there is a new forward year that is added on, it is just a copy of the previous years. It then is necessary for us to go in and modify those figures if the trends are looking wrong. That is something that we will be doing in all departments.

The CHAIR: The bit I am still unclear on, though, is for Parliamentary Services, clearly, 2014–15 has a twenty-seventh pay—right?

Ms Ozich: 2015–16.

The CHAIR: 2015–16 has the twenty-seventh pay. What is the \$19 000 that then remains in the forward estimates?

Ms Ozich: It probably should not have a “19” there, but it should have an increasing balance in the subsequent years.

The CHAIR: That is why I am trying to work out why there is a “19”. I understood the logic of what you said before, that it would go to zero and then, under the current process, you just go zero, zero, zero because it repeats the year before. I still do not understand how we ever got a “19” there. I agree with you, it should be zero—or you would assume it would be zero, if we have paid it out that year.

Ms Ozich: Yes, it would be.

The CHAIR: Are you able to take on notice why a figure of 19 appears in there?

Ms Ozich: Yes, I can.

[*Supplementary Information No A10.*]

The CHAIR: Going back to page 47, “Amount Authorised by Other Statutes—Salaries and Allowances”, that continues to grow over the forward estimates until the last year of the forward estimates when we see a decline. Can you advise us which MP we are getting rid of, or which Deputy Clerk or Clerk is being abolished in that year? If that is not the case, why does that occur in that way?

Mr Pratt: Are you volunteering, Mr Chairman?

The CHAIR: A nominee—to nominate someone?

On page 47, under “Amount Authorised by Other Statutes—Salaries and Allowances”, which I am assuming is the salaries of MPs and the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk, you see there that it continues to grow over the forward estimates. Then in the 2017–18 financial year, it declines in that last year.

Ms Ozich: The reason that 2016–17 is a higher figure is because that is an election year. In an election year, there are entitlements—resettlement entitlements—that apply to members who are leaving the Parliament. That is an additional cost in that year. That is what that budget is for.

The CHAIR: How many members are assumed to be leaving the Parliament in that year to arrive at that budget figure? There must be an assumption made.

Ms Ozich: I cannot remember the exact number but it was based upon what happened in the most recent election that we just had, so a similar number.

The CHAIR: It does not provide for a landslide election! It is based on the traditional pattern of the turnover of members.

The PRESIDENT: It is worth noting that it is a statutory obligation of the executive to provide for any allocations of money that is made by the Salaries and Allowances Tribunal.

[12.30 pm]

The CHAIR: My final question is: I notice we got new note pads yesterday. I pre-empted this with the Clerk. Is there an additional cost of these compared to the cost of the red covered ones, and what is the cost of them?

The PRESIDENT: I had not noticed them.

The CHAIR: I only discovered them yesterday, Mr President.

Mr Pratt: Mr Chairman, I will have to take that one on notice.

The CHAIR: That is the cost of the previous red ones and the cost of the new ones on an individual basis and the annual cost.

[*Supplementary Information No A11.*]

The CHAIR: The committee will forward any additional questions it has to you in writing, via the minister, in the next couple of days, together with the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to make this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons for why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I will ask them to email them to the committee as soon as possible after the hearing.

On behalf of the committee, thank you for your attendance today. I have a couple of questions but it is purely so that we provide the same information that they did in the other place about expenditure, so I will put those questions in as supplementary so that it is on the public record.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you members for your interest.

Hearing concluded at 12.31 pm
