

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2014–15 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
FRIDAY, 13 JUNE 2014**

**SESSION TWO
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES**

Members

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

Hearing commenced at 1.33 pm

Hon KEN BASTON

Minister for Fisheries, examined:

Mr STUART SMITH

Director General, examined:

Ms HEATHER BRAYFORD

Deputy Director General, examined:

Mr BRUNO MEZZATESTA

Executive Director, Regional Services, examined:

Mr PETER ROBINSON

Chief Financial Officer, examined:

Dr RICK FLETCHER

Executive Director, Research, 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. Firstly, if I can ask the witnesses to confirm that you 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. The committee values your assistance with this.

I will go straight to questions, unless there are any statements that anyone wants to make?

Mr Smith: No, Mr Chairman.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I would like to ask about the closure of the Naturaliste Marine Discovery Centre at Hillarys Boat Harbour. Could you advise the house when the decision was made to close that centre and why the decision was made, and then I will ask you some other questions as well?

Hon KEN BASTON: I would ask my director general to comment on that.

Mr Smith: The decision to close it was made by the department in the second half of last year as part of a review of our operations looking at both the opportunities for savings within the department and the priorities of the department. So the decision to shut the Naturaliste Marine Discovery Centre was part of a decision to review and change the way in which we pursue our education programs. We will continue, for example, to offer services to schools. We will maintain

our curriculum work that we are doing at the moment. The focus has shifted from the students themselves to the teachers, but we still do work with the schools in the metro area in the same way that we do in regional WA.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: And when was it publicly communicated that the decision had been made to close the centre?

Mr Smith: It would have been either towards the end of last year or early this year.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: What consultation was undertaken prior to the decision to close the centre? Was there consultation with any external parties other than an internal review of operations of your department?

Mr Smith: There were discussions certainly with our minister's office at the time, and there would have also been some discussions with organisations like the Department of Transport, which holds the lease for the site; we pay some rental on the site.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Was there any consultation with the Department of Education or schools that utilise this centre prior to the decision being taken to close the centre?

Mr Smith: I am not aware of any formal discussions with the Department of Education, but there may well have been.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Being that schools, teachers and students are significant users of the centre, would it not have been better to consult with them as to whether they consider the centre is useful for educational purposes prior to making the decision to close it?

Mr Smith: Our staff have particular expertise in education. A number of them are former schoolteachers themselves and they work pretty closely with the Department of Education anyway in terms of the information that is provided as part of our education program, including the delivery of services to students and to teachers. So, as I say, we have not sought to terminate our education program; it is a shift in focus of that program. We continue to work with schools throughout the state, and the closure of the marine discovery centre is just one aspect of our education program, which we decided to take internally.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I understand that you made the decision internally. The point I am making is that the external stakeholders may have had a view different from yours about the value of the program, and it is quite clear from what you told me that you did not bother consulting with them. I have had numerous schools and teachers, and students for that matter, tell me that they thought it was a valuable program, particularly given that it is located right near another privately run facility—the AQWA facility—and also is within three or four steps of the beach itself and a particular part of the marina where some flotsam and jetsam and other things gather. That combining of the natural environment, the marine discovery centre and the AQWA facility made for a very comprehensive school excursion and for really good learning opportunities. It appears to me from what you told me today that none of that feedback was received by the department before the decision was made to close the centre.

[1.40 pm]

Mr Smith: I would not say that none of that feedback was received. We were well aware that some of these schools valued that service highly. We also know that some of the students got value out of it. We saw value in it as well but we needed to make a judgement about what was the best use of the limited funds we have available and we saw considerable value in other things we do as well, like research. We had to make a call as to where to make the cuts and that was where we chose to make the cuts. We also spoke to groups like Recfishwest about our plans and they seemed to accept that that decision was an appropriate one. In regard to your comments that we are right near the water and there is flotsam and jetsam and so on, we have been running programs through the Marine Discovery Centre for the school holiday programs. Some of those will continue on. We have all also

maintained our laboratory out there, which is set up for school students and other members of the public to come in. That capacity is still there and those programs are still offered on occasions even with the discovery centre is shut. As I say, the discovery centre was just the area where people could go in and walk around the displays. The closure of that particular part of our education program does not mean that we are not still providing services to both schools and to the broader community. We still are and we still value those services. I understand the schools still value those services highly. The key part of our education program for the schools is actually that curriculum education component, which we have chosen to maintain because we understand that that is the most highly prized part for the community.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: What was the cost of operating the discovery centre on an annual basis?

Mr Smith: I will refer to Mr Mezzatesta on that.

Mr Mezzatesta: The actual cost of operating the exhibition hall, because that is what we are talking about?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes.

Mr Smith: All we have closed is the exhibition hall component of that facility, and that was \$100 000 a year.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I believe that space is now being used for just general office accommodation for the department; is that correct?

Mr Smith: At the moment it is not being used for that but the intention is that we will put our library there. The library is currently on the second floor of that facility, therefore, it has limited access to the public. We want to make sure that the public can access the resources we have in our library and we are going to move the library down to where the discovery centre exhibition hall was so that the community can have access to all those hard-copy resources and other resources that we have, once again, as part of our education program.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Is the library currently open to the public?

Mr Smith: It is open to the public, but, as I say, it is upstairs and it is not nearly as accessible to the public as it will be when it moves to the new area.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It is one flight of stairs and a lift up.

Mr Smith: If you are in a wheelchair it is not so convenient, and it is not visible either.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: What will happen to the space up on the second level where the library is?

Mr Smith: We expect to be moving our IT area. The current plan is to move our IT area, which is currently in the Perth office, out to Hillarys, which will enable our finance area, which is in some temporary accommodation, to move back into our head office building so that we can have the department in relatively few premises. The idea of having them spread out across Perth is not conducive to delivering good services. Part of the savings come from avoiding the rent we have to currently pay to house our finance area in some temporary accommodation.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: That could not have been accommodated in any other accommodation the department has apart from the discovery centre?

Mr Smith: There are various places they could be housed but the implication of leaving the library where it is, for instance, and the IT in the Perth office, would mean that our finance branch could not move to be co-located with the other corporate services functions we have, and we would continue to pay the rent. So whilst the exhibition hall costs \$100 000 a year, that does not take into account things like the value of the rental we will be saving by the changes that have been included as part of this decision.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: How much rent will you be saving?

Mr Smith: Once again Mr Mezzatesta, you know that, otherwise Mr Robinson might know that.

Mr Robinson: I understand that it is of the order of \$250 000 and that is what we expect to save.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Just in closing, could you provide me, perhaps on notice by supplementary information, a list of the people who were consulted prior to the decision to close the discovery centre?

Mr Smith: The organisations I take you to mean.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes, the organisations or people in each case.

[Supplementary Information No B1.]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Maybe way of supplementary, if the department could provide the numbers of students that have used the Naturaliste Marine Discovery Centre over the past three financial years. I just wanted a sense of how well used it was.

Mr Smith: I understand in total about 40 000 students have been through the program in its entirety, not all of those necessarily go through the marine discovery centre, but I am taking from your question that you want us to limit it to students who have gone through the exhibition hall—and the last three years?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The last three years, please.

[Supplementary Information No B2.]

The CHAIR: Mr Smith, was a history of the construction of the fisheries research centre at Hillarys drawn to your attention when you made the decision to close the Naturaliste discovery centre?

Mr Smith: Yes, it was. In fact, I consulted with other parties who had a major hand in the design and the intention behind the building.

The CHAIR: Are you aware of the contentiousness of the location of that facility at that location at the time? Was it drawn to your attention that it was actually a very contentious decision to locate the research centre at that location?

Mr Smith: Yes, I am aware of the contention. I think I understand the issue you are making.

The CHAIR: One of the strong selling points that was made to the community of the northern suburbs was the fact that you would have the ability for schools—if you look at the minister's press release back in 2004 and I can go to the previous government's media, when they first proposed that location, one of the strong points they argued in support of it going ahead was the fact that it would provide an on-site education facility and what was known as the Naturaliste discovery hall would be located at that location. Did you give any consideration that when you made the decision to close that facility—the fact that you would actually use that as an argument to have that facility located in the Hillarys boat harbour?

Mr Smith: Yes, in fact that formed part of our deliberations and was instrumental in the decision to improve the access to the public to the library and also to maintain some the facilities out there like the laboratories where the students come in and do things like fish dissections and assessment of the flotsam and jetsam that they collect out on the beach and so on. The decision to shut the exhibition hall was taken in the context that we would continue to provide services to the community about educating them in regard to fisheries management and the marine environment.

The CHAIR: But part of the argument was that you were locating a fisheries research area and taking up significant valuable land at what is a prime tourism area so there was both the linkage to schools and also an education facility, particularly for young people, at that location. You have limited the education to schools and you have completely, in my view, removed the benefit of having that facility from a tourism point of view that people can and look at the display hall. Do you

not see that that would be taken as a complete breach of trust by the people of the northern suburbs that within less than 10 years of opening it, one of the key arguments that your department used to have the facility put there in the first place has now been taken away from them—complete breach of trust?

[1.50 pm]

Mr Smith: I do not believe it is at all. As I say, we still have facilities out there that enable us to educate the community, for the community to come into the centre and run programs on analysing the fisheries management, the habitat and how we manage the marine environment. So those sorts of things are still being delivered from that site. We are continuing to run our education services from that facility for the whole of the state, and we are improving access to the resources we have like the library. When the building was set up, there was not necessarily envisaged some of the services that we now provide anyway for education, so the community could not have foreseen things like the development in the provision of information through electronic means. So these sorts of decisions cannot be static decisions; circumstances change and we have to change as well. But I still believe we are delivering substantial education services to the community in the northern suburbs from that facility.

The CHAIR: How do you now contribute at that location to its tourism? It is now one of the three iconic places for tourists to visit in the Perth metropolitan area. It has one of the largest visitation of tourists.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It is 4.5 million a year.

The CHAIR: Yes.

How are you contributing to that? Whereas the Naturaliste Marine Discovery Centre did, how are you now contributing to the tourism potential of that location by having that research centre on that land that is very valuable tourist land, as well as from an educational perspective?

Mr Smith: We are continuing to contribute to tourism there. We bring people to the Hillarys facility not just for education services, but out of that building there are multiple services that are available to the public. I have already mentioned the library; there are also three very substantial meeting rooms out there that are used by the community for meetings, some of which are organised by our department, but others, which we do not have a hand in. We make that facility available to those, and it is utilised for that purpose, which is bringing people not just from the metropolitan area but from throughout the state to the Hillarys area. I would expect that some of those people would move across to the broader facilities that are there. Also, in regard to the education services that we are providing, as I say, we are continuing to maintain the laboratories out there so that students can come in—it may be during the school holiday program—but we also have the capacity to bring teachers in to complement the curriculum services we are offering for them. We continue to run our education —

The CHAIR: But my point is that you could have done that at any one of the many other locations that were being proposed from about 1998–2000, I think, it probably first started. You could have done what you are now saying you are doing at any one of the other locations. Part of the point that was sold for that location to take up valuable land at a tourism site was because you would have the exhibition hall that you have now closed. I just want to place on record that as someone who was actively involved in those discussions at the time and worked with the local community to allow that facility to go there, I personally feel completely betrayed that the department, in less than a decade, has walked away from one of the arguments that was given. The things you are talking about could occur at any location; the argument was that you would be contributing to the overall net benefit of Hillarys Boat Harbour. I do not want to spend any more time on that issue; I will let you have a response to those comments and then we will move on.

Mr Smith: If you feel betrayed, I am sorry about that. It was not the intent for the community to feel that way at all. But I would say that in terms of the exhibition hall, that could have been located at any of a wide range of locations —

The CHAIR: That is not what your department was saying in 2004.

Mr Smith: But the part of it that is best placed out at Hillarys is actually the laboratory, because it is the laboratory that is used when we run the programs where the students go out along the beaches and collect things like flotsam and jetsam, and they come back and analyse that material. They do that analysis inside the laboratory; the laboratory is still there and set up for that purpose. They do not necessarily need an exhibition hall for us to run those sorts of programs. It is that component that is most suited to Hillarys, and I still believe it was the right location and I still believe we are keeping faith with the community.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I refer to page 595 of budget paper No 2 and the line item that shows a grant to Recfishwest of \$1.642 million. What was the grant used for and was the money presented to Recfishwest?

Hon KEN BASTON: That funding was used to buy back commercial licences in Roebuck Bay, Broome

Hon RICK MAZZA: So that was not presented to Recfishwest directly then?

Mr Smith: I can elaborate. The government elected to buy out two commercial gill net licences in Roebuck Bay, which would have some benefits to recreational fishing. The listing of that item in the budget is appropriate, but the terminology used—“Grant to RecFishWest”—is not especially appropriate. I brought that to the attention of Recfishwest and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, because WAFIC also has an interest in the nature of this grant to Recfishwest. It is not a grant to Recfishwest; it is actually \$1.64 million being paid to buy out the two commercial gill net licences in Roebuck Bay associated with the establishment of the Greater Kimberley Marine Park, and, as such, no funding is going to Recfishwest, but there is a significant benefit to recreational fishers.

Hon KEN BASTON: That was royalties for regions funding as well.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I refer to the second dot point on page 3 of budget paper 3. Does the 15 per cent procurement saving measure affect the level of funding provided to peak bodies for both commercial and recreational fishing?

Mr Smith: I cannot find the page but I think I know the issue the member is referring to. It is 15 per cent across the government agencies more broadly. The 15 per cent reduction in nonessential procurement that the government has levied across all agencies does impact on our department the same as others and it has the potential to impact on the appropriations to both the WA Fishing Industry Council and Recfishwest. The appropriations that we pay to those two bodies are listed under our nonessential category for “Other Expenses” and as such falls within this 15 per cent. I will clarify this because the additional part is important. We flagged to both WAFIC and Recfishwest the potential for that 15 per cent to apply to their appropriations. However, we have also said that we will take this issue up with Treasury because we do not believe that it was the intention of the government to apply that particular saving to those appropriations to those peak bodies. We will seek to recover that component of the savings measure from government so that the appropriations for WAFIC and Recfishwest are not affected. That will take some months to resolve, and we have had said to WAFIC and Recfishwest that in the interim we will carry that expense in the department’s books.

[2.00 pm]

Hon RICK MAZZA: So at this point in time, we will not know how that will affect them until we find the outcome of those inquiries?

Mr Smith: Correct, but both organisations are aware of the situation.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Moving on to page 590, under the heading, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, it mentions the MSC certification process that is being undertaken in conjunction with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council. Has Recfishwest been involved in the MSC process; and, if so, to what extent?

Hon KEN BASTON: So you mean, in particular, Recfishwest rather than just fisheries generally? Is that what you are saying?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Sorry? Say that again.

Hon KEN BASTON: You are saying that Recfishwest generally, have they been involved?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes, have they been invited to be involved in that certification?

Mr Smith: Yes, Recfishwest has been actually a very active participant in the Marine Stewardship Council program that the government has. Without wishing to go into any particular detail, the program is a very substantial program where the government has agreed to fund the full cost of commercial fisheries applying for pre-assessment and full assessment—independent assessment against the MSC standards for their fisheries and the initial audit—the annual audits for those fisheries. Recfishwest has actually taken it upon themselves to indicate that they would be keen to see some recreational fisheries included in those assessments with a view to having their fisheries certified as being sustainable, both in terms of the fish stocks and the impacts on the associated environment. The first fishery that is being considered in this regard is the Peel–Harvey estuarine fishery, which is predominantly crabs, although there is some mullet taken as well.

In the case of the crabs in that fishery, the majority of the catch is a recreational catch. So Recfishwest have said they would work with the commercial fishers to be the applicant for full assessment. Recfishwest have also been a member, and an active member of the certification advisory panel, which is chaired by the deputy director general of the department and includes representation from WAFIC, Recfishwest and the Marine Stewardship Council. So the recreational sector—full credit to them—have been very active and, in fact, if they do secure full certification, it will be the first time anywhere in the world that a recreational fishery has been certified as sustainable by the MSC, which is the gold standard for certification schemes around the world.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I am glad to hear that. The last bullet point on that page states that “Proposed new fisheries legislation will provide new opportunities”. It mentions proposed new fisheries legislation. Does this new legislation have support of both the commercial and recreational peak bodies?

Hon KEN BASTON: As far as I know, yes, it does. It certainly covers all aspects of protecting fisheries, but also the act actually gives the ability to increase the resources in the sense of aquaculture, and creating zones for aquaculture. It allows many things to happen, like, I guess, from a recreational point of view, if you are going to have sustainable fisheries in an area, then—and it makes the decision on whether that fishery is sustainable as far as commercial goes—you need to weigh it up. So this sort of legislation allows those two bodies to actually participate in the resources stock that is actually out there.

Mr Smith: Both WAFIC and Recfishwest have been consulted on the draft bill and they put forward some amendments, which were taken on board, and some changes made to the draft bill, to come up with the latest version, which they have both indicated support for the bill. In the case of both the commercial and the recreational sector, one of the important features of the bill is that it strengthens the access rights and the rights of fishers. So yes, both commercial and recreational fishers are keen on the bill and keen on seeing it become enacted.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On page 591, “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”, part (b): there is a section there to do with the management arrangements for both commercial and recreational fisheries for herring.

Hon KEN BASTON: Sorry; part (b)?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes, (b), the last line, basically—“The management arrangements for both commercial and recreational fisheries”. Are the recommended revised management arrangements for the herring fishery likely to cause a positive or a negative effect on the department’s budget?

Hon KEN BASTON: First of all, let us look at the herring fishery and what stage it is at. There was a report done on that, which I think you are well aware of, honourable member, and I have read that report. On reading that report, in the early 1990s, it was something like 1 140-odd tonnes of herring taken out, and now we are down to about 140-odd tonnes. You would say that there is a problem. However, I have met with the commercial fishers in the herring fishery, bearing in mind that the use of herring is basically for bait for rock lobster, and the other thing it is used for is feeding seals and things in zoos. But it is highly sought after by the recreational fisherperson. So I have given the commercial people that I met with till the end of June to come back to me with some science to give me cause for not taking back and closing the commercial arm of that fishery, and then perhaps looking at other methods as well. The way the report perceives it is that we will probably have to cut back on bag limits as well for a certain period until we get that fishery back up again, but I am waiting till the end of June to get something from those commercial fishermen. Their argument, of course, is that the price is so low that they have not been catching the fish; therefore, if they have not been catching the fish, you cannot measure the tonnage that is actually coming out. So, they are going to come back—I asked for some better evidence than just that.

Mr Smith: If I can just add one thing there, just to be clear: the minister mentioned closing the commercial fishery. He was not talking about all commercial fishing in terms of herring—correct me if I am wrong.

Hon KEN BASTON: No.

Mr Smith: It was particularly in regard to those commercial fishers that are not supplying the fish for human consumption that he is focusing on.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Very good. Thank you for that. The other question I have is to do with aquatic biosecurity. From memory, there is a \$24.3 million change. I think it is on page 154 of budget paper No 2, volume 1—I have not got it here with me at the moment. The responsibility for that is going to move from Fisheries to the Department of Transport, as I understand it, being ports and marinas. I am just wondering who is actually going to enforce the compliance of that, because some of those ports and marinas are privately owned, and if it goes under the Department of Transport, who is actually going to be responsible for the enforcement of compliance on aquatic biosecurity?

Mr Smith: I think I understand the reference in our accounts that you are referring to. There were quite a few million in the accounts that have been removed from the Department of Fisheries accounts. They have not been added to the Department of Transport accounts anywhere. That is because the numbers that were in there reflected a contingency rather than a likely outcome, and it was the full contingency. Under the measures that were proposed for biosecurity compliance, there were effectively penalties on the ports if they did nothing in terms of trying to lift biosecurity. So, if they did nothing, they would incur this penalty, and the total value of those penalties in the out years was the value of the amount that has been removed from the accounts. Our department is responsible for ensuring compliance, and we have been funded by the government to ensure that, and we will continue to have that responsibility, but we never envisaged that the full value of that contingency, if any of the contingency, was going to be required, because we would expect that the ports would take action, and it is in their interests to do so anyway.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Right. Mr Chair, I have other questions but I will leave it to other members.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, page 590, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”: the second dot point relates to sharks and shark hazard mitigation strategies. I have a couple of questions on this item. I am keen to get a sense from you about how much the government actually did spend on the drum line policy in both the south west program and indeed the metro program. Perhaps if I start with the south west program first—are you able to provide costs of payments to the private contractor and also the separate cost of contract monitoring, and indeed how much in general the department spent on the drum line policy in the south west region?

[2.10 pm]

Hon KEN BASTON: I was having this discussion earlier. The Premier made some announcement about it. What you are after is the breakdown. I will hand it to my director general, as we were only having this discussion earlier.

Mr Smith: In terms of how much was paid to the south west contractor, we do not actually have those numbers. Our department is not responsible for the policy. We are not the lead agency. We were engaged by the government to provide contractor services for the metropolitan area. We do not get involved with the contract of the south west contractor; that is with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That is by way of background. I have heard that the Premier commented, I think in an estimates hearing recently, that the total cost of the program to the state is in the order of \$1.2 million. I understand he indicated that the south west contractor had been paid in the order of \$600 000 out of that. The balance of that figure reflects the cost to our department, which would not otherwise have been incurred.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: So the money has been taken out of your budget but you have absolutely nothing to do with the spending of the money—is that what you telling me, Mr Smith, through the minister?

Hon KEN BASTON: It was always going to be refunded to Fisheries for the metropolitan area in running that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Perhaps the minister can tell me how much the fisheries department has been given as part-compensation in relation to the operation of the DL program; or, if you have not got any money yet, how are the negotiations going with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to get some of that money back? I note in the other place in estimates recently that your director general said that negotiations were ongoing. Are you in a better position now to tell us how much you have got back from the department and how much it has cost you at this stage?

Mr Smith: In terms of the costs, we believe that the Premier was right—the cost to our department —

The CHAIR: That is a good career move!

Mr Smith: How could I say otherwise!

We believe the cost will be in the order of \$600 000. In terms of negotiations with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to recover some or all of those funds, they are progressing well. We have not agreed on a final figure. I anticipate that the final figure that we will receive will be in the order of \$500 000. As I say, we have not yet finalised those discussions.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister or director general, are you able to identify which items you are actually seeking compensation for?

Mr Smith: If I can refer that to Mr Mezzatesta.

Mr Mezzatesta: We will be seeking to recover the costs of operating a vessel, so the ordinary costs of operating a vessel—fuel, maintenance, those sorts of things. We will be seeking to recover the costs of the construction of the drum lines themselves because the Department of Fisheries is

responsible for the overall program in terms of providing the physical drum lines. We will be looking at recovering costs where we needed to make specific modifications to vessels or buy other equipment to deal with the program. We will be seeking to recover some of the employee-related costs for the program.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, you have obviously, or your department, has done some work about what has been spent or what you have spent and what you think you need back from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. Are you able to provide a list by way of supplementary, breaking down the spending on each of those areas that Mr Mezzatesta spoke about to give us a sense? There is lots of interest on this issue. We are trying to get to the bottom of what this does cost and what it has cost your agency. Could you provide that breakdown by way of supplementary information? I know that there is obviously a bit of argy-bargy between yourselves and Treasury or DPC, but I am keen to get a sense from you and your agency about what you have actually spent and what you think you should receive to recoup it?

Hon KEN BASTON: As supplementary information, I do not have a problem with that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That will obviously include things like staff costs et cetera for your agency.

[Supplementary Information No B3.]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In relation to the metro program, I am also keen to get a sense of how many vessels were used by the department and how many days they were used for. Given that this has been such a momentous policy issue over the past few months, I am sure you have tracked all these things, so you will probably have to give me an answer by way of supplementary information. Can you give me a sense of how many vessels were used; how many days they were used for; what the running costs were for those vessels; what the fuel costs were; what the staffing costs were; and whether there were any other costs incurred? I guess that would have to be provided by supplementary information as well.

Hon KEN BASTON: Yes, supplementary information.

[Supplementary Information No B4.]

Mr Smith: I can provide some preliminary information anyway. Essentially, it was the patrol vessel *Hamelin*, PV *Hamelin*, which was used pretty much every day. There may have been one or two days when it was not utilised, but that was the main vessel we used. It was typically crewed by a skipper and a couple of fisheries and marine officers as crew; on occasions there were others on board the vessel, either as observers or for some other purpose, although I am not sure for what other purpose they would have been on there. We can give you those costs, but just as an indication, it would be costs associated with the PV *Hamelin*, operating for 12 hours a day, seven days a week, throughout the period in which the drum line program was running.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you. Minister, I refer again to page 590, and the second dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”.

The CHAIR: Member, are you moving off the cost issue?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; I am on the same one.

Minister, the selected south west contractor was chosen, I believe, ahead of a number of other, less expensive contracts and, indeed, was chosen ahead of more experienced shark fishers. Are you in a position to advise why this tender was accepted? Can you confirm whether the contractor had been a commercial shark fisher before? Can the minister advise of the criteria under which the successful contractor was considered preferable to other bidders?

Hon KEN BASTON: I believe that tender was not issued by fisheries; it was actually issued by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, so we cannot respond to that question.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is fair enough in terms of the tender, but are you aware of the particular person who is the contractor and his experience or lack of experience in this area? Can anyone in your team comment on that?

Hon KEN BASTON: I met the contractor and that was after he had already started. All I was interested in talking to him about was how it was going and what was actually happening out there each day.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: So you are not in a position to comment on whether he was a shark fisherman before or has experience? Is anyone else?

Mr Smith: I did not participate in the tender and I do not know what experience he submitted as part of his tender, so I am really not in a position to respond. That is really a question, probably, for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, which handled the tender.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you. Minister, again on the same dot point: do you and the government believed that the drum line program actually reduces the risk of shark attacks; and, if so, how can you quantify that reduced risk?

Hon KEN BASTON: We did not reinvent the wheel; it has already been operating in Queensland since 1962, very successfully. When we had seven shark fatalities in three years, the government certainly thought it needed to do something more than what it was already doing in terms of the shark mitigation policy. Drum lines have been used in other parts of the world, of course, so that was the obvious next step—to put drum lines in place one kilometre offshore, and you know the rest of it. Can we say they were successful? Did we have any deaths? No. Would there have been any deaths? Well, you cannot measure that. But I believe that the idea of it was they were set there with the bait on so that if the shark came in close, it would take the bait instead of taking a human. So, that makes it very hard. How do you value the human life as against what the program was? I think in the small area of ocean that it was actually doing it, my personal belief is it was worth it.

[2.20 pm]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Of course Queensland used drum lines and nets. We have not gone near the nets issue here in this state, so it is a bit unfair to compare it with Queensland.

Hon KEN BASTON: The reason, of course, we did not go near the nets issue is the bycatch, and that there is a bycatch when you have nets out there. So, in using a 25 O-hook, if you had any knowledge of fishing, the bigger the hook you use, the bigger the fish you catch is the basic rule. The bigger the hook, though, the longer you wait. So, in that sense, bycatch was absolutely virtually kept down to the minimum.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, I did spend some time as the principal policy adviser for Fisheries, as Mr Mezzatesta would remember, in a previous government, so I am certainly aware of hooks and issues in relation to hooks. I will just keep on that point, though the government's public environmental review, "Western Australian Shark Hazard Mitigation Drum Line Program 2014–2017", states that the great white population will only be reduced by less than 25 over the next three years. That is, 25 out of I think we said between 3 500 and 5 000 great white sharks, so that is only one per cent. Do we really think by getting rid of that one per cent that we are actually going to have a huge impact in keeping people safe? Are we really tackling the problem? Is this just the thin end of the wedge essentially?

Hon KEN BASTON: I would not say that. Basically you are only saying that after you have got the people in the water, and that it is being used as a cull program. It is not a cull program; it is a mitigation program. And you have just alluded to 25 sharks over three years, I think you said. That is only if those sharks are going to come into where that drum line that they are actually going to be caught. And of course if they take the bait.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It seems to be a glaring issue, because in this PER document we are kind of saying less and less sharks are going to be captured or caught, yet external and outside we are saying that more and more are being caught. There is a big contradiction there. Minister, has the agency done any work in relation to the bull shark population, particularly in and around the Swan and Canning Rivers? If we are reducing the tiger shark population off our beaches, will this mean that more bull sharks from the Swan River go out and swim up and down our beaches and attack people on the beaches? Has work been done on that? Is that a real concern?

Hon KEN BASTON: I will refer to my DG on that one.

Mr Smith: I will actually refer the science part of it to Dr Fletcher, but I can say in terms of bull sharks that the drum line program has already provided some useful information, and that we did actually catch a bull shark, which whilst they were included, we were not necessarily expecting to find them in the ocean environment. And so it was interesting to find one there, and we were conscious—I presume the government was conscious—when the program was being put together that there have been bull shark attacks in other locations around the world, which is why they were included. But maybe Dr Fletcher can talk about the research that is actually being done in estuarine areas.

Dr Fletcher: Yes. Certainly from our shark experts, they were of the opinion that bull sharks are largely confined to those sort of estuarine and embayment locations. So, removing tiger sharks is not going to change their distribution. They are not there because of competition; they are there because that is where the bull sharks like to reside. So, it is not like removing one is going to make an expansion in their distribution. So, the fact that they caught one was interesting. They were not expecting to catch many at all, so one is actually consistent with expectations.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, is the department aware of how many breeding size female tiger sharks have been caught as part of the drum line policy? What impact do we think killing those breeding size females will have on the population in general?

Mr Smith: Mr Mezzatesta would be able to tell you how many tiger sharks were caught. In terms of the number of those that were breeding size females, I suspect he will not know. Dr Fletcher may be able to provide an indication of the likely number.

Dr Fletcher: The size of sexual maturity for the tiger shark is a bit above the size that we were targeting—above three metres. You can imagine that a number of those above three metres would have been sexually mature. Our assessment is that the number killed in that area is a relatively small proportion of the total tiger shark population. We are talking small amounts of tonnages in one particular year and one small part of their range, both within Australia and even in WA. Our assessment of risk takes into account the number of breeding size females.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, you said recently that the government, or indeed your agency, will do a full review of the drum line program in June this year. Has that review commenced and been completed? If it has commenced, who is doing it and when can we expect that that review will be made public? If it has not started, when will it start and, again, when will it be made public?

Mr Smith: As I understand it, the review is actually being conducted by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet as it is responsible for the policy. As an agency that was delivering services as part of it, we could potentially be conflicted if our own agency did the review. I understand the review is being conducted by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. In terms of the status of it, questions on that matter should probably be directed to them.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Perhaps through you, minister, Mr Smith, you can let me know if you or your agency have been consulted on this review so far and whether you have given evidence or, indeed, you have given scientific fact. Perhaps you could relay what you think in relation to when this might happen or, indeed, when it might finish.

Mr Smith: I can confirm that we have been asked for our views and experiences on the drum line policy, particularly in the metropolitan area, by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I understand that is part of the review. I expect they are taking on board input from a range of other parties. We have certainly participated. The sort of information we have provided has been around our experiences, good and bad, in terms of how to catch and handle the sharks, how to release them and some of the changes that were made during the course of the program. For example, when we were catching sharks originally, we would bring them on board using the modifications to the vessel up the ramp. We were then covering them in a tarpaulin. On one occasion some members of the public were concerned that we may be using the tarpaulin to conceal what had been brought on board the vessel when in actual fact our purpose in covering the sharks with tarpaulins was to minimise distress on the animal. But we changed our practice from then such that we put a wet towel over the head of the animal when it was on board to try to minimise the stress but still enable members of the community who were out there on the water to observe the animal so they knew it was a shark because there were suggestions that maybe we had taken some other animal, which was not the case. They were the sorts of things that we were advising Premier and Cabinet—our experiences and some of the modifications that we found as lessons for the future if the government chooses to continue with the program and if approval is granted for it.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is a very emotive issue. I and many other members in this place would have received lots of correspondence on the issue.

Hon MARK LEWIS: Is it a budget issue?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely. We are spending money on it. On the same issue of sharks, on page 593, “Asset Investment Program”, paragraph 4 talks about additional funding for the shark monitoring network. You may need to give me this information by way of supplementary. I am interested in finding out how many sharks were tagged in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013 and to date this year, so basically every year from 2009 onwards to this year. I also want to know how many acoustic receivers are installed. How many have been installed to date and how many will be installed following the rollout of this funding over the next few years? I presume that would have to be supplementary.

[2.30 pm]

Mr Smith: I would think it would be. I am just looking at Dr Fletcher as he may know, but I suspect it will be a supplementary.

Dr Fletcher: I can give you rough amounts, but it is probably better if I give you the precise amounts.

The CHAIR: When we say tags, it is obviously the different types of tag.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, please.

The CHAIR: So it is not just tags, but whether they are acoustic or other types of tags.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, so it is separate.

[*Supplementary Information No B5.*]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: On the same issue of shark monitoring, again the public environmental review document says that there are 346 sharks targeted as part of the shark monitoring component of the program. Can you, minister, or the department provide a breakdown of those sharks by species as well?

Dr Fletcher: Yes.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If we can add that?

[*Supplementary Information No B6.*]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Were any tagged sharks caught as part of the trial between January and, say, April this year?

Dr Fletcher: The answer to that is no.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is easy; no supplementary for that one.

Again, on the same point—the asset investment program on page 593—how many contacts were logged as part of the shark monitoring program on receivers for the 143 tagged white sharks that were caught between November 2013 and April 2014? I am looking for how many contacts were logged as part of the shark monitoring program on receivers for the 143 tagged white sharks between 30 April 2013 and 15 April 2013.

Mr Smith: I understand that information is available on our website, but we would be very happy to provide that as a supplementary.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Mr Smith, you may not be aware, but in this place it is not good for a minister, or indeed anyone, to say go to our website for information.

The CHAIR: In fairness to Mr Smith, he did say he would provide it.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: He did and I am pleased. I congratulate him for it!

The CHAIR: Clearly, he has learnt the customs and practices of the upper house, and maybe he could run a course for some of the ministers up here!

[Supplementary Information No B7.]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Chair, I am aware there are other questions, but I have two other quick ones in relation to supplementary information.

Can I also find out how many white sharks have been tagged between 30 April and 15 November for all the years across the shark monitoring program?

The CHAIR: Dr Fletcher wants to ask for clarification on what you are seeking.

Dr Fletcher: Is that just in Western Australia?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, please—just in Western Australia.

Dr Fletcher: That is fine.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That was for the period between 30 April and 15 November.

If I could again have the figures for those white sharks that were tagged between 15 November and 30 April for those same years, but I am interested in two discrete times.

[Supplementary Information No B8.]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do have some questions, but I note that the Chair had some questions on the shark issue.

The CHAIR: I had a couple of questions. Is it possible to get a copy of the written advice that you have provided to the Premier's office regarding the review? You made mention a number of times about written advice to the Premier's office; is it possible to receive copies of that?

Mr Smith: The advice we provided was not written as such; the things I was talking about was actually in a meeting. I expect that the Premier's office would have a recording of the advice we have provided, but we have provided input in terms of research and things like that. Dr Fletcher?

Dr Fletcher: At the back of the PER there is a series of appendices, so there are at least three of our documents that are supplementary information for the PER.

The CHAIR: So it was just the verbal advice and those documents that you have provided as advice to the Premier so far?

Mr Smith: That is my understanding, but if you would like, we can review it and if there are any additional documents, we will make them available.

[*Supplementary Information No B9.*]

The CHAIR: In answer to some of the questions about the \$600 000 in cost, you said, I think—I wrote down the words—you were seeking to recoup the costs that would not have otherwise been incurred.

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIR: Can you explain what exactly you mean by that? What costs of the operation of that vessel do you treat as ones that you would have already automatically incurred as opposed to those that are over and above?

Mr Smith: Perhaps I will answer it by way of example. I have mentioned that the vessel we used was the *PV Hamelin*. That *PV Hamelin* vessel would have otherwise been parked up; we were not going to be using it for the summer and, in fact, there would be a cost associated with that—some depreciation, for instance, in the vessel. That depreciation has not been included in the \$600 000, so they are the sorts of costs that would have been incurred either way and have not been attributed to the drum line program.

The CHAIR: So there is no provision for annual maintenance costs on the vessel as part of the costs you are recouping.

Mr Smith: I refer to Mr Mezzatesta.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes, there will be, absolutely. The director general was correct; the *PV Hamelin* was not funded for the 2013–14 financial year. So, given we undertook some activity that incurred a cost, we will be expecting to recover that cost, so that is what we are looking at.

The CHAIR: What I am trying to understand is what is the nature of the costs you are seeking to recover. As a result of operating it, there must have been a range of maintenance costs that you might not have otherwise incurred, so you will seek to recoup those.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes.

The CHAIR: And that is factored into that \$600 000.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes.

The CHAIR: You have not recovered depreciation on the vessel, so the full staff operational costs to operate that vessel are included in that \$600 000.

Mr Mezzatesta: Those numbers are included in the costing, absolutely.

The CHAIR: Of that \$600 000 figure?

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes; whatever the number is, yes.

The CHAIR: Is that the additional operating hours of the staff? I assume those staff would have been employed ordinarily by the department, so are you recouping their actual ordinary wages or just overtime and additional wage costs?

Mr Mezzatesta: Again, the cost includes the total. The amount that we are recovering will be offset by any amounts that we were already funded for. We will not be recovering the ordinary operating time of the officers because it is already funded.

The CHAIR: Are there ordinary salaries included in that \$600 000?

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes, it is the total cost.

The CHAIR: The total cost is \$600 000.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes.

The CHAIR: So their normal wages would go in that \$100 000 that is the difference between the \$600 000 and the \$500 000 that you said you expected to receive.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes; in approximate numbers, yes.

The CHAIR: So the salary cost is only about \$100 000 for the vessel for the length of time that it was out on the water. Generally, when I saw photos of it, there were at least three or four staff on it. Am I right there?

Mr Mezzatesta: I do not have the numbers off the top of my head. It would have been more than that. Three officers for three months working 13 hours a day is going to be a bit more than \$100 000, I would have thought.

The CHAIR: Yes; that is why I am trying to work out the discrepancy between you saying that the total cost is \$600 000 and you expect to get \$500 000 back and what you were ordinarily funded for, which you do not expect to get back. It leaves a bit of confusion in my mind.

Mr Smith: What I have said is that the total cost to us is in the order of \$600 000. On the amount that we are in discussions with Premier and Cabinet about, it looks like we will end up being remunerated to in the order of \$500 000 from Premier and Cabinet. That is part of the discussions we are having at the moment with them. That \$500 000 is in lieu of the costs, not necessarily covering the full \$600 000 obviously.

[2.40 pm]

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: I will come to you, anyway, as the next person on the list.

The *Hamelin* operated the previous year; is that correct?

Mr Mezzatesta: No.

The CHAIR: It has been parked up for how many years then?

Mr Mezzatesta: It has not been totally parked up. The *Hamelin* was removed from service when the rock lobster fishery moved from input controls to quota. The department stopped going out and checking pots in the water and making sure the right gear was at the end of the lobster floats. When that stopped happening, we did not need to run a boat for 150 days a year; however, it continued to do some work. The PV *Hamelin* continued to support the shark tagging program, for example, but it certainly was not doing the quantum of work that it was doing, historically. That is why it was available for the drum line program.

The CHAIR: I assume you have it broken down as a separate business unit as an agency. Can we get the annual operation costs for the PV *Hamelin* for each of the years 2011–12, 2012–13 and 2013–14? If you can tell us how many hours it was operating in each of those years, that would be good as well. That includes depreciation and everything. I assume you run it as a separate business unit.

[Supplementary Information No B10.]

The CHAIR: Are you able off the top of your head to tell us the wages with all the on-costs for the officers who would have been operating on that vessel on an hourly rate or annual rate? What sort of levels are they?

Mr Mezzatesta: I am accountant trained; I do not like pulling numbers out of the air like that.

The CHAIR: Can you say what level they are?

Mr Mezzatesta: The officers work under quite unique arrangements. They work under an annualised hours arrangement where their salary includes a component for the fact that they work on weekends and public holidays and the fact that we work them for extended hours on particular

days. It is a bit difficult to say the master was a level 5 and then equate that to a level 5 salary for a public servant.

The CHAIR: What are the staff positions and what are their annualised salary costs?

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes, that is fine.

[*Supplementary Information No B11.*]

The CHAIR: Hon Lynn MacLaren.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: We had an hour of Hon Stephen Dawson, can I go now?

The CHAIR: If it is a very quick question, Hon Stephen Dawson, I am happy to take it, then I will come to you next, Hon Lynn MacLaren.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Delightful! Thank you.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not think I have had an hour.

The CHAIR: You have not. Hon Peter Katsambanis, Hon Rick Mazza and even Hon Ken Travers had some of the earlier time and I am trying to get to you.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thank you, Chair. Just a quick question that relates to illegal fishing and who was managing the illegal fishing issue while the shark cull process was happening? Did the federal agency look after the illegal fishing role of the agency? If another agency did it, who was it? Did we provide funding to that agency to look after that role?

Mr Smith: In terms of illegal fishing, our department remained responsible for illegal fishing and we continued to provide services in regard to that and we continued to pursue enforcement actions and compliance throughout the state.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Minister, first of all, I want to thank you and your department for answering my questions on notice, which clearly assisted us in understanding the complexities of the shark mitigation strategy and who is paying for what. What I still do not have an answer to—it has been brought up about four times in this place—is whether the internal review that you said was going to be completed and released in June has now been completed and released. Can you tell me where that is?

Mr Smith: I presume you are referring to the review being conducted by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Has that not been released yet or has it been released?

Mr Smith: No, I do not think it has been released yet.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: There is a working draft document in the PER and what I am trying to find out is: is that the internal review to which you refer when I have asked you questions about the details of the assessment of the drum line policy?

Mr Smith: Yes, when I refer to the review of the policy, I am referring to the DPC review of the drum line policy. Our department does not have a review of the drum line policy happening; there is only one I am aware of and I am not aware of it having been released by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Thank you very much. So we can still anticipate that in June at some point in time?

Mr Smith: That is really a matter for Premier and cabinet; I cannot answer in terms of time.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Then they would have misled Parliament if it is not. I will not ask any further questions about that, because I will read their internal review.

Minister, I am concerned, in this budget do you have a contingency budget for any legal liability due to activities that may affect threatened species that are protected under international or national treaties? Do you have a contingency fund?

Mr Smith: The department does not have a separate contingency fund for such issues. The state government typically self-insures and if there is any requirement for that, and I am not sure what that would be in regard to, but if there was, I would imagine that the government would take the same position on that as it does on other things and self-insure, but there is no contingency within the Department of Fisheries budget.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: So the drum lining part of the shark mitigation strategy is going to remain under the ambit of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or will that at some point be the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries?

Mr Smith: At the moment it is with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and it is our understanding that it will remain with them for the foreseeable future. There may well be a change by the government at some stage; they may seek to pass it to our department or some other organisation, but at this stage it is with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Has the Department of Fisheries considered putting in place any funds in the forward estimates for continuing to do the operations of the drum lining program?

Mr Smith: No, we have not. Our understanding is that the government will seek to use contractors for both the south west and the metropolitan drum line program if environmental approvals are secured for the next three years. We will still have a compliance role, we expect, in regard to the program, but it would be more in regard to ensuring that the contractors are complying with their obligations, particularly on the water, and any other parties that might have obligations.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: The staff that were involved in the drum lining program over the last 12 months, what will they do now? What are they redeployed as?

Mr Smith: There are several staff involved. Several of them, for instance, are from our Geraldton office. Those staff would typically be involved primarily in activities related to fisheries in that part of the state. Those staff that participated from the metropolitan area will be involved in other fisheries compliance activities within the metropolitan area. It is not unusual for our department to have adjustments in terms of priorities from year to year and season to season between fisheries, and so we treat this in the same way, so if there is no longer a call on our staff to be providing services in the metropolitan area to monitor drum lines, those staff will be redeployed on other fisheries-related compliance activities.

[2.50 pm]

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: It was quite a significant focus of attention of your staff for many months. What operations were foregone during the period that Fisheries was required to complete the drum line program?

Mr Smith: I am not aware of any specific programs that were foregone. Mr Mezzatesta may be able to add some comments about what work they may have otherwise been doing. As I say, staff from the Geraldton office would typically be dealing with fisheries in that part of the state, so fisheries such as the West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery, perhaps some issues in fisheries related to areas around the Abrolhos Islands and so on, Whereas those fisheries officers from the metropolitan area would typically be involved in compliance activities related to things like the West Coast demersal scalefish fishery, some of the crab fisheries, abalone and so on.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Under the shark mitigation program, which is not the drum lining part but all the other research and other activities you are doing—education—will you have some key effectiveness indicators associated with that shark hazard mitigation program?

Mr Smith: There are a range of key performance indicators that could be used for that. In the case of education and awareness, as part of the education program there was a survey that was run for community attitudes so it will be possible to monitor adjustments in community attitudes. But equally things like the research programs that we have been running on things like tagging, the outcomes from that are released as reports and made available to the public. So you could put indicators being the number of sharks that are tagged, particularly white sharks, but really for us the key performance indicator in those sort of programs is about our understanding of both the status of those stocks and how they move around. We are finding that the research is leading to substantial improvements in the knowledge that was there; it was pretty limited before on white sharks. The research programs are leading to a significant improvement in our understanding of white shark populations and their movements. We have also done things like the research program looking at a correlation study, looking at where there have been attacks and what sort of conditions were prevailing at the time of those attacks, whether it be what time of the year, what time of the day, what were the water conditions and so on, which can assist the community in deciding what sort of level of risk they are prepared to take. Anyone who goes into the marine environment faces a risk, and we see one of the important things that we can contribute is providing people with information to assist them in making decisions about what risk they are comfortable with. The research is providing quite a broad range of things, all of which could be indicators. I think there is plenty of indication that the research is proving helpful.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Does the shark mitigation strategy have a key performance indicator of reducing the number of shark attacks?

Mr Smith: Well, that is the purpose of them. I believe it will be an outcome; I believe it is an outcome of it, yes.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Could I see the measures? How are you going to measure that, and exactly what are we spending these multimillion dollars on? I would like to see how we are going to measure the effectiveness of the shark mitigation strategies. You probably do not have it right now, but would you be able to provide it as supplementary information?

Mr Smith: Yes, I can certainly provide you with information relating to the outcomes and outputs from the research and the other components, including the education components of the shark mitigation strategy that our department is responsible for.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: That would be much appreciated.

[Supplementary Information No B12.]

The CHAIR: Can you also include in B12 how many shark attacks you actually expected would occur without the drum lines?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Well, the question is regarding —

The CHAIR: You are saying it is going to reduce it, so I wanted to know how many you were expecting before that.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: The question regards the entire mitigation strategy, of which the drum lining is only a part.

Mr Smith: Can I clarify the information I will be providing? I will not be providing key performance indicators on the drum line policy because it is not a program for which our department is the responsible agency. I can provide information about our role within that program effectively as a contractor for the metropolitan area, but questions on key performance indicators and outcomes and outputs should be directed to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I will attempt to do that. My last question may not be in your ambit either; it concerns the shark observation towers, one in particular was promised for Cottesloe. Is that

part of the shark mitigation strategy? Does it come out of the Department of Sport and Recreation's budget? How is that paid, and is there a strategy associated with shark spotter towers?

The CHAIR: Is it looking out into the ocean or back into the electorate!

Hon KEN BASTON: I do not know.

Mr Smith: I am aware of the announcements about the towers but our department is not involved in the towers, so the funds do not come through our budget. I really cannot provide any information because I do not know much about that.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Clearly it has something to do with monitoring sharks, so it would be worth your while to find out how it fits in with the bigger plan.

Hon KEN BASTON: Is the member talking about the tower for the surf lifesavers?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: It is an observation tower.

Mr Smith: The nature of the member's comments suggests that all the shark mitigation measures are ours, as in the Department of Fisheries.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: No, I mean the government as a whole, and the Department of Fisheries would have the majority of responsibility because it has the science about the marine environment and responsibility for the bigger portion of the shark monitoring network.

Mr Smith: We have some very important components of the program. I do not think we have the majority of the funds; there are other components as well held by other agencies and organisations. I certainly acknowledge that our department is making an important and substantial contribution to the program and we are happy to release information related to our activities.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I know that many people have questions so I relinquish my time.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: My question relates to note (e) on page 591. Please describe in some detail how the government expects to increase the overall commercial fishing sector's annual WA output by around 25 000 tonnes in the longer term, while also meeting, for example, widespread community aspirations for much higher levels of sanctuary zones in WA?

Mr Smith: If I may take a liberty, I have just been given some information about the observation tower so I can at least comment to the chamber. I understand that the state has allocated \$300 000 in the 2013–14 budget, and I believe that is in the budget for the Department of Premier and Cabinet. I may be incorrect on that, as it is not our department; but it is \$300 000 allocated in the current financial year.

[3.00 pm]

I will get back to the question at hand in terms of increasing the production to 25 000 tonnes without compromising in anyway existing sanctuary zones. We do not believe that target would require any compromise to sanctuary zones, nor would we put such a target if we thought it did. We see a role for sanctuary zones in the state in certain circumstances. In terms of increasing production to 25 000 tones, we see that coming from a multitude of different avenues. In terms of the wild-caught fisheries, we have been seeking to open some new fisheries and we have done so in recent years. So we are using an additional resource—harvesting an additional resource that had previously not been harvested or not covered by management plans, so opening some new fisheries is one way of doing that.

We are seeing the capacity to increase the harvest from some fisheries. For example, the West Coast Rock Lobster Fishery has experienced a reduced take in the last few years following action by the government to reduce the catch, which has had the support of the industry. There is now scope, given the breeding stock in that fisheries is now at record levels, and the settlement of the juvenile rock lobster is at average-to-above average levels now. There will be scope to increase the take in coming years. Whether that happens will actually be determined largely by what the market is

demanding rather than supply. So it will not be a constraint on the supply side but rather the demand side, but there is scope to expand there. So some of the existing fisheries have scope to increase production, but also I know the government and the minister particularly is very keen on seeing an expansion in the aquaculture industry in Western Australia.

As a department, we are looking to try to come up with some initiatives to promote the expansion of the aquaculture industry. The government has already put in place some measures, such as aquaculture zones. So there is a zone in the Kimberley region around Cone Bay, which is almost ready to be opened up to additional operators in that area. The government has also commenced the environmental mapping and survey work for a similar zone over at Abrolhos Islands, in that area. There may be potential for other zones around the state. There are a multitude of things on aquaculture.

I do not want to take up too much time on that, but the final thing that I think is worth noting is also the work that is being done on amending the legislation with the potential for a new fisheries bill to be introduced into Parliament. As I mentioned before, the bill will seek to strengthen the property rights—the access rights for both commercial and recreational fishers, which should facilitate additional investment in those fisheries. In doing so, there is scope for expanding some of the existing commercial fisheries, but I do not see that expansion coming in any way at the cost of existing sanctuary zones; I just do not see that as necessary.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Thank you. On page 592, under “Research and Assessment”, I refer to the outcomes of the 2014 special management period for flesh-footed shearwater bycatch in zone 1 of the south coast purse seine fishery. How many flesh-footed shearwaters were reported as mortalities in the fishery during February, March and April 2014? I note that we will need to take that on notice. If anybody has got that to hand, it would be brilliant! We will put that on notice.

The CHAIR: If you had not asked for “freshwater” they probably could have helped you!

[Supplementary Information No B13.]

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It was not “freshwater”, it was “flesh-footed shearwaters”.

The CHAIR: It was the “flesh” bit that got me!

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Then what is the estimated actual mortality of the same species in the fishery during the same period? Again, I will take it on notice.

The CHAIR: We will make that all part of B13.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Can the minister table any report or analysis on the effectiveness of mitigation measures during the 2014 special management period for that issue?

The CHAIR: I think that is all part of B13.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: On page 593, I refer to the asset investment program and the “Abrolhos Islands Program” under “Works in Progress”. We had mentioned Abrolhos Islands a minute ago, and I have a question with a few parts in relation to that. Regarding the decommissioning of the abandoned fish camps at Abrolhos Islands, I ask: How many fishermen are continuing to fish from Abrolhos Islands? Do you have that?

Mr Smith: Just to be clear, I presume you are just talking about commercial fishermen.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That is right.

Mr Smith: We have seen a significant increase in recreational fishing activity over at the islands. In terms of commercial fishers, I do not have those numbers readily to hand, but I would be happy to take it as a supplementary and we will have that information, I expect.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes. Once again, you may or may not know this, but I would hope you would know this one: how many camps are no longer in use and on what islands are these distributed?

Hon KEN BASTON: I would just like to comment on this. Having recently visited the Abrolhos Islands with Fisheries, I think I virtually saw every island that had a shack on it—I know that it took all day. There are obviously some buildings that are not being used now. I do not know if we would know the exact number, but I have actually asked somebody who is involved in that to do the report on it for me to give me a breakdown of what we need to do over there. There are jetties over there that obviously need removing that have not been used for some time, but also, of course, it opens up opportunities. Once the rock lobster industry went to 12 months of the year, lots of rock lobster fishermen do not use the islands; they do not stay over there anymore. There are some that do, of course, but that may change. There may be a reason why. We only have to go back to a certain period of the rock lobster fishing, and in that case the islands could come back into use. None of the schools or any of those types of services are now being used. It does have huge opportunities, of course, for aquaculture over there, and it also has opportunities for limited ecotourism. Also, in the sense of tourism, of course, all the houses are about to be removed from Beacon Island. A new jetty will be built there and that will go back as a heritage area to visit, because that is where all the survivors, or most of the survivors, from the *Batavia* were actually buried. That is very important for our history. We are very much looking at the management of the island and how we can preserve it and obviously take control of shacks that are not being used anymore.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Just on that, I have got some finance questions pertaining directly to that.

The CHAIR: Sorry, member, was there an earlier part of the question that you wanted taken on notice around the Abrolhos Islands?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes: how many fishermen are continuing to fish from the Abrolhos Islands; and how many camps are no longer in use? There was a question, but the minister sort of —

The CHAIR: That is why I am asking whether I need to give it a number or whether the minister sufficiently answered your question.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: No, he has not.

The CHAIR: Are you happy to take the details on —

Hon KEN BASTON: Yes, I am happy to take that on notice.

[Supplementary Information No B14.]

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: We are talking about fishermen continuing to fish from Abrolhos and how many camps are no longer in use. Then, what I really wanted to talk about was Beacon Island.

Hon KEN BASTON: Sorry, Mr Chair, can we just clarify —

Mr Smith: Just to be clear, what is being asked for is, effectively, the number of commercial fishing licences operating at the Abrolhos that have shacks there. I think that is the number you are after.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: That is correct, yes.

Mr Smith: I am just conscious that there may be multiple people on board a fishing vessel, and it is really the shacks that you are after.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Then I was asking how many camps are no longer in use, and then, when it came to Beacon Island, what is it going to cost or what has it cost to remove the material from Beacon Island. I do not know whether you would want to take that on notice as well.

Mr Smith: Mr Mezzatesta can probably provide the answer now.

Mr Mezzatesta: Yes. We had a funding allocation of \$1.6 million for that removal exercise. We went out to tender and we, I think, will be spending about \$1.5 million, so within the budget.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Who is responsible for removing the remaining camps and what is the estimated cost of decommissioning those remaining camps, and who bears that cost?

[3.10 pm]

Hon KEN BASTON: That is on Beacon Island?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: No; on the rest of the Abrolhos.

Mr Smith: The shacks are the responsibility of the fishers that own those shacks. In terms of the cost of removing them, it will depend very much on the circumstances, when the time comes, for each shack. If all of them are removed—I do not foresee that—some of them are —

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I am talking about the unused ones.

Mr Smith: Yes. The unused ones—what we are doing at the moment is taking action where appropriate. There are some shacks that are in a state of disrepair. In some cases I have issued orders already for those camps to be rehabilitated, for want of a better word. We will continue to do that. For those shacks that are in a state which means they cannot be restored to a suitable working condition, some fishers will choose, where some maintenance is required, to restore those shacks to an appropriate condition. There is not an estimate of the total cost because —

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: There is no budget allocation?

Mr Smith: Correct. In any event, the liability would not fall to the state. The responsibility will be for the fishers for that.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: What if you cannot find the fishermen?

Mr Smith: The owners of those shacks can be found because they are commercial fishermen who have an asset, which we are aware of, in the form of a fishing licence.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Okay; I have got the implication. The concrete pads and the asbestos—what will be happening to those?

Mr Smith: Once again, it will be up to the fishers—the owner of the shack, effectively—to come up with a plan that they put in place to remove those things. Those sorts of things need to be dealt with in accordance with the law. For instance, asbestos —

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: All that material will be taken off site?

Mr Smith: We would expect there to be the same sort of approach that we are putting in place for Beacon Island, which is to remove all of that from the island and dispose of them in accordance with whatever the rules and provisions are. For instance, there will be no dumping of asbestos at sea, if that is the sort of the thing you are concerned about. We would not support that and —

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I was not suggesting that.

The CHAIR: You realise he can now go out there and say, “I’ve heard it said”!

Next is Hon Darren West —

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I am done.

The CHAIR: I am not trying to stop you; I just want to double-check. Hon Darren West has indicated he has questions, and Hon Stephen Dawson. At this stage they are the only two I have. I might add, if Hon Mark Lewis returns, I will give him the call.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Will that be recorded in *Hansard*?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Hon DARREN WEST: My question is about the Eco Shark Barrier at Coogee Beach, which I understand was a great success and the City of Cockburn is now seeking funding from the state government to implement the shark barrier for the next three years. Given that the Eco Shark Barrier is a proven success both economically and environmentally, will the government match the City of Cockburn's funds for the project?

Mr Smith: In terms of the shark enclosures, our department has had no involvement at all with the trial of the one in Coogee or the one in the south west, so we really do not have anything to respond to.

Hon DARREN WEST: It seems a strange set of circumstances that the fisheries department has had no involvement at all. I know it is not your fault but it does seem a very strange set of circumstances to me. I will leave the next question, which was also related to that one.

On page 590, "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency", the second dot point refers to —

More resources are being invested into the Department to enable it to conduct new and continuing activities over the next four years, including additional funding to expand the shark monitoring network, research, electronic tagging of sharks, and additional community awareness programs to increase public awareness of the risks of shark attacks and how to deal with those risks.

Is this an exhaustive list of the actions that these additional resources are required to cover in shark mitigation? Can the minister outline the quantum of the additional resources for 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16, please?

Mr Smith: Can I just ask for the last part to be reiterated?

Hon DARREN WEST: Now I have turned my page! That is fine. I have had this question given to me to ask, so if you need more explanation, I may not be able to give you more. Is this an exhaustive list of the actions that these additional resources are required to cover in shark mitigation, and can the minister outline the quantum of the additional resources for 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16?

Mr Smith: I have the information in front of me, but I suspect it is going to take me some time, so if you are comfortable, I am happy to table this document.

Hon DARREN WEST: Table it? Yes, that would be great, in the interests of time.

The next question also relates to page 590, under "Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information". The department has identified the herring fishery as being at risk. Has a decision been made on how to reduce the take from this fishery? Will the minister guarantee that there will be no reduction in the recreational catch and not close this fishery for recreational fishers at any time during the year, even for a temporary period?

Hon KEN BASTON: I thank the honourable member for that question. No, I do not guarantee it will not be, because Shark Bay snapper were saved by closing the fishery during the spawning season. However, with herring it is a little more difficult because they actually swim from here through to South Australia, so you cannot actually make sure that you have closed the season at a time that is going to be the most effective, scientifically, to increase the spawning mass. That is a little more difficult. From what I have read of the report and heard from speaking to people, we will probably look at the buyback of commercial licences and, obviously, the science from fisheries would help me make my decision. But I believe that perhaps a reduction in the bag limit for recreational fisherpersons would be the way to go, and I think that would probably suffice in the first instance.

Hon DARREN WEST: Thank you. Is the government still committed to introducing the aquatic marine resource management bill?

Hon KEN BASTON: Absolutely.

Hon DARREN WEST: Okay. If so, when is it going to be introduced?

Hon KEN BASTON: I guess my very simple answer is hopefully sooner rather than later. It is a very important bill for the future of aquaculture et cetera.

Hon DARREN WEST: What amendments have been made to the draft bill; and, if any, why?

Mr Smith: There have not been any amendments made for some months—certainly, not this year. There have not been any amendments since the input from WAFIC and Recfishwest, and the amendments were made based on inputs that they provided.

Hon DARREN WEST: Have the views of the Conservation Council been taken into account in the amendments, or does that predate that?

Mr Smith: They have, yes.

Hon DARREN WEST: The next question was whether any issues were yet to be resolved; and, if yes, what are they. But I think you may have touched on that already. Will there still be a fit and proper person test in the legislation for persons to operate on a commercial basis; and, if not, why not?

Mr Smith: I will check with Ms Brayford on that one.

Ms Brayford: My recollection is that there probably is, but I would like to go back and give you correct information on that. I am happy to do that.

Hon DARREN WEST: Okay, thank you.

[Supplementary Information No B15.]

Hon DARREN WEST: On a similar vein, will the “precautionary principle” still be present in the legislation; and, if not, why not? The term precautionary principle is in inverted commas here, so I presume that is part of a clause in the bill. Perhaps we could include that in with the last question?

[3.20 pm]

Mr Smith: I can say that we operate in accordance with the precautionary principle. The thing is that the precautionary principle is much like the term “sustainability” where it means many different things to many different people. We believe we operate in accordance with the precautionary principle, both in the existing legislation and in the future, and we have not sought to alter that principle.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The development and better industries fund, or what was known as DBIF, does that still exist? If it has been renamed, what is it called and where do I find it in the budget papers?

Mr Smith: No, the DBIF does not exist anymore. It was part of the changes to the funding arrangements that came into force in 2010 when the access fee was introduced for the commercial fishing industry.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: So, the fund is no longer. Is industry still contributing an amount that goes to Fisheries and stays with Fisheries and that Fisheries can dole out essentially?

Mr Smith: No. The funds that were left in the DBIF account were exhausted around the time that the funding reforms were introduced. But if I recall correctly, the last of the funds were used to assist the west coast rock lobster industry when it was going through the reduction in effort measures associated with the fall in puerulus stocks. So, there were no funds left over and there have been no funds raised through the DBIF since and it no longer applies as an impost on fishers.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Minister, is there still a discretionary amount in the Fisheries budget that you as minister can access?

The CHAIR: Certainly not that he is going to put on the record where Treasury can find out!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not need that information now; I will talk to the minister after. I do not want to get the minister in trouble!

The CHAIR: You do realise that Treasury monitor this and go after departments, unless they plead poverty at these hearings!

Hon DARREN WEST: The eyes moving in that photo up there are the Treasurer's!

The CHAIR: Did you want to ask that as a serious question?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, I will leave that. I do not want to put the minister in a bad position!

Hon DARREN WEST: I have a serious question. What are the reasons for the closure of the Cockburn Sound crab fishery and what action has been taken?

Hon KEN BASTON: As I understand it, obviously, the commercial fishery made the decision to close as the stocks were dropping off for them. So, they made a voluntary decision, and then I signed off on the recreational side of it not long after, I think. Mr Smith?

Mr Smith: Yes, that is correct. The minister's decision to close that fishery to recreational fishing followed an approach from Recfishwest that that action be taken with the support of the department. In terms of why the action was needed, that is really a research question. I am happy to defer to Dr Fletcher if you require any elaboration.

Hon DARREN WEST: Yes, I would be keen to know what is going on.

Dr Fletcher: The Cockburn Sound crab fishery, I guess, has been somewhat of a problem in the last number of years. It was closed for three years due to a recruitment failure, which we considered was being largely driven by environmental reasons. We reopened it when we had a very large recruitment. Those large recruitments, the large number of small individuals, did not seem to grow very much, so they did not go through a moulting in one period, which meant that they did not get into the breeding sizes. There was not much breeding stock there, despite a large number of animals, which meant next year's recruitment was actually lower, despite the fact there was a large number of individuals there. So, we are going through a series of recruitment problems, which we consider to be largely environmentally generated. It has been problematic, and so it is not operating, I guess, like it used to, which means that we have a large level of monitoring going on both before the season and during the season to make sure that we give it the best opportunity to actually have the right level of spawning which gives the best opportunity for recruitment. But, unfortunately, like a number of fisheries along the coast, having breeding stock there is not sufficient to actually ensure that we have got reasonable levels of recruitment the following season.

Hon DARREN WEST: I refer to "Spending Changes" under "Appropriations, Expenses and Cash Assets" on page 589. Across the forward estimates there are savings indicated for aquatic biosecurity. How does the government intend to make these savings? I do have some figures here in a little table.

Mr Smith: The funds that are listed there for aquatic biosecurity were in last year's budget and they related to contingency for the port authority in the event that the authorities did not put in place remedial action to reduce the biosecurity risk. That was the full and maximum amount of contingency that could result if they did not take any action, bearing in mind that the plan is for aquatic biosecurity to move to a full cost recovery model or some sort of cost recovery model that will involve the ports. We never envisaged that the ports would take no action. It was expected that they would take action to reduce the risk. It is in their interests to do so. Certainly, in discussions with the Department of Transport, for instance, we gained the opinion that they would take action, so there was no need for that contingency. That was the view of Treasury, so the contingency has been removed from the accounts to better reflect the actual situation.

Hon DARREN WEST: If I am hearing that there is a plan to move to a full cost recovery from ports and, I presume, marinas and other places, when do you expect that that will fully occur?

Mr Smith: The government has currently funded us through until the end of the current calendar year. We are looking at having some arrangements either in place from 1 January next year or in the subsequent months. We are looking at models at the moment that could be put in place to recover at least some of the biosecurity costs incurred by the state.

The CHAIR: Members, are you happy with that document that was tabled earlier to be made public? If that is case, I will make the document public. I presume that you are happy for it to be made public?

Mr Smith: Yes.

Hon DARREN WEST: The next question relates to the income statement on page 595 under “Cost of Services”, the line item “Employee benefits”. Why are the employee benefits in 2017–18 as a percentage change from the previous year significantly below CPI? The figures that I have here are 2014–15, 2.9 per cent; 2015–16, 4.3 per cent; 2016–17, 2.5 per cent; and 2017–18, 0.1 per cent. Why would that be?

Mr Smith: I think I will refer to my chief financial officer, Mr Robinson, for the detail of this. I hesitate to get too detailed in accounts.

Mr Robinson: I provided a detailed explanation in questions on notice.

Hon DARREN WEST: If you have already answered, that is fine.

Mr Robinson: Sorry, it was not questions on notice; it was asked at the estimates hearing for the Assembly.

Hon DARREN WEST: So there is an answer to that question on the record?

Mr Robinson: There is an answer on record but I am happy to —

Hon DARREN WEST: It is called the lower house.

Mr Robinson: I can either read out that answer to you or I can table it.

Hon DARREN WEST: We have about two minutes to go, so if you can table it, that would save us a bit of time, thank you.

Mr Robinson: I am happy to table it.

The CHAIR: We will table that.

Hon DARREN WEST: I have two more questions, and they also have lots of numbers in them. I refer to page 595, under “Income Statement”, “Cost of Services, “Supplies and services”. The cost of supplies and services reduced by almost 50 per cent over the four years of the forward estimates. What changes to supplies and services are causing these reductions? I have the figures here: 2014–15, negative 27.4 per cent; 2015–16, negative 15 per cent; 2016–17, negative 33.8 per cent; and 2017–18, negative 2.1 per cent.

[3.30 pm]

Mr Smith: Once again I have got some information here, but I will refer to Mr Robinson to answer this one in the first instance.

Mr Robinson: My understanding of your question was why the supplies and services have decreased. I have a detailed explanation of why it has decreased for the 2014–15 year, which we tend to focus on when we are doing our preparation for these. I am willing to give that answer at this point, but take on notice the movements in the out years, because I do not have that in front of me.

Hon DARREN WEST: Once again, for the purpose of brevity, could we have the whole lot taken on notice?

[*Supplementary Information No B16.*]

The CHAIR: With this tabled document, because it is actually just a copy of the *Hansard* of the other place, rather than taking that as a tabled document, what I might ask you to do is just submit that as supplementary information for the same answer, I think we just gave B16 to the earlier item.

[*Supplementary Information No B17.*]

Hon DARREN WEST: On page 595 is the income statement and the income from the state government. The royalties for regions funds are decreasing over the forward estimates, primarily in the area of regional community services. What are the implications for staff currently working in these regional community services?

Mr Smith: Sorry; can you just point out which one —

Hon DARREN WEST: It is on page 595 in the income statement under the heading “Income from State Government”. I have a series of numbers starting with \$1 147 000 in 2014–15 down to \$111 000 in 2017–18.

Mr Smith: In terms of the final year that sees the significant drop off in funds, I am not sure of the composition of what is typically just over \$1 million in most of the years and then the drop in that final year to \$100 000, which will see the conclusion of some existing programs. It is probably more useful if I give you a more detailed breakdown and take it as supplementary.

[*Supplementary Information No B18.*]

The CHAIR: Noting the time, I think I probably need to draw it to a close, so, member, if you have any further questions, I would like you to put them on notice.

The committee will forward any additional questions it has to you via the minister in writing 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 meet this due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these to the committee clerk at the close of the hearing.

On behalf of the committee, I thank you all for your attendance and, again, thank you, minister, for serving on the Friday. We are letting you go home a bit earlier than last year! Thank you very much for your attendance here today.

Hearing concluded at 3.33 pm
