

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2014–15 ANNUAL REPORT HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2015**

**SESSION TWO
DEPARTMENT OF THE PREMIER AND CABINET**

Members

**Hon Ken Travers (Chair)
Hon Peter Katsambanis (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Alanna Clohesy
Hon Rick Mazza**

Hearing commenced at 1.31 pm

Hon PETER COLLIER

Minister for Education representing the Premier, examined:

Mr DAVID SMITH

Acting Director General, examined:

Mr RICHARD MAY

Acting Deputy Director General, examined:

Ms KATHRYN ANDREWS

Acting Assistant Director General, examined:

Mr ROBERT KENNEDY

Acting Executive Director, examined:

Ms FIONA ROCHE

Executive Director, Office of Science, examined:

Mrs ANGELA BOLAND

Acting Director, State Administration, examined:

Mr ADRIAN MURPHY

Acting Executive Director, Land, Approvals and Native Title Unit, examined:

Mr PETER PRIDE

Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Mr THOMAS LEEMING

Executive Director, examined:

Ms KYRA NIMMO

Acting Principal Policy Officer, examined:

Mr CHRISTOPHER DOWSON

Graduate Development Officer, examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Can witnesses confirm they have read, understood and signed the document headed "Information for Witnesses"? In doing so, I believe that there are five of you at the table with the minister and then there are a number of others who may be called to the table later on. I am asking all of you who might be called to indicate whether you have read, understood and signed that document.

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. I note that we are actually broadcasting live from here. This is the first week of live broadcast from these rooms on the internet. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to review agency outcomes on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the committee values your assistance with this.

Do any of the witnesses wish to make an opening statement or should we go straight to questions?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Straight to questions, Mr Chair.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On page 15, "Employment Opportunities", in the last paragraph you talk about 1 743 applications for 41 advertised positions. I just wondered what those 41 positions were that needed to be filled?

Ms Andrews: Just off the top of my head—I have not got a list with me—in terms of overall within the agency, they were across the agency at various levels. I suppose I could get you a list if that is what you want?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Can we take that on notice?

Ms Andrews: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No B1.]

Hon RICK MAZZA: Can you tell me how many of those positions were actually filled by existing employees of DPC?

Ms Andrews: I can do that, yes.

Hon RICK MAZZA: And how many were employed that were employees of the WA government and how many were external? Also for the previous year as well, if you would not mind, please.

The CHAIR: That is all part of B1.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On page 42, there is a series of dot points. The second dot point refers to the removal of 20 000 feral cattle. What do you mean by "removal"?

Mr Smith: Sorry, where?

Hon RICK MAZZA: It is page 42, the second dot point.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I can tell you what we did with the feral horses.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes, I know what happened there. It is under "Major achievements".

Ms Andrews: On our page it is "Future directions." Maybe it is a different —

Hon RICK MAZZA: Is it? I have here page 41 that starts with the heading "Major achievements". Then over the page on 42, the dot points continue.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I do not think that is the same page as our annual report.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I have the annual report.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I think the difference is that one is a website version and one is a PDF version, if that makes sense—an HTML version and one is a PDF.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Either way, you want to know what happened with the cattle?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: We do.

Hon RICK MAZZA: We just want to know what happened to the cattle.

The CHAIR: Wherever they may appear.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I do not know why we ended up with two different versions; they have the same heading on the front. So what happened with the cattle?

Hon PETER COLLIER: We just need to find it first.

Mr Smith: Yes, I would like to find the context.

Hon RICK MAZZA: It is page 47 in the next version I have got.

Mr Kennedy: Yes, okay; I found it—page 47.

Hon RICK MAZZA: It is the third from the top on the right, “Removal of over 20,000 feral cattle”. Were they mustered or culled?

Mr Smith: I presume that mustering would have occurred for those cattle, so it is more about removal from those particular locations as opposed to —

Hon RICK MAZZA: Are you sure they were mustered?

Mr Smith: I will need to check that, if I can.

Hon RICK MAZZA: All right, if you could check that; I have heard otherwise.

[Supplementary Information No B2.]

Hon RICK MAZZA: It says that it has reduced the cattle numbers by 44 per cent in areas of high biodiversity value. What are the high biodiversity value areas? Where are they?

Mr Smith: They are the areas covered by the parks and conservation areas, but if you would like a more specific description, we could provide that.

Hon RICK MAZZA: How they were identified too, would be good.

Mr Smith: I am sorry? How the biodiversity —

Hon RICK MAZZA: How they were assessed as being high biodiversity value.

The CHAIR: Is this all going to be part of B2?

Hon RICK MAZZA: Yes.

If someone else can take some questions, Chair, so I can actually reorientate myself with this new report that I have that is a little different.

[1.40 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Good afternoon, and sorry that I missed you at the beginning of the meeting. I refer to page 92—this is the version that was printed for me today, so I do not know whether it is different—and it is in the notes to the financial statements in respect of employee benefits’ expenses. Was there any change to the FTE allocation for the Office of the Premier during 2014–15; and, if so, was that an increase or a decrease?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I think we do have some information on that.

Mrs Boland: During the year, the Premier’s office had 20.6 FTE, and there was no increase in his office.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That is a relief!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you able to tell me what the current FTE allocation is to the Office of the Premier?

Mrs Boland: Yes. The resourcing and staffing report that was tabled in both houses on 26 November has currently got 23.5, but I must note to the committee that maternity leave that is being paid is included in there, so that does raise the FTE up from the 20.6.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you. Are you able to tell me the total FTE in all other ministerial offices at 30 June 2014 and 30 June 2015?

Mrs Boland: I only have the last financial year's figures in front of me here, and I can tell you that the whole FTE was 212.79 for the financial year ending 2014–15, but I can take the other on notice and provide that.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you very much.

[Supplementary Information No B3.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: And perhaps as part of B3, what is the current FTE allocation to all ministerial offices?

Mrs Boland: Certainly. From the resourcing report that was tabled on 26 November, I can get the figures from that report.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Are you not able to give me a current figure? Is there likely to have been any change between November and now?

Mrs Boland: Yes. We do have staffing changes all the time in ministerial offices for people moving on, and placements go back to their agencies and new placements come, and different agencies put people in for different reasons. So the numbers change by the month, and in the last pay period of every month we do a report. So, yes, I can do that for you.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Just on that, can we get both those who are paid for by DPC and those who are on loan from other agencies?

Mrs Boland: Yes.

Hon PETER COLLIER: This needs to be at a point at time, though. So it needs to be what—as of today?

Hon SUE ELLERY: The closest pay period to today.

The CHAIR: I will make that all part of B3.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Page 52 refers to support for the functions of the Premier and Cabinet. I know everyone is flicking their pages, but you are not going to find the reference that I want you to find. After an update on the revision of the Ministerial Code of Conduct, when is it anticipated it will be released?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It still has not been considered by cabinet at this stage.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Okay. Is there a particular reason, other than it has not been considered by cabinet yet, that it took a while for it to be able to get to cabinet in the first place?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Not that I am aware of. I do not think there were any complications et cetera.

Mr Smith: No. It was undertaken, and work has been only recently completed, I guess, so it has not been that long with cabinet.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I am interested as well, if there is somebody here who can answer this for me, in the latest members' interests return from the Minister for Transport, which seems to indicate that some company arrangements are yet to be fully settled or disposed of. Where are we with that?

Mr Smith: I am sorry; we do not have anyone here who could answer that question.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Perhaps you could take that on notice for me.

Mr Smith: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No B4.]

Hon SUE ELLERY: I will keep going, Chair, until you stop me.

The CHAIR: Yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: I refer to page 15, and again it is a heading, “Employment opportunities”. I am particularly interested in new redeployment and redundancy arrangements for the public sector that came into effect from May this year, I think. My question is in a few parts. How many staff of the department accepted a voluntary reference during 2014, and what was the cost of those voluntary severances?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I think we will need to take that on notice.

Mr Smith: We may have some information.

Ms Andrews: I may have some information on severances. I might have to take that on notice, actually.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Perhaps I will run through all the questions that I have on this bit and then you can tell me what you are able to provide us with now. The two first bits were: How many staff in the department accepted a voluntary severance during 2014–15, and what was the total cost of those severances? Were any staff made involuntary redundant; and, if so, how many, and what was the cost of that? How well is the department managing the government’s workforce renewal program? The policy objective is recognising that we have an ageing public sector. The idea of that policy objective—not that it is a policy objective I necessarily support—is, as I understand it, about being able to refresh and renew and bring new and younger staff in. How many young people have come on board to replace more senior officers who may have left, and does DPC have a global view about how that renewal policy is working generally across the public sector?

Hon PETER COLLIER: What time period are you looking at?

Hon SUE ELLERY: I think the policy only came in in late May, maybe, of 2015.

Hon PETER COLLIER: So, for this year?

Hon SUE ELLERY: Yes.

Ms Andrews: I do have some information on voluntary severances and I just could not find it, but somebody has, gratefully, found it for me. I have got seven voluntary severances were accepted by employees of DPC this financial year. The cost of those was \$768 983.99. So, just for this year, from 1 January to 30 June, 17 officers ceased employment in permanent positions; and as at 30 June 2014, four positions have been abolished, six positions remain vacant, and three positions are being filled temporarily for parts of the year through acting opportunities.

In terms of workforce renewal, it has been in place, apparently, since 1 January this year. We have categorised DPC between frontline and non-frontline. There are different rates of the cuts for frontline versus non-frontline, as you are aware. We have managed to get approval from Treasury to categorise officers classified above level 5 in ministerial offices and electorate and research offices to be frontline staff and be only subject to a 10 per cent harvesting. But I will note and I will add that we have made no harvestings from PEOs and the Leader of the Opposition’s office, and we have not harvested any savings there, and we are committed to the full FTEs in those areas. I am advised by my HR branch that 45 officers have ceased since 1 January 2015, 29 classified as frontline—that would be a mixture of ministerial and PEOs—and 16 non-frontline. I do not have any more further details than that. We are implementing a number of strategies to meet savings, including regularly reviewing functions to align with our organisation structure, and to that end, filling vacancies as monitored against our budget. We are basically just watching every position we advertise. I do not have any figures on youth to hand in terms of jobs we have advertised; I can add part of that to the jobs we have advertised in this financial year. What do you regard —

[1.50 pm]

Hon SUE ELLERY: Sorry, it is not so much about youth. The policy objective, as I understood it, was about bringing in a younger workforce. Frankly, I am 53, and I think I am young.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I think so!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you!

It is not necessarily about youth; it is about if 45 went out, how many came in, and were they meeting the policy objective of being younger, less experienced staff? That is the essence of the question. Is the department meeting the policy objective?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I would assume at 53 you are a babe in the woods!

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thank you!

Hon PETER COLLIER: Having said that, though, you are correct in terms of the intent of the exercise. Can you offer anything specific?

Mr Smith: Perhaps if I can say, in terms of general policy, as Kath has outlined, we have applied the criteria, if you like, that have been assigned to us as they have been to other agencies. In terms of positions and rolling out, what we have tried to do—we have very much taken a case-by-case approach to this—the question that was asked at the start about the number of people who come into positions, we have looked, as Kath said, at positions when they have come up and people have left for a variety of reasons, so there is not necessarily a connection, obviously, between voluntary severances and the workforce renewal policy. The workforce renewal policy is an ongoing thing that is applied every time we go out to market, if you like, for a position. I know in the areas I am most familiar with we have looked at looking for someone with perhaps less experience and perhaps less qualification in that area as a way of bringing them into the organisation, so we have not sort of slavishly followed an age target or whatever, but we have deliberately looked at positions and said, “Can we bring someone in at a lower level and apply it that way?” Against that, if you looked at the statistics, which we probably could dig out if you wanted us to, I am not sure they would show that pattern because, as you say, we are all battling with getting older and an ageing population and an ageing workforce.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Thanks for that. I just was particularly interested in, I guess, whether anyone is actually tracking whether the policy objective is being met. If the policy objective was—in the kindest, gentlest way—to move on the ageing workforce and bring in a younger workforce, you meet two objectives there: you kind of refresh and renew, but you are also saving the government money. It is not necessarily a policy I endorse, but the policy objective is twofold—to get a cheaper workforce in, but also to renew and refresh. If nobody is actually tracking that, you are never going to know whether you have achieved that or not.

Mr Smith: I guess, in a sense, the ultimate tracking becomes: are we living within the financial parameters that have been assigned to us under that policy, and the answer to that is yes.

Hon SUE ELLERY: That is one objective. You might just be replacing a 63-year-old with a less experienced, less qualified 63-year-old, and then you have not met the policy objective of renewing and refreshing your workforce, but if you are able to take any component of that and go away and consider whether you can provide me with any information that shows me how you are meeting that objective, that would be useful to me.

[Supplementary Information No B5.]

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: My first question is on page 26 of the annual report. It relates to the WA government’s interests overseas and specifically its offices located overseas. Do we have any offices located in China?

Mr Kennedy: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Where are they located?

Mr Kennedy: I am not sure; it is administered by the Department of State Development, so they are not offices that come under us.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It is just that it is interesting that in the annual report itself there is no reference at all made to any offices in China, and given that they are one of our major trading partners, I would expect that reference.

Mr Kennedy: That information would be in the Department of State Development's annual report.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: It would be in State Development's annual report?

Hon PETER COLLIER: There is one there, though, because I just went to Beijing and we had two officers come from —

Hon SUE ELLERY: There are two offices—Shanghai and Beijing, maybe.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: That is why I ask, because I thought it was quite interesting that we talked about the North Asia office, the Middle East and African offices, but there was no mention of China.

Mr Kennedy: Those three offices are the only ones that the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is responsible for.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Okay, so there is a separation. These offices the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is responsible for, and the offices in China, the Department of State Development is responsible for?

Mr Smith: Yes, and Singapore, recently, so there is a range. Indonesia —

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Indonesia is State Development as well?

Mr Smith: Yes, and India.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Why that separation?

Mr Smith: I think it is historical. Those three offices were set up, the ones that we are responsible for, as DPC offices, and we have maintained the responsibility for the administration of them.

Mr Kennedy: I do not claim to be an expert, but the European office obviously dates from the time of the Agent General Act, which is an 1895 act, so it has been around since pre-state, if you like. Dubai was obviously set up by Premier Gallop and it was a personal initiative of his, as I understand it, which is why we ended up with it as opposed to State Development. I believe North Asia, similarly, was something that the Premier of the time set up; I do not want to be quoted, but I think it might have been Sir Charles Court's initiative to establish that and so it became the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's responsibility, but it is purely a historical thing.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: The reason I ask this is that in some of these countries, status is important and there are some nations that have issues with each other, and perhaps perceiving that one status is higher than others in the view of the Western Australian government by positioning one in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and one in the Department of State Development, is that likely to cause us any issues or do we just simply focus on the trade and not worry about the rest?

Mr Smith: I think the latter, and I certainly would not claim to be an international relations expert, but I suspect that difference in administration is imperceptible to those outside.

Mr Kennedy: I do not know that that interpretation has ever been raised with me; it could be the case.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I just asked because obviously we all want to advance the state's best interests as much as we can, wherever we can, including in the minister's recent visit.

Mr Smith: I think, as detailed in these pages, those offices, even though we are responsible for them, they perform very similar kinds of functions and perhaps a few more, as all the other Department of State Development–run offices as well, so the trade and development investment responsibilities of those offices are not diminished in any way because of their location with us.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: My perception issue was probably on the other end—those that are in State Development might be perceived as being considered by us to be of lower value than the ones in DPC, which clearly is not the case, but we do not want the outsiders to be thinking otherwise.

Mr Smith: As Rob said, I do not think we have ever had any message —

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: All right—good.

Mr Kennedy: I think that is probably somewhat nullified by the fact that the Premier is also the Minister for State Development, so when he travels overseas representing the state, he does not just stick to the DPC offices; he goes to the State Development ones too. In fact, all the ministers do.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Sure, and they are very receptive, all those offices, to all MPs and ministers and shadow ministers visiting.

I am going to move on to page 40 and the heading “Environmental Deregulation”, which is another issue that I have a fair amount of interest in. The first dot point under that heading reads —

- A new one stop shop environmental assessment bilateral with the Commonwealth was signed in October 2014 and is now operating successfully. A draft approvals bilateral agreement was released for public comment in December 2014 and is awaiting passage of amendments to Commonwealth legislation before being finalised.

Has that draft approvals bilateral agreement been finalised?

[2.00 pm]

Mr Smith: No, not as yet. It is still waiting for the commonwealth legislation changes. The commonwealth requires some amendments to its Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Are the assessment bilateral proceedings still operating?

Mr Smith: Yes. They do not have the same question mark, if you like, that has been raised in terms of their legal standing. I am pleased to say that the commonwealth and the state have been operating with that assessment bilateral since last year, and that is going very well.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: What KPIs have been established around those assessment bilaterals to work out that they are actually delivering a perceivable benefit to the users of the one-stop shop process? We all know that the one-stop shop process is likely to deliver gains, but how are we going to measure those gains?

Mr Smith: It has been a while since I have looked at this agreement, and I cannot remember whether it has specific KPIs in there. The sorts of things that are obviously driving the policy intent and the shared intent of both the commonwealth and the state in this were to ensure that proponents, both private and public, that are going through these processes can have a one-stop shop shared assessment process in undertaking that. That has been achieved. I think I could probably find the figures or the Department of Environment Regulation, which is responsible for this, could find the figures that show the number of assessments that have been undertaken under that bilateral shared approach. That is a good indication of the extent to which it is used. I am not aware that any proponent has chosen to go outside of that assessment bilateral.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Sure. It makes sense to do so. Any indication when the approvals bilateral is likely to be through the federal Parliament?

Mr Smith: That is a very good question.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Is it how long is a piece of string?

Mr Smith: Yes. We are obviously very keen to get it finalised. We have been out to public comment on the approvals bilateral, so in a sense, from our perspective, we are all ready to go. We are just waiting for the commonwealth. Sorry; can I just qualify that? I think there are some changes to state legislation that may be required to implement this as well when the commonwealth progress theirs.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Correct me if I am wrong, but my understanding is that that state legislation is effectively conditional on the passing of the commonwealth legislation so we cannot commence the process at the same time. Is that right?

Mr Smith: Yes; exactly.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Which makes it even more critical to get the feds to speed up the process. We cannot be doing something at the same time to be ready for it. It has become an issue, obviously, for users of the system, and that is why I raise it. There is a fair amount of, let us say, waiting with bated breath for this to happen.

Mr Smith: Yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: At least you are on there, but I understand it is not in your hands.

On the same page, deregulation generally. It talks about working with the Department of Finance on deregulation. The Harper review into competition policy made some recommendations around deregulation on a state basis. The review has been available for a while. The commonwealth response is only relatively fresh. Has the Department of the Premier and Cabinet done any work around those recommendations?

Mr Smith: In this area—I think this is a good thing—the Department of Finance, as our annual report describes, and the Minister for Finance have taken a lead role within government on the deregulation agenda. The recent Repeal Week that was held in Parliament was in a sense a demonstration of that agenda being progressed. We continue to work with Finance. They take more of the lead role than they have in previous times, but we work with them. On the Harper material, as I said, the commonwealth provided its response only recently. There will be a COAG meeting on Friday, I think, and I think the agenda will include a discussion on the commonwealth's desire in relation to progressing its response to the Harper recommendations and the extent to which that involves the states and territories will be a matter for discussion on Friday, I believe.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Is there any indication that the commonwealth is likely to have some figures on the table during that discussion? As recommended by Harper, the equivalent of the old competition payments was flagged. Is there any indication that they may return in some form?

Mr Smith: I believe that the federal Treasurer has made some public comments about his willingness to look at that kind of arrangement, and I expect that to be part of the discussion at COAG on Friday but at a very general level. I do not think—again, I may prove to be wrong—the commonwealth's deliberations are yet at the extent where they are going to say, "Here's a payment arrangement; here's an amount of dollars." But I think the intent will be there. They will be looking for ways in which they can incentivise the states to continue down a deregulation path.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: From the comments that Harper specifically made about Western Australia, are there any areas that the Western Australian Department of the Premier and Cabinet has decided ought to be quarantined from broader reform until there is, for want of a better term, money on the table from the commonwealth?

Mr Smith: From a department point of view, no, there is not anything we have done on that. There has not really been any detail or information available as to how the commonwealth might

approach it. I think if our advice is sought, that would probably be a wait and see what the commonwealth might propose and then consider the impacts that might have on state policy.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I am paraphrasing, but effectively said Harper said Western Australia ought to keep going on retail trading hours and come up, along with everyone else—we are not Robinson Crusoe—with a solution to on-demand transport, like every other state needs to. As I said, we are not Robinson Crusoe; we have not been highlighted. There is also the old chestnut of the Potato Marketing Corporation, which is unique to us. Harper effectively said that irrespective of any money on the table from the feds, Western Australia should go down this path anyway. So have we taken issue with that approach?

Mr Smith: Not that I am aware of. These matters have been discussed at Treasury meetings as well, and I obviously was not present for those discussions. But, again, Harper made a lot of comments across a lot of jurisdictions. I do not think anyone has sat down and gone through those line by line or item by item. I confess that I have not read his report fully either, but it has been cited to me that he made favourable comments in the area of competition policy and its application to human services delivery. It was a very broad-ranging report. There were lots of things that he considered and addressed. I think it is a case of the commonwealth and the states and territories, both bilaterally and collectively, working through with the commonwealth how those things might be progressed. At that point then I think it would be our role to provide some advice, in concert with the other departments, to government about how to progress.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Has the Murchison Radio-astronomy Observatory Indigenous Land Use Agreement trust deed been fully executed?

Mr Murphy: I am Adrian Murphy, acting executive director, Land, Approvals and Native Title Unit. I am not sure—I will check—but I expect it has been by now.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Could you also give us the date on which that happened, and could you also tell us the claim group to which the trust was transferred?

Mr Murphy: Yes, I can do that.

[Supplementary Information No B6.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I wanted to move on to parliamentary and electorate officer entitlements.

Hon SUE ELLERY: Something we all have a vested interest in at this end.

[2.10 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: There are some very significant concerns regarding it. From the members of Parliament who came in on March and May 2013, when did the last two move into their offices? I think the last time we met, there were still two who were outstanding.

Ms Andrews: Darren West.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I do not need to know the names.

Ms Andrews: Sorry, it was 12 November.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Was that 2015?

Ms Andrews: It was 2014, I think, when we were talking at the last upper house estimates. We have no-one for 2015, as I understand it. Yes, another member moved February 2015. I would say that is the last two.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Maybe you might like to take that on notice, because I do not think that is accurate.

Ms Andrews: When you say “the last time we met” —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The last time the estimates committee met with DPC, there were still two members who had not moved into permanent accommodation.

Ms Andrews: My understanding is that was Lewis, West and Love. Admittedly, I have to use the names because that makes sense to me.

Hon PETER COLLIER: That was in May; it was the estimates hearing. Mark Lewis was still waiting at that stage and that has not changed.

Ms Andrews: Correct, he still has not moved.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am not sure about Darren. You said Darren got in in November, so he cannot have been one of the two.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I did not say he was.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am not saying that you did.

Ms Andrews: There are two outstanding who are seeking offices, but they have yet to identify suitable offices, as I understand it, and yet to confirm those moves.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: There are still two outstanding and the reason they have not moved to permanent accommodation is because they have not identified where the locations are.

Ms Andrews: They have identified offices that have not been deemed suitable by the Department of Finance over a period of time, so they are still seeking suitable offices. One member has a temporary office in Dongara, as I understand it, and the other member is still seeking a suitable office as far as I know.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So the member is seeking a suitable office because?

Ms Andrews: He is still wanting to relocate to that location—obviously, from a metro location to a regional location.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: He was given temporary accommodation in 2013.

Ms Andrews: That is one of the offices, yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: He has been given temporary accommodation but he is still yet to identify a permanent office; is that right? He has not identified the office.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I know that as far as Mark is concerned that is true. He has been looking for something. He wants something that is suitable for him but also falls within the constraints of rent, size et cetera. All these things have to be taken into consideration. I had the same situation when I moved from Joondalup to Warwick. There were a pile there that you could have gone for, but they were simply unsuitable; they did not meet the criteria. It took a while.

The CHAIR: Why you would ever have left Joondalup, I do not know!

Hon PETER COLLIER: You were looking after it so well, Hon Ken Travers!

The CHAIR: I notice Hon Michael Mischin was quick to replace you, though.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, but he had a different office.

The CHAIR: Some would argue the quality rose, but some would not.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I would not, of course. I thought we needed some representation down there in Warwick.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: A lovely history, thank you.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is worth it. It is a good story.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It really helped with filling in that picture.

How many electorate offices have asbestos in them?

The CHAIR: Before we move off the issue of location, because it is now 18 months until the next election and one of the things you have always tried to do is have your leases aligned with the parliamentary terms, what now happens with those offices? If they found an office tomorrow, what would happen in terms of the management of it?

Ms Andrews: There is a process, of course. The first part of the process is they would identify an office. We would do some preliminary investigations through the Department of Finance, Building Management and Works, to see that they met all the building codes. We then require the approval of the Premier. There is a complicating factor now that we are so close to the election in March 2017. It is problematic to obtain a long-term lease for that period and represents a considerable risk to the department in terms of entertaining a four-year lease for possibly less than that.

The CHAIR: If that member does not get re-elected, the new member may not want the same location.

Ms Andrews: The department would probably recommend against a move at this late stage in the parliamentary term, but obviously it would be fully invested if that member was returned to office to seek a move to where they would want to go as early as we can in March 2017.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How many electorate offices have been identified as having asbestos in them?

Ms Andrews: I will give that to Angela. As I understand it, the Department of Finance is dealing with that.

Mrs Boland: The Department of Finance has the asbestos register and it is responsible for the leases for all member of Parliament offices. There are all different levels and codings that they have, so that information we would have to obtain from the Department of Finance.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It would be helpful if you could do that.

[Supplementary Information No B7.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So, when a member identifies asbestos in their office, what happens?

Mrs Boland: They would report it, in the first instance, on their parliamentary database to the entitlements and transport staff at the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and then we would identify that same problem to the Department of Finance, Building Management and Works, and I would imagine they would send an inspector there, because they have regional inspectors. To my knowledge, that has not happened. I have been director of state administration for 12 months and I have had no such report of any asbestos in offices, but there is an asbestos register that each office is responsible for. Every member should be aware of it and it should be located in their office.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: With signs in their office saying, “Don’t touch this; this is asbestos.”

Mrs Boland: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: I refer to the electorate office equipment upgrade. The first part I am interested in is IT, and the other part I am interested in is other equipment. How much is in the budget for the IT equipment upgrade and how much has been expended?

Ms Andrews: In the papers I have to hand for 2015–16, I have an amount of \$73 000; for 2014–15, I have an amount of \$124 000. I do not have figures to hand on how much has been expended. I would have to take that on notice.

[2.20 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So for IT upgrade for 2015–16, it was \$73 000.

Ms Andrews: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What happened to the \$1.949 million that was allocated for IT upgrade?

Ms Andrews: In new works, in my papers, it is not specifically listed for PEOs. I have a 2015–16 program for \$1.949 million.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So that is across the whole department, is it?

Ms Andrews: I would think so, yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So across the whole department in 2015–16, how much was allocated for —

Ms Andrews: The PEOs? As I understand it, I have got on my second page \$73 000. I can take that on notice to confirm that figure.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes, that would be helpful. What is that for?

Ms Andrews: In terms of the 2015–16 allocation? We have just completed a major refresh program in 2014–15; hence, the amount in 2015–16 is a much smaller amount. You may be aware that we have done the desktop–laptop upgrade during 2014–15, which we dedicate a lot of resources to. So 2015–16 is going to be more of a quiet year.

[Supplementary Information No B8.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Do you know what would be useful, and quicker probably, would be a breakdown of expenditure under the new works assets replacement program for parliamentary upgrades for 2014–15 and 2015–16 and anything proposed for 2016–17? That would probably be the quickest way.

Mr Smith: By “parliamentary upgrades”, do you mean electorate offices?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes.

Mr Smith: In aggregate?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: A breakdown.

Mr Smith: I am just looking at page 71 of the budget papers, which gives a breakdown of electorate office equipment upgrade for the 2015–16 program, 2016–17 program and 2018–19 program—\$73 000, \$100 000 —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So what is allocated in that program? Is that equipment upgrade for multifunction devices, for computers, for rubbish bins —

Mr Smith: I am not sure we are going to be able to provide that level of detail in terms of a budget allocation.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: You must have arrived at a figure somehow.

Mr Smith: Yes, I am sure we did.

Ms Andrews: As you know, we have MFDs and ICT network, and obviously we have got about 101 offices and we have got a couple of secondary offices. We obviously come up with a budget based on a certain amount per office, but in terms of expenditure, that is a different matter.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So there is a budget of a certain amount per office. What is that budget?

Ms Andrews: I am just saying that is probably how they arrived at that budget. There would not be a budget per office.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Sorry; did I mishear that? Did you just say that they probably came up with a figure based on budget?

Ms Andrews: They come up with a total figure; they have to come up with some estimation of cost per office.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So what is the cost per office?

Ms Andrews: I do not know; I would have to take that on notice.

Mrs Boland: Can I please add to that? The computers and MFD are on a rotational program, so every year the budget for the office is going to be different, because if they are coming up for a new MFD, there will be an extra \$15 000 allocated for that. So it does change depending on where we are up to in the cycle of the replacement.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: All right; that makes more sense than a single unit budget.

The CHAIR: Are we taking something on notice out of all of that?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes. We still want the breakdown.

[Supplementary Information No B9.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: While we are on multifunction devices, do members of Parliament have to pay for their own toner in those?

Mrs Boland: No. The entitlements and transport branch pays for the toner; however, colour copying, I think, is a different scenario.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Colour printing.

Mrs Boland: Colour printing, yes; sorry.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So members buy their own colour printers and then pay for their own toner, but for that equipment that is supplied by the department —

Mrs Boland: We pay for the toner.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: — you pay for the toner.

Mrs Boland: And the paper, I think.

The CHAIR: No, not for the paper.

Hon SUE ELLERY: But if you would like to, you could!

The CHAIR: I think I have got an invoice to send to you based on recent advice to pay for my toner!

Mrs Boland: I am sorry if I misled the committee; apologies.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: You nearly made some best friends there!

Mrs Boland: I try!

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What is the department's policy on the rollout of the NBN and connecting electorate offices with that?

Mrs Boland: I guess the NBN program is a national program and, from a Western Australian who has moved two suburbs trying to get decent internet—I moved closer to the city and we do not have it—it is not something that we have any control over. It is a federal government issue.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It is not about the rollout of the NBN. When the NBN comes close to an electorate office, does the department connect the electorate office to the NBN?

Mrs Boland: What we do is when a new electorate office or an existing one is identified, our IT people—that is one of the things we do when we are trying to actually get a new office as well is to see whether we can actually get IT to it, because, as you know, it can be quite tricky.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: You might want to take that on notice then.

Mrs Boland: I will, but if there is NBN available, I cannot imagine why we would not have it. It just makes no sense.

[Supplementary Information No B10.]

Hon RICK MAZZA: Just on the electorate offices and the NBN and internet in general, the internet in my office is extremely slow. I am not the only office, because every member I have spoken to has exactly the same problem. Every time we ring and complain about it, they ping the computer and say, “Yeah, it’s all good.” When are we looking at actually getting some decent internet speed?

Mrs Boland: Without being disrespectful, that is something we have to write to our federal members of Parliament about, because we have no control over the internet speed. It is only what is available in the area in which your office is. Some people in Perth have great internet speed; others do not. As I stated before, even at DPC, it is not terribly quick.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Are you sure it is not a problem with the internet provider, because whether you are in West Perth or other areas, we are all experiencing the same problem? Our research officers are pulling their hair out. It is one of those things I think we have to look at a bit further than maybe a national issue. I think it is an internet provider issue, quite frankly.

Hon SUE ELLERY: For example, my electorate office is in Willetton. If I followed your suggestion, I would be writing to Dennis Jensen, and I just do not think that that is going to get me a faster internet speed.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Or make any difference.

Mr Smith: I think the point that Ange is making is that we do not have great control over the provision of internet speed or services. We can look at those issues in relation to provider if there are matters that are raised with us, but there is a limit. We cannot—I suspect; I do not know—dramatically improve the service, which is commonwealth controlled, if you like.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I am sorry; I do not accept that, because there are businesses all over Perth that are running businesses with a reasonable internet speed. We are talking about an exceptionally slow internet service in our offices. It is to do with the provider; it is nothing to do with national. It is something we desperately have to look at. We are trying to operate as members of Parliament and we have real issues with our internet speed in our electorate offices. It is not something we can just gloss over; it is a problem and it needs to be addressed.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: And it is here, too. Just following on from Hon Rick Mazza, you have five MPs here—six including the minister—and we all have electorate offices in various parts of the city. Mine is in Leederville. In my premises, there are two other businesses—until recently, one of them was Water Corporation—and staff compare speeds and we are running at many multiples lower than the speeds that the other businesses in that office building are getting. So it has to be sheeted home to the service provider and the contract that DPC have with the service provider, because we are clearly getting such a ridiculous speed. In my office, I am lucky; I can switch off from the internet and go onto the 4G, and my 4G is significantly faster than what my staff have got to do the research for me. It is the same invariably. I have not met one member of Parliament who sings from the rooftops about the internet speed that they get in their office. Perhaps you can take it from here today that we have requested that you look into it. I know you cannot click your fingers and solve it, but can we look into it and see whether we can be provided with at least some sort of base-level adequacy that a normal business in Perth would expect in 2015, because we are not getting it?

[2.30 pm]

Hon PETER COLLIER: I think that is what you call a fair cop.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I presume to include you there, minister.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We will certainly undertake to look at that and see if there is any way to improve it.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: The cap on relief hours, how many officers exceeded the 150 hours in 2014 and where is that at for 2015? I am happy to take that on notice as well.

Ms Andrews: I think I have some figures here. Sixteen electorate offices requested additional relief for 2014–15. The most common reasons for requesting additional relief were to cover extended periods of absences due to maternity leave, long service leave and personal leave. Two offices have used the full entitlement of 150 relief hours for the year, and 11 offices have used greater than 100 hours of relief as at 30 June.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: That is financial year?

Ms Andrews: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Because it is administered on a calendar year, is it not?

Ms Andrews: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Can I have those figures for the calendar year 2014, on notice, please?

Ms Andrews: Do you want just the amount that have exceeded?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Just all that information you have given expressed as a calendar year as well, just because it is comparable then.

[Supplementary Information No B11.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Headcount in each electorate office—how many electorate offices have three or more staff and how many electorate offices have four or more staff?

Mrs Boland: I could get the exact figures on notice; however, everyone is allocated 2.0 FTE. Some members of Parliament might have six people making up that 2.0.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: There was an edict from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to reduce the headcount in electorate offices; I am just wondering how that has been met.

Ms Andrews: I do not know that there was an edict to say reduce headcount; I think there was a note to say attempts should be made to reduce the number of staff in each office in terms of the administrative cost of administering possibly eight or nine EOs, but I do not think the DG had a target in mind.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So there was no target in mind?

Ms Andrews: No.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How many officers have responded to that memo from the director general to reduce—there certainly was not a number; there was not eight or nine, it was four. So how many —

Ms Andrews: That is the worst-case scenario we have in an office, so —

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: So take that on notice, too?

Ms Andrews: Yes; thank you.

Mrs Boland: Is the question how many have reduced since the memo has been issued?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Yes.

Mrs Boland: Thank you.

[Supplementary Information No B12.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: How many site visits have been made to electorate offices?

Mrs Boland: Are you talking about occupational health and safety?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: No. It states at page 32 of the annual report that “site visits at electorate offices are regularly conducted”. How regularly are they conducted and how many were carried out?

Mrs Boland: I would have to take that on notice, to get the exact number.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Thanks.

[Supplementary Information No B13.]

Hon RICK MAZZA: What is the average fit-out cost of a state member of Parliament’s electorate office?

Mrs Boland: Once again it is very hard to give you an average figure because, depending on where that fit-out is and what needs to be done to it, it is chalk and cheese. If you have a heritage federation building in Kalgoorlie, it is going to cost a lot more than a new building like this in West Perth to refit. We go to tender—or BMW will go to tender because it is over \$20 000—and I guess what needs to be done with regard to lining a building or the total fit-out will come in under tender. I could not give you a figure. Some might cost \$50 000, some might cost \$300 000.

Hon RICK MAZZA: A ballpark would be okay—\$50 000 is interesting. I do not think there would be too many that get fitted out for \$50 000.

Mrs Boland: If we look at some figures that I have in front of me from the last election of some fit-outs, it looks as though it was roughly \$100 000 to fit out an office. It is an expensive exercise. I am proposing to put some new regulations into the parliamentary electorate officers’ handbook for the next election so that new members of Parliament would have to move into an existing office, because it cost over \$3 million last time for new members wanting to not go into where the previous member was; so it is something that I am very conscious of in my role, as a way of saving money, is not having these refit costs when I do not believe they are necessary.

Hon RICK MAZZA: With those fit-out costs, does that include the plant and equipment inside the office, such as the photocopiers and phones, and things?

Mrs Boland: It does not include that. The equipment is on top of that. That is purely the build cost; the build and then we will furnish it, usually with existing furniture if we can and then we will buy new if we have to.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I think you answered my second question, which is, do you put it out to tender; so it goes out to the open market for fit-out?

Mrs Boland: Yes; historically we do that because it is a fair and transparent process and every builder in Western Australia gets an opportunity to get the job.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Very good. With the office furniture, do you relocate that? If a new member of Parliament comes in who does not want the existing location, do you move that furniture to the other area?

Mrs Boland: Yes; we keep stock of furniture, and it only gets replaced if it is not reusable.

Hon RICK MAZZA: How do you assess that as being unserviceable furniture, such as the age of it?

Mrs Boland: If the member says that this furniture is getting too old and I looked at it and I thought it was getting too old, yes, of course you replace it. It is not just refreshed unless it needs to be, but if both parties are in agreement that it is old and distasteful, of course.

Hon RICK MAZZA: So it is a discretionary arrangement?

Mrs Boland: Of course; yes.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Can I interrupt. Would you come and visit 632 Newcastle Street, Leederville, because we have had a two-and-a-half year running battle about a credenza that does not have functioning doors and is no longer fit for service.

Mrs Boland: Why, Mr Katsambanis, am I just hearing about this now?

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: We usually go through the usual reporting-up channels.

Mrs Boland: Oh!

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I do not like to cause more fuss.

Mrs Boland: Yes, and I will, your honour; I will.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: There is no “your honour” here. We might be “honourable” by title; this is no court!

Mrs Boland: I would be more than happy to come down.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: You do not have to come down.

Mrs Boland: Well, that is unacceptable. I find that unacceptable, too.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I must say I do, too.

Mrs Boland: So I will speak to my staff, yes, because it is unacceptable. You should not have, as a member of Parliament, non-functioning equipment.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: And tables with great stains in the middle of them—furniture that I would describe as sort of 1970s high school furniture —

Mrs Boland: I find that unacceptable.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: — and we are in 2015.

Mrs Boland: I agree. I will talk to my staff, and will be more than happy to —

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Sorry to interrupt, Hon Rick Mazza.

Hon RICK MAZZA: I am finished with the office issue, thanks, Chair.

[2.40 pm]

The CHAIR: On page 54, I think it is, related to the executive council. It refers there to the Coastal Towns and Settlements Cabinet Subcommittee. Are you able to tell us what the location and date of each of those eight meetings was?

Hon PETER COLLIER: I cannot!

Mr Smith: We would be able to with notice. I think certainly most of them were in Perth.

The CHAIR: If you could give us the location and date of each meeting, and the cost of each meeting that was held outside the metropolitan area.

Mr Smith: So if it was held outside, what were the extra costs of that?

The CHAIR: Yes, of holding it outside. I assume that basically there is no additional cost to holding it in the metropolitan area, but if it is outside there would be accommodation costs, whether government aircraft was used or whether there were any commercial flights or hire cars—anything that was recorded as part of those meetings.

Hon PETER COLLIER: What about the Aboriginal Affairs Cabinet Subcommittee; would you like to know where they went?

The CHAIR: Not at this stage, minister.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I am just trying to be as cooperative as I can.

The CHAIR: No, I will not take the bait; I could say something.

In terms of Mr Baston advising the department of his conflict of interest, can you advise us of what the departmental advice was to Mr Baston in terms of the declaration of that conflict?

Mr Smith: I believe Mr Baston's or the minister's declaration to Parliament described the content of that, but the document itself is something that was provided as a cabinet document.

The CHAIR: What document are you referring to now?

Mr Smith: The advice to Mr Baston from the director general.

The CHAIR: Okay; so we are going to try to hide behind cabinet confidentiality. Why was it needed to keep the declaration confidential?

Mr Smith: Sorry; are you talking about Mr Baston's declaration?

The CHAIR: He declared a conflict and absented himself from cabinet matters. He notified of the conflict and absented himself from cabinet matters, but then there was a decision to take the fact that that was occurring and keep it confidential from the public. Why would it not have been made a public declaration that that conflict had been identified and that he was going to absent himself from all matters?

Mr Smith: I am not sure it is a matter I can comment on.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Look, from my perspective I do not know, to be perfectly honest. I do not know that there was a decision that was made; I think that is probably a question for the minister himself.

The CHAIR: But he has argued that it was based on advice from the director general of DPC.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Did he say that in the chamber?

The CHAIR: Yes; that one of the sources of advice he got was from the director general with respect to the confidentiality. I suspect you are to going to have to take it on notice then. I will add the other part of the question I am intrigued to know about. Why was the public Perth market authority act not removed from Mr Baston's list of activities and handed to another minister once the conflict was identified?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It was in the formal parliamentary sense. Are you talking about —

The CHAIR: No, the amendment act was given to another minister, but the responsibility for the Perth market authority act remained with Mr Baston, which is what led to him then ending up in a position of taking decisions that conflicted with the fact that he had declared a conflict.

Hon PETER COLLIER: I cannot answer that, to be honest, and I will have to take it on notice and get some advice.

Mr Kennedy: I think the department answered a parliamentary question from you last week.

The CHAIR: Yes, but the department "provided a response" is probably better terminology to use.

Mr Kennedy: The department provided a response, which was that, and my understanding is, the minister removed himself from the sale process by handing it to strategic projects in the Department of Treasury, and therefore the administration of the act was not related to the sale process.

The CHAIR: But as a result of being responsible for the act, he ended up engaging in at least three areas that we know of where there was a conflict. One occurred on the day he notified the director general of the conflict, so 2 July, when he issued a directive to the agency regarding the sale process. So, he had not absented himself from the sale process because he issued a directive regarding the sale process. Subsequently, on 17 July, he engaged again in issuing a further update, which, ironically, removed the Under Treasurer and changed it to his nominee—so, again, clearly involving himself in the sale process. Then two weeks ago, I think it is now, he appointed a new board when, in his own words, he said one of the roles of the new board was to manage the

transition to new owners—clearly a part of the sale process. That is the whole point. You argue that he absented himself, but he did not even though you claim he needed to. That is why I am trying to get to the bottom of this.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, I know. Again, I am not trying to be evasive, but I cannot answer the questions you asked.

The CHAIR: Ultimately, Mr Baston has to accept responsibility for his own political actions, but it would appear that he was poorly advised and let down by the system as well by the failure to remove him from that portfolio that left him in a position of continuing to have conflict, as well as, as far as I know, never identifying to people who were raising concerns with his office that he had the conflict. You can take all that on notice.

[Supplementary Information No B15.]

Mr Kennedy: Can I just clarify what we are taking on notice there?

The CHAIR: The issue is why was he not removed from the administration of the act, what the advice to him from the director general was in terms of the declaration and the keeping of confidentiality, and why he was advised to keep the declaration confidential.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: I am only using this as one example, but is any consideration being given to perhaps having a public conflicts register?

Mr Smith: I am not aware that that has been an active policy issue. I think they exist in some other jurisdictions.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes, which is why I ask.

Mr Smith: Yes, but I am not aware that it has been raised as a policy proposal or proposition here.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It might be now!

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes, especially if we are going to continue down the path of public processes, as we have with the Perth Market Authority being out for expressions of interest. A public conflicts register would at least inform all the participants in that process of potential or actual conflicts, so that everyone is of the understanding that they are on a level playing field.

The CHAIR: I agree with you, member. I think the secrecy is the issue that enhances the conflict. Sunshine is the thing that will clear the conflicts, if it is all out there for everyone to know and see.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: We do not just have to rely on sunshine; it could even happen on a cloudy day!

The CHAIR: Shining the light on it.

Hon PETER KATSAMBANIS: Yes. I mention it just as a suggestion.

The CHAIR: On page 48, under “Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Region”, you say there that one of your major achievements is —

- Completion of master planning for development footprints for each class of action (urban, industrial, rural-residential, infrastructure, basic raw materials and pine harvesting)

Are those master plans public?

Mr Smith: They will be as part of the process for SAPPR.

The CHAIR: You say that the SAPPR documents will be released for a three-month public consultation period by the end of 2015.

Mr Smith: Sorry; I am having trouble finding the words for that.

The CHAIR: Those words are just above “Major achievements”.

Mr Smith: Sorry, yes; okay.

The CHAIR: Are we still on track to see those documents released for public consultation?

[2.50 pm]

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Basically, some time in the next 20 days or so.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes.

The CHAIR: When they are released, will that include the full master planning?

Mr Smith: Yes—master planning, which includes the WAPC Perth and Peel@3.5million draft plan planning framework, which has been out for public comment already, obviously. It is in the process of being assessed against the comments that have been received and finalised.

The CHAIR: Also on that page in the second paragraph, it states —

These class approvals will cover urban, industrial, rural residential and infrastructure development, basic raw materials extraction as well as harvesting of the pine plantations at Pinjar, Yanchep and Gnangara.

Is there currently not environmental approval to clear those pines then? Is that what that is suggesting?

Mr Smith: Again, I probably would not want to provide expert advice on this. But my understanding is there is still harvesting of those pine plantations. The clearance under the commonwealth environmental legislation had not been assessed.

The CHAIR: How are we clearing it if we have not had it assessed yet under the commonwealth legislation?

Mr Smith: I will need to provide you with accurate advice.

The CHAIR: Is the person that handles the SAP not here today?

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIR: I would have thought that was a pretty fundamental part of the SAP process.

Mr Smith: They are processes that are still underway; there is no conclusion of them. We are trying to include within the SAPPR, the strategic assessment, both future planning and urban, industrial, rural infrastructure, as well as basic raw materials and the continued harvesting of those pine plantations in a strategic assessment process under the commonwealth legislation.

The CHAIR: I understand all the issues around the future acts, but—I was not aware—that is the first time I have seen anything that suggests that we do not currently have approval for the clearing of those pines in those locations, but that suggests that we do not. If you can take it on notice.

What are the current approvals and how are we operating if we do not have approvals for that?

[*Supplementary Information No B16.*]

The CHAIR: It says —

A number of long term land use conflicts have been resolved through undertaking SAPPR in conjunction with the WAPC sub-regional structure planning process

What are those long-term land-use conflicts that have been resolved?

Mr Smith: Again, probably could be a little bit more careful with our tense there, but those things are in the process of being resolved through the SAPPR. There are some land developments; east Keralup is one that comes to mind.

The CHAIR: That is no longer going to be developed for housing. Is that correct?

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIR: What happens to that land now?

Mr Smith: It will be available for alternative uses—some of which may be environment; some of which may be other uses. I have not got all the detail in front of me on that SAPPR, but it will be as part of the public consultation process.

The CHAIR: My recollection is that the east Keralup land is owned by the Department of Housing. In fact, I think they have spent a bit of money on work on it. Will they be compensated for that land now? Will someone actually purchase that off them? What happens to that now?

Mr Smith: I think alternative arrangements and alternative allocations will be found for them that better suit their needs and demand going forward, which is the whole intent of the nature of the strategic assessment process. There were some constraints on that land, as you may be aware, to start with. To the extent to which it might have fulfilled Housing's needs was a little uncertain in any case. The SAPPR process and the consultations that have occurred between agencies as part of that SAPPR process, which has gone on now for two years, have helped provide perhaps a better solution going forward for Housing and their future needs than that land.

The CHAIR: Are you saying that government land to an equivalent amount will be given to the Department of Housing to compensate them for that east Keralup land?

Mr Smith: Yes. There are probably some words—I would prefer to put it another way.

The CHAIR: Put it another way to me.

Mr Smith: The idea of compensation: there is not a monetary value; compensation usually has a monetary implication. I do not think a monetary assessment has been made about that land. It is more: what are Housing's needs? As I said, they have changed and the east Keralup land was not, in a sense, necessarily ready to go or fit for purpose and needed lot of consideration.

The CHAIR: I am not arguing about the decision. I can understand the amount of landfill that would need to have been brought in, the Ross River virus issues, the environmental flows into the Peel–Harvey estuary. I understand all of that.

Mr Smith: I am just being cautious if you are going to say to me, “Where can I point to land of equivalent value that is going to be provided to Housing?”

The CHAIR: No. We have already had that debate with respect to new schools in the inner urban areas of Perth this morning with the minister's other department today. With this one, I am more interested in, obviously, housing and land available for future housing needs is a really important issue. As part of that strategic assessment, that land is being removed from the Department of Housing being able to use it for housing.

Mr Smith: I will describe it this way: alternative sites or land have been identified which would meet Housing's future needs.

The CHAIR: That has been identified. Will that be released as part of that three-month consultation as to where that land is?

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIR: Can you assure me that none of it is on the Gnangara mound?

Mr Smith: I will need to take that on notice. With language like what you mean by “the mound” and what other people mean by “the mound”, I have learnt through bitter experience.

The CHAIR: I have a very clear definition; it is a definition that was given as part of the glums after the 1984 select committee report that said we need to identify the boundaries based on science and protect it for evermore. They are the boundaries I rely on when I refer to the Gnangara mound.

Mr Smith: Yes, and I am bowing to your experience.

[Supplementary Information No B17.]

The CHAIR: We will see whether you get the answers to us before you release it publicly or whether we get them after.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: This is about employees with disability. In 2014–15, there were 459 FTEs across the department. How many of those identified as having a disability?

Ms Andrews: I do not think I have got those.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Do you want to take that on notice?

Ms Andrews: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Further to that: that is in addition, so that number should be in addition to the six employees working in the supported work team.

Ms Andrews: Yes.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Could I have that for 2013–14 and 2014–15, please?

[Supplementary Information No B18.]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Who is responsible for the implementation of the substantive equality under the Equal Opportunity Act? Who is responsible for that throughout the department?

Ms Andrews: The manager HR as part of our equal opportunity policy, I suppose, and the director general.

[3.00 pm]

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Is the department participating in the substantive equality framework group from the Equal Opportunity Commission?

Ms Andrews: Not as I understand it. We have tried to integrate the substantive equality statement in our equal opportunity policy and tried to mainstream those sorts of issues into our equal opportunity policy. That is as I understand it.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: Do you not have a substantive equality policy offer position?

Ms Andrews: No; we are a small agency with limited, I suppose, public front contact. We have endeavoured to make it part of how we do business, in terms of our equal opportunity policy.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: What is the next step in developing a new disability access and inclusion plan?

Ms Andrews: A DAIP plan?

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: A disability and access and inclusion plan, yes.

Ms Andrews: I thought the one we had was current.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: It is until June 2016, but it is about to expire in six months, so what is the process that you are going to undertake to evaluate that one and develop a new one?

Ms Andrews: We would review it at that time, probably closer to the date.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: When it expires?

Ms Andrews: Probably a month or so before, as I understand it.

Mr Smith: I am just looking at our annual report, the statement of last time; I expect a similar process would occur. We seek the views of existing employees with a disability and look to engage them in developing a plan for the next period.

Hon ALANNA CLOHESY: A month out before it expires you will start doing it?

Mr Smith: A suitable period before it expires to allow us to develop the plan. It makes sense.

The CHAIR: In your report you make reference to Infrastructure Australia. What is your exact role in providing advice for infrastructure, with regards to Infrastructure Australia submissions?

Mr Smith: Sorry, with respect to?

The CHAIR: In your report you say that you are responsible for Infrastructure Australia submissions from WA. I am just trying to get a clearer picture of exactly what that role is.

Mr Smith: We provide advice and coordinate with other agencies in dealing with Infrastructure Australia. I am not sure exactly what you mean by submissions.

The CHAIR: It says you coordinated state input to Infrastructure Australia, so I am trying to understand what that actually means.

Mr Smith: In the past 12 months, for example, I think Infrastructure Australia have done a number of things as requested by the federal government, obviously, who are responsible for Infrastructure Australia. They have conducted an audit of national infrastructure and they produced that audit in June this year. We were involved in meetings with Infrastructure Australia. They came to Perth a couple of times in the preparation of that audit. They met with a range of state agencies. We coordinated or facilitated that discussion. We provided response to information that they sought. They had a number of studies, which I think are now public, underway about their methodology for assessing the state of national infrastructure, and agencies through us provided a WA perspective on that.

The CHAIR: Was Perth Freight Link a recommendation of WA to the commonwealth, or was it a recommendation of the commonwealth to WA? I mean the total Perth Freight Link, not Roe 8 or the High Street and Stirling Highway intersection, but the Perth Freight Link in totality. Was that something that WA put in a request for, or was it something that the commonwealth recommended to WA that we should do?

Mr Smith: Again, you would probably get a more accurate answer asking that question of the Department of Transport. Infrastructure Australia is not a funding body, per se, so there were no submissions made by the state for funding—do not go to Infrastructure Australia. The commonwealth requirement, I think, is something like any commonwealth contribution that is in excess of \$100 million requires an Infrastructure Australia assessment. I think the process, the Department of Transport would be able to clarify this, was we made a request to commonwealth for funding. Commonwealth referred that funding request to the IA. IA asked us for things like the material behind that.

The CHAIR: I think that is right. I have seen the submissions for various projects: airport rail lines, MAX light rail lines, the extension of the railway line to Yanchep, the upgrade of Stirling Highway and High Street intersection. I do not think I have seen one for Roe 8 but I am sure one probably was put in. That is why I am trying to understand: if you are the coordinating agency, did we pull together as a state and put in a request for what is now known as the Perth Freight Link, in its totality from, basically, Canning Highway through to the current end of Roe Highway, as a complete project? My sense is that it was done at a government to government level, not Main Roads to Main Roads. I am trying to work out—you are the coordinating agency so I actually think you are the appropriate agency to tell me—whether we made a submission to the commonwealth saying, “Please fund this project”, or did they say to us, “This is what we want to fund; here is the money for it”?

Mr Smith: I am not sure it is either of those. Perhaps the point I am trying to make is that we are the coordinating agency for dealing with Infrastructure Australia. The submissions, if you like, for funding to the commonwealth are not made to Infrastructure Australia. Once the commonwealth receives a submission, whether it is from us or anybody else, says they want Infrastructure Australia to look at.

The CHAIR: To answer my point, it is not Main Roads to Infrastructure Australia —

Mr Smith: No.

The CHAIR: It is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in WA on behalf of the WA government to the commonwealth government?

Mr Smith: No; sorry. I think it is more the Department of Transport and the Minister for Transport to his commonwealth counterpart about funding for roads. That gets sent off by the commonwealth to IA, they ask IA to look at it and IA comes and talks to us as the coordinating agency. The distinction I am making there is, we are the coordinating agency dealing with Infrastructure Australia, not the submission of funding request.

The CHAIR: No wonder no-one can work out who decided what on the Perth Freight Link when it is so complex! In your coordinating role —

Mr Smith: Yes; with Infrastructure Australia.

The CHAIR: —the submissions for transport projects did not come through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet?

Mr Smith: The submissions for funding for the commonwealth for transport funding did not come through our department.

The CHAIR: Right. Did any submissions to the commonwealth for infrastructure funding come through your agency as the coordinating role? In the past there was the Point Torment proposal; there was a list of priorities raised by your agency.

Mr Smith: Yes, and Infrastructure Australia have changed their methodology and approach and their legislation has been changed as well. I think, originally—I am looking at my notes; I do not have it—there was previously a list which they had, I think it was called the “Infrastructure Priority List”, which was last updated in December 2013. It had a range of WA projects on that list.

The CHAIR: In the past there has been Housing funding.

Mr Smith: There were about eight, from memory.

The CHAIR: Who now does that? Whose job is it to express to the commonwealth what the WA priorities are, because Transport will probably have a list as long as your arm that they can send off tomorrow. Surely, there must be somebody saying to the commonwealth, “We would like three Transport, one Housing and a State Development project funded.”

[3.10 pm]

Mr Smith: That question has not been asked of us by the commonwealth. I know that is not an entire defence, but nobody from the commonwealth is saying, “Send us in your infrastructure funding bids”, across that —

The CHAIR: Are we not expressing to the commonwealth any view about what our priorities are? Is it up to individual line agencies to put in submissions to their commonwealth counterparts for funding, and no-one coordinates, from a WA perspective, what our priority should be?

Mr Smith: Because, as far as I am aware, there is no central commonwealth assessment or body for seeking those. Our agencies continue, as they have in the past, to put in priorities that the Premier has expressed views, publicly I think, about what he thinks the priorities are. There is no commonwealth process—we find this quite frustrating—to take all of those infrastructure bids and assess them in any —

The CHAIR: Do we have a state process for prioritising the bids to the commonwealth?

Mr Smith: Well, into what process? Into that individual —

The CHAIR: I would have thought, because if you have all the agencies sending off bids and we are not coordinating at a state level —

Mr Smith: I have probably created the wrong —

The CHAIR: — you run the risk of the commonwealth saying, “We’ll fund Perth Freight Link”, when, in fact, what we really wanted them to do was fund the Fremantle Port. So they will fund Main Roads’ proposal for Perth Freight Link when, in fact, what we really wanted them to do was fund state development and Fremantle Ports proposal for an outer harbour. If we have not coordinated that at state level, they will come back and say, “But your Main Roads asked for money for Perth Freight Link, Roe 8”, or whatever they ask for and, “We thought that was a better project and no-one told us that your priority was X.”

Mr Smith: At the moment, at least, there has been no indication provided by the commonwealth about the processes by which funding decisions will be made. There is no process for us to submit, whether individual agencies or combined.

The CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Smith: The role that we have is with Infrastructure Australia, which has produced the audit. They are in the process of producing an infrastructure plan, which, I think, will look at the high level; it will not be project specific. It will be based on the information that we and other jurisdictions have provided to them during that process of preparation.

The CHAIR: When you say that it will not be project based but it will be high level, what do you mean by that?

Mr Smith: Obviously, I do not know what they will come out with. I think they are expecting to have this public within the next month. I think the public commitment by the commonwealth minister was to have it by the end of 2015. He may not make that date.

The CHAIR: What are we asking for in that process for WA?

Mr Smith: We have identified high-level projects, road maintenance initiatives, for example, rather than specific projects. There is no list.

The CHAIR: So, road maintenance. Is that the only thing that we are asking for? Is there nothing else at the high level to give an idea of where we see the priorities for infrastructure expenditure in WA, such as job creation? Are we putting forward a view, from a WA perspective, where money can be best spent to get jobs created or anything like that? Surely that is what you would be looking at if you are looking at a high level, rather than —

Mr Smith: Yes. I am not sure —

The CHAIR: Spending money on investment in infrastructure in the science area, rather than roads or road maintenance? I am just trying to work out what you mean when you say it is about a high level and we have provided advice at a high level.

Mr Smith: What I am trying to say is that we have not identified specific projects and I do not think IA are identifying that.

The CHAIR: You say you are doing it at a high level but what does that mean? What are we saying is at a high level if it is not project specific?

Mr Smith: It is mainly in the transport area, if that is your specific interest?

The CHAIR: No, I am interested across the board.

Mr Smith: The information that we have provided to Infrastructure Australia, through the audit, has covered all the agencies that have been involved in the process—water infrastructure and housing, as you mentioned earlier.

The CHAIR: Again, in your annual report on page 43, it talks about —

Identified opportunities for greater efficiency in infrastructure spending and land use through an emphasis on sharing and colocation of future infrastructure corridors:

Can you explain to me what that actually means?

Mr Smith: Sorry.

The CHAIR: On page 43 at the very bottom; the last bit before you get the indented dot point.

Hon PETER COLLIER: It is just a different page number.

The CHAIR: Sorry. It is under “Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Region” then it goes on to “Major achievements”. Can I say, if you made your PDF version online searchable, it would make life a lot easier. Most agencies do. I do not know if that is a deliberate issue.

Hon PETER COLLIER: We have got it. Is “Completion of master planning” what you meant?

The CHAIR: At the very last dot point it reads —

Identified opportunities for greater efficiency in infrastructure spending and land use through an emphasis on sharing and colocation of future infrastructure corridors:

Mr Smith: Yes. As part of the SAPPR master planning process, one of the things that they looked at in infrastructure was whether or not the provision of land corridors for infrastructure could be done in a more efficient fashion than was currently done. As I said earlier, I think one of the good things that has come out of the SAPPR process, even to date, is it has provided a vehicle for agencies to talk to each other about these sorts of issues that did not exist before. The SAPPR plans, when they are released, will—I am not saying it has been done to any perfect degree, but it has been done more than it has ever been done before—look at whether or not there is scope for co-location of infrastructure corridors, which would have obvious benefits in terms of cost and efficiency of operation. There are some constraints to that, obviously.

The CHAIR: Does that mean that we can expect, in the documents that are released later this month, those corridors to be identified?

Mr Smith: They will be —

The CHAIR: Is it down to that level or is it just at that high level of the conceptual?

Mr Smith: Higher level. There is not lines on maps to say, “Here is a particular transmission line”, or a waterline, or whatever, but it will indicate areas where those facilities are expected to be utilised. That is part of —

The CHAIR: So, through the east Wanneroo area, we will run a corridor that could have road, rail, power, water, sewage —

Mr Smith: That is the kind of ideal, if you like, but there are obviously technical constraints that might limit the ability to do that.

The CHAIR: Is that the full extent of it—power, gas, water, road, rail—or is there other infrastructure that I have missed that will be in those corridors? Are we working with the commonwealth for telecommunications?

Mr Smith: Yes, I think we were discussing with the commonwealth agencies.

The CHAIR: The second sub dot point, which goes over the next page on my copy—it may not on yours—says —

The groundwork for an across-Government infrastructure policy is being undertaken to support implementation of colocation and sharing ...

When will that across-government infrastructure policy be completed?

Mr Smith: It probably is still a work in progress. It will not be part of the SAPPR documents as such, but, in a sense, what we are trying to do there is capture the work that has happened among agencies in being able to identify, into the future, how shared corridors might work in particular areas. It is kind of a by-product, I guess.

The CHAIR: When will we expect it to be completed?

Mr Smith: I am not sure I want to make a commitment at this point. Our focus has been on getting the SAPPR documents ready.

The CHAIR: I will make it B19 to provide that as a supplementary as to the estimated date of completion of that work?

[Supplementary Information No B19.]

Mr Smith: Yes.

The CHAIR: Finally, it states —

Extensive engagement with the key stakeholders, including the development industry, local government, environmental groups and the basic raw materials industry. To date, there have been 51 stakeholder briefings and meetings

Are you able to provide us with a copy of any documentation that was provided to those briefings and meetings, and any minutes of those briefings and meetings? I assume that minutes were taken?

[3.20 pm]

Mr Smith: There were reports prepared. I do not know that you would describe those as formal minutes or not. I will just see whether we have some notes on this.

The CHAIR: Minutes or any records of the meeting and briefings.

Hon PETER COLLIER: Yes, we can provide that.

[Supplementary Information No B20.]

The CHAIR: My final question is related to strategic asset plans. Has the department provided advice to agencies that they should not provide them to this committee?

Mr Smith: Not that I am aware.

The CHAIR: So, no-one is aware of that, because we were advised by Police that it was an edict from DPC that they should not provide their strategic asset management plan to this committee?

Hon PETER COLLIER: It did not come to Education. That was not an edict, as far as I am concerned, from DPC.

The CHAIR: But you were advised that we would be asking questions around strategic asset plans?

Mr Smith: Yes, I was, and that was helpful.

The CHAIR: Did you make inquiries as to whether or not any instructions had been issued?

Mr Smith: Yes, and there are no instructions provided. The sequence of my interpretation of that discussion, and obviously I was not there, was the committee asked Police, as it has other agencies, I believe, for copies of those strategic asset plans.

The CHAIR: It is just a requirement for their internal planning purposes, yes.

Mr Smith: That is right. That is a process which is part of their internal processes, but also to assist in Treasury's development of budget deliberations, and that is a cabinet process, obviously, so the agencies treat those documents as part of their budget submissions, which are cabinet-in-confidence material.

The CHAIR: They are more than just a document as part of the budget submission, though. They may inform budget submissions but they do not go to cabinet as part of a submission, though, do they?

Mr Smith: But, like lots of material that is prepared for budget processes, they inform the context of that.

The CHAIR: And the FOI commissioner has been pretty clear about what is a cabinet document and relates to cabinet deliberations and what are documents that inform cabinet deliberations. Documents that inform cabinet deliberations are FOI-able. They are not cabinet-in-confidence.

Mr Smith: I would probably, like you, be keen to know what the FOI commissioner's view was on these documents.

The CHAIR: I do not think a parliamentary committee should be required to rely on the FOI commissioner to make a determination.

Mr Smith: My understanding of the discussion yesterday and your request was that those documents were described to you, rightly or wrongly, as cabinet-in-confidence. From my understanding, they are cabinet-in-confidence.

The CHAIR: No. I think a claim is being made, and what I am trying to establish is whether, for instance, did they form part of a submission to cabinet? You could argue that everything that you do as an agency in some ways can ultimately inform a cabinet submission, and on that basis nothing would ever be released to a parliamentary committee or FOI or anything else, if you took that interpretation. These are documents for the purposes of agencies managing their strategic asset plans, and for a parliamentary committee that is required to oversight the financial administration of the state, it is pretty crucial for us to have an understanding of what the 10-year outlook is. That goes broader than a cabinet—we are not asking for the cabinet submissions. We are asking for the documents that agencies use as their working documents to inform them about what their long-term needs are.

Mr Smith: I have not been asked and I am not able to make a judgement as to whether or not those documents are cabinet-in-confidence. Only agencies know what it is that they are —

The CHAIR: It is funny. They are saying to us that they were told by DPC that they were not to release it, and they are saying it was DPC's decision to call it a cabinet document.

Mr Smith: That is why I was seeking to clarify. My understanding of what was said yesterday was there were two elements to it. One was are these documents cabinet-in-confidence; and two was, if they are, the advice of DPC is it is not within the authority of public servants to release that cabinet-in-confidence information.

The CHAIR: Yes, that is right, but a cabinet-in-confidence document under the FOI act—unless you are telling me you have a different definition of it—would be only those documents that actually go to cabinet as part of those submissions.

Mr Smith: I do not have the documents so I am not able to make a judgement about that. In terms of a DPC edict, we have not and we cannot.

The CHAIR: There is clearly some misunderstanding between agencies, but if you could give us a full record from everybody about the conversations, or if there was any written documentation regarding the correspondence between yourself and any agencies about providing strategic asset plans to this committee, if you could provide those to us.

Mr Smith: I am pretty confident there was no such correspondence, but we can check that.

The CHAIR: And whether you can confirm for us from a DPC perspective whether or not any of the strategic asset plans did form part of a cabinet submission that went to cabinet, or a subcommittee of cabinet.

[Supplementary Information No B21.]

The CHAIR: Are there any other questions from anyone?

Hon RICK MAZZA: I have one, Chair. Page 47, the fourth dot point on the left-hand side, recreational fishing initiatives, including the purchase of two commercial gillnet licences in Roebuck Bay. I think that was a couple of years ago. Has there been any feedback as to whether

there has been an effect on the fishery from the purchase of those licences? Would the department receive information as to whether there has been research as to the effect on the fishery from the buyback of those two licences?

Mr Smith: Again, I do not have that with me but we can find out if that information is available.

Hon RICK MAZZA: That would be good. That paragraph goes on to talk about stocking of Lake Kununurra with barramundi and promotion of a nature and culture-based tourism program. I think about \$700 000 from memory has been spent on restocking barramundi in Lake Kununurra, which is a good initiative. There was a pre-election promise regarding forming an inland fishing hub at Wellington Dam. Has any work been done around that?

Mr Smith: Not that I am aware of, and obviously our interest and involvement is the Kimberley science and conservation strategy.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Okay. So there has not been anything in the south west for empowerment fishing?

Mr Smith: I am just unable to answer that. That is not our area of responsibility. The Department of Fisheries I presume would know and may be able to answer that.

Hon RICK MAZZA: But the actual decision as to whether they would investigate setting up an inland fishing hub in Wellington Dam surely would come from cabinet?

Mr Smith: It may have and I cannot recall, or it may be something that is coming. But it is not something that we as a department are aware of.

Hon RICK MAZZA: On page 94, in your “Notes to Financial Statements”, item 12, “user charges and fees”, there is a line item “Overseas offices”. What would that be in relation to?

Mr Smith: We will take that on notice.

[Supplementary Information No B22.]

The CHAIR: That will include both this question and the previous question on gillnet licences.

Unless anyone else has anything, I will finish off with a quick one. What is the annual cost of security at Hale House on a financial year basis?

[3.30 pm]

Ms Andrews: I will just try to find that; I do have it, or very close to it, anyway.

Mr Smith: I am not sure that we have an annual cost.

The CHAIR: Maybe you could take that on notice, and if you could also give me a comparison between the cost of security at Hale House compared with what it used to cost you at Governor Stirling Tower for security.

Ms Andrews: I do not know if we can do that.

Mr Smith: I am not sure we will be able to do the latter part.

The CHAIR: Why is that?

Ms Andrews: The Premier was obviously on the twenty-fourth floor of GST, so —

The CHAIR: So the cost of security is an additional cost of that location that was not there at Governor Stirling Tower—is that it?

Mr Smith: I guess so. I suppose I would also probably say that obviously the environment has changed considerably as well. I am just concerned about not being able to make an apples-to-apples comparison.

The CHAIR: Well, I am happy for you to tell us what the cost was at Governor Stirling Tower, what the cost is at Hale House, and if you want to provide any additional information about why it is an orange and not an apple, I am happy to have that.

Mrs Boland: The security at Hale House is part of the whole security of the Dumas House complex; it is all managed in one. The figure we would be able to provide you would be for the contract we have for the precinct, not individually.

The CHAIR: Maybe then also comparing it to what the contract was when it was Dumas House alone.

[Supplementary Information No B23.]

The CHAIR: Are there any non-government organisations proposing to hold Christmas parties at Hale House this year?

Hon PETER COLLIER: Not that I am aware of.

The CHAIR: Maybe if you could provide on notice a list of all non-government functions that have been held at Hale House since 17 September—since the answer to that question. Give us an update on that.

[Supplementary Information No B24.]

The CHAIR: The committee will email the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted on the transcript to you in the next couple of days. The corrected transcript will be requested to be returned within five working days of receipt. I draw your attention to the fact that it used to be 10, so with respect to the transcripts we have shortened that period, but the good news is that the answers to questions taken on notice will be requested by 11 January, which is more than the usual 10 days because of the Christmas–new year period. Any additional questions the committee has for you will be forwarded by the minister next week and will also be requested by 11 January. 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. In the event that you are unable to meet the due date, the committee expects that those questions that can be answered will be provided by the due date. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to email them to the committee staff by midday on Monday, 14 December. On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today.

Hearing concluded at 3.33 pm
