

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

**2020–21 BUDGET ESTIMATES AND
2019–20 ANNUAL REPORTS**



**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020**

**SESSION THREE
DEPARTMENT OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION**

Members
Hon Alanna Clohesy (Chair)
Hon Tjorn Sibma (Deputy Chair)
Hon Diane Evers
Hon Aaron Stonehouse
Hon Colin Tincknell

Hearing commenced at 2.00 pm

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON

Minister for Environment, examined:

Mr MIKE ROWE

Director General, examined:

Ms LISA BYRNE

Chief Finance Officer, examined:

Ms KELLY FAULKNER

Executive Director, Regulatory Services, examined:

Dr NYGARIE GOYAL

Executive Director, Science and Planning, examined:

Mr ANTHONY SUTTON

Executive Director, EPA Services, examined:

Mr PATRICK SEARES

Executive Director, Strategy and Engagement, examined:

Mr PAUL STEWART

Acting Executive Director, Corporate Services, examined:

Ms SARAH McEVOY

Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Programs, examined:

Mr STUART COWIE

Executive Director, Compliance and Enforcement, examined:

Mr DARREN FORSTER

Principal Policy Adviser, Minister for Environment, examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations, I welcome you to today's hearing. I will now swear in the witnesses. Could the witnesses please state whether they have read, understood and signed a document titled "Information for Witnesses"?

The WITNESSES: Yes.

The CHAIR: 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. It is also being broadcast live on the Parliament's website. The hearing is being held in public, although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private. 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.

Members, before asking your question, I ask that you identify whether it relates to the budget papers or annual report and provide the relevant page number.

Minister, do you have a brief opening statement?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not, thank you.

The CHAIR: Members, you have approximately 13 minutes each, with the lead speaker having more time, as per usual. We start with Hon Tjorn Sibma.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Thank you very much, Chair. First of all, minister, I want to compliment you, your personal staff and your departmental staff for the passage of the EPA bills. I think that was actually a significant achievement in environmental reform. The assistance provided to me as shadow minister was excellent, and I am sure that Hon Dr Steve Thomas would echo the sentiments.

I have a series of areas of focus that I might just highlight up-front to make this process a little easier. I am interested in waste; climate change, and particularly the state government's carbon footprint; issues to do with single-use plastics; and ongoing approvals reform. I might begin in the waste domain. I refer to both the reference to waste at paragraph 4 on page 650 of the budget papers and, indeed, to the relevant section, outcome 4 in the annual report, which is on page 61 and onwards.

I am keen to understand actually how we are progressing with waste avoidance. I attempted to ask this via our usual process and you were not able to answer me at that time because it was a complicated question. But I would like to know whether it is possible to identify by category of waste what volume of waste has been diverted from landfill in Western Australia on an annual basis from, say, 2016–17 to the present day?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thanks very much. Indeed, can I thank you for your support in helping us to get the legislation passed through the Parliament as well, and indeed the support and assistance from Hon Dr Steve Thomas was most welcome, too.

In relation to that question, in 2016–17, in terms of construction and demolition waste, 1 092 500 tonnes were diverted; for metals in that same year, 567 000 tonnes; for organics, 468 000 tonnes; for paper and cardboard, 211 100 tonnes; for glass, 55 700 tonnes; for rubber, 17 800 tonnes; for plastic, 13 100 tonnes; and for textiles, 2 200 tonnes. That is a total of 2 427 400 tonnes. In terms of 2017–18, for construction and demolition waste, 994 800 tonnes; metals, 670 800 tonnes; organics, 407 400 tonnes; paper and cardboard, 232 100 tonnes; for glass, 45 800 tonnes; for rubber, 18 100 tonnes; for plastics, 17 100 tonnes; and for textiles, 5 800 tonnes, for a total of 2 391 900 tonnes. In terms of 2018–19, in relation to waste diverted, for C&D waste, 1 380 100 tonnes; for metals, 657 200 tonnes; for organics, 418 300 tonnes; for paper and cardboard, 238 000 tonnes; for glass, 55 800 tonnes; for rubber, 33 500 tonnes; for plastic, 20 000 tonnes; and for textiles, 3 000 tonnes, for a total of 2 806 400 tonnes. Data for 2019–20 is not yet available. That was the three—2016–17, 2017–18 and 2018–19.

[2.10 pm]

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I appreciate that comprehensive response. Could I ask a more general question as to whether or not you as minister, or the department, believe—first of all, a more fundamental question. I presume that that dataset is dependent upon self-reporting. What I am curious to know is what audit process the department undertakes to validate those reports? I am actually concerned at a financial level too that the state does not miss out on collecting levies that are due to it. There

has been media speculation as to whether or not there is a discrepancy between reported waste avoided and the actual levies recouped. I invite the minister to speak to that, if you are in a position to do so.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You are correct in that for those three years, the information is self-reported, and it is a real issue and has been an issue of concern to me. To improve data accuracy, we made regulation changes to the Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Regulations 2008, which now require record keeping and reporting of waste and recycling data from local governments from waste recyclers and from the licensees of the major regional landfills. That requirement is now in, and we will have that data in the middle of 2021. It has been very rubbery; no-one has had any confidence. In terms of how it has been audited, it has not really been audited up to now, but it has been a sore point for me because, at times, people have suggested there is stockpiling going on or whatever. If there is ever a complaint about stockpiling, certainly the department investigates, but we do not know what we do not know, essentially. Changes to those regulations, as I said, will now mean that the information needs to be reported and we can have confidence in the figures moving forward.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Would that obligate any additional resourcing of your department to implement that revised regime at all; and, if so, where should I look in the budget papers to find it?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; we do not believe so. I think one of your previous questions was along the same line, which we did not answer, related to the waste levy. In 2016–17, the total waste levy collected was \$69 460 405; in 2017–18 it was \$73 954 428; in 2018–19, \$77 572 041; and in 2019–20, \$78 393 94. We have been able to access funding for various things from the waste levy to fund extra kind of waste initiatives that the department has needed to undertake.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Do you anticipate any potential increase in levies recouped as a consequence of, effectively, a changed regulatory approach to reporting?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We have got a review of the waste levy on at the moment. We last increased the levy in 2018. It is a fairly blunt instrument in that you raise the levy and, hopefully, people act differently and do the right thing. Over time, we have seen in relation to construction and demolition waste, for example, that figure, in terms of how much is recycled, has been on the up, and that is great, so it has worked in that case. I am not always confident that it does not lead to stockpiling or dumping. Historically, the waste levy has increased yearly, sometimes by \$5, so we are currently considering that review of the waste levy to see that it meets the objectives of the “Waste Strategy 2030”, and then we are looking to establish a future schedule of levy increases, but we have not landed on anything yet.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: With respect to the figures you quoted earlier about the rubber category, I presume that largely refers to tyres, and your remarks about stockpiling. Is there any estimation on the number of units of tyres stockpiled in the state?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; we have no idea. Obviously, you would have seen in the media fairly recently a case of tyres being stockpiled in a house, in a garden, in Kewdale. That was of significant concern for me, so much so that the department was asked to facilitate the removal of those tyres because it was a real safety risk from my perspective. It only needed some hoon to drive past in the middle of the night and flick a match and the house, the garden, the neighbours and everybody else would have gone up. Things like that appear from time to time, but we have no idea what could be stockpiled. For example, if you look at the big mining companies in the north-west of the state, they go through significant numbers of massive, giant tyres for their machinery. Some of them use those tyres and bury them onsite as part of their rehab. A couple of years ago, I appointed Reg Howard-Smith as the chair of the Waste Authority. It is an area I am keen for them to look into, to work with

mining companies in particular, to make sure that we are recycling material that is used, particularly the tyres.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I have a related question, which again pertains to page 650 in the budget. There is a reference made to your \$35 million fund to assist the local processing of recyclable materials. I think you have run, or are about to conclude, an expression of interest program, if I am right, to deal with that. This probably also relates to a recent Auditor General's report into the need for a waste recycling infrastructure strategy in addition to a generalised strategy: can I ask just in relation to the tyres, which is probably a bit unknown, is there any view about the kind of scale, the volume or the capacity of a facility to deal with the problem as it is today? I presume that \$35 million will be well received by the recipient. It will go some way to advancing us as a state but it might not be up to the scale required to address the problem. It is more of an open-ended question but, we could just stop putting tyres on cars today, and remediating the problem we have with the stockpile could take us another 50, 60, 70 years on the basis of what we have got.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It would be a very brave environment minister, indeed any minister, who decided to ban tyres on cars, let me tell you!

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I just wanted to see whether the Greens might take it up!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You never know what is ahead of us in the future and what cars might use in the future in terms of getting them around.

In terms of the \$35 million, that is to support local processing once the COAG ban comes into place. That COAG ban starts from 2021, essentially, and is phased out over a number of years. The \$35 million can be used for glass, paper, plastic and tyres. The commonwealth has also put money on the table. The deal with the commonwealth's money is that the state match it and a proponent matches it too; essentially a third, a third, a third. We are working closely with the commonwealth at the moment. It may be the case that we do not get one of these facilities in each state or territory. For some of those facilities there might be one in each state and territory, but for others, it might be the case that there is one in South Australia that services Western Australia and WA–Northern Territory. That has not been worked out yet, but it is a significant investment so I am very pleased to have that \$35 million. There is also a commitment from the state to provide approximately \$5 million worth of land to help get such a facility and/or facilities up and running.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Does the government have a view on where the locations might be or is that to be determined?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; to be determined. A group of councils have been pushing to have a facility up your neck of the woods. I think it is Marangaroo or somewhere around there. It was a previous kind of recycling facility and they are keen to have a new processing facility there. To be honest, there has been no thought put into it. We will see what expressions of interest we get from proponents. A proponent might have a view that it should be in Kwinana, for example, so we would obviously look into that. Any such facility would obviously need to get proper approval so that is all to happen yet.

Sorry; the other point you did make related to the Auditor General and the state waste infrastructure plan. That work is happening now. I want to say that that plan will be finished, I think, in the middle of 2021; that is the advice that I have been given. That was in train prior to the recent Auditor General's report, but, obviously, the Auditor General did put out a report in, I think, 2012 that, essentially, mentioned the need for a state waste infrastructure plan.

[2.20 pm]

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Maybe I can continue on the waste line, particularly as it relates to the three-bin policy and the rollout of the program in metropolitan Perth, at least, to the degree that I am familiar with it. What approach is likely with respect to residential apartments, particularly in the inner city? There are issues with space and the like. Does the government have a particular view about how you might roll out a program like this in East Perth or Vincent, where you have multi-unit dwellings?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We do not. It is up to each individual council to work out what works for them. We have put money on the table for the “Better Bins Plus: Go FOGO” program. I think it is \$20 million. I think I did make an announcement. I think there are about 17 councils who have expressed an interest in getting funding through that. That is on top of the existing councils who have already got FOGO in place. There are six in the south west of the state: Donnybrook, Balingup, Bunbury—a few down there. Melville already have theirs in place. That was established a couple of years ago now. Bassendean started theirs recently, and there are a few others on the way. In relation to Bassendean, they have only commenced for houses. Their intention is to work over the next 12 to 24 months to work out how they would bring apartment blocks into the scheme too. It is up to each individual council to decide how to work that out.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I asked that question because I think it has been a bipartisan point now for the better part of a decade in terms of hitting a 47 per cent infill threshold. Obviously, more and more of the loading is going to go into the CBD and middle-ring suburbs. I am just interested to know what forward planning anticipates that particular move.

I might move on, Madam Chair, before I give the time up. With respect just to climate change, as it is referred to at point 3 on page 650 of the budget, minister, you have been asked very recently repeatedly about the state climate policy—when that might be anticipated. I am sure you will tell me just to wait until the end of the year. I have not seen any associated costings with it. Is it likely to eventuate in a sum cost or zero cost to the community in terms of the implementation of the measures that you are yet to announce?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Too much information, honourable member. I am afraid I cannot disclose that at this stage. I can say that it is imminent, so we will see it over the next few weeks.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I cannot even ask for a thumbnail sketch?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, not at this stage.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Will there be financial implications borne by industry or the community in terms of the implementation of that policy?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is due to go to cabinet very soon. With any great certainty, I cannot answer that.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: On a related issue, is there any single-point calculation of the state government’s carbon emissions in any particular year and an understanding of what drives that in terms of, say, vehicle fleet or operations or buildings, power consumption and the like?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Emissions reporting is actually a commonwealth responsibility and requirement. The last figures I have at hand relate to 2017–18. Western Australia’s greenhouse gas emissions for the whole state were 91.7 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent. A big emitter in Western Australia, obviously, is liquefied natural gas, but, obviously, vehicles are significant too. In terms of a breakdown, though, the state government would not have it, but the commonwealth would certainly have it.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: You are not in a position to attribute the state-sourced emissions to government or government functions in any particular way?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. That information is not monitored by the state at this stage. Perhaps, in the near future, we might seek to measure that stuff.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Could I ask a related question? It concerns the state vehicle fleet. I think I asked you a question, perhaps, toward the end of last week on the size of the fleet and the number of hybrid or electrically powered vehicles. I know it is not your portfolio because it is handled by the finance minister—these types of arrangements, as I understand. Nevertheless, is there any impetus towards decarbonising your fleet to any degree—a policy shift which is a preference towards hybrid vehicles or electrically powered vehicles?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That issue is under active consideration at the moment. Finance is the responsible agency for the procurement of vehicles. Minister Dave Kelly, as the minister for innovation, has been the lead minister on the state electric vehicle strategy, so it is under active consideration as we speak.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Changing gears a little bit, on page 660 of the budget, I am interested in service 7, “Environmental Impact Assessment Services to the EPA”, and the associated table. I am just seeking some clarification on the FTE numbers that are contained there. Between the years 2019–20 and 2020–21, there appears to be a 21-person increase over the course of that year. Were they temporary contracts or are they a growth in the actual establishment for that service?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In 2018–19, we provided additional funding of \$3.3 million to DWER to help tackle what has been a steep increase in state significant proposals that required assessment by the EPA. This funded an additional 14 FTE on a fixed-term basis. That is to support both the EPA and the Appeals Convener to, essentially, obtain timely advice to inform assessments and to address the issue of approving environmental management plans for proponents. There is an additional \$2.086 million in the budget estimates for 2020–21, and that has been allocated to ensure that this good work continues. Obviously, you would recall, honourable member, that in our legislation that we passed recently, we now have the ability to cost recover, so we are working on regulations to enable us to cost recover for assessments on some of those bigger projects.

In terms of the numbers here and the full-time equivalents, as the note says, there has been a change in methodology in relation to how we allocate staff across the agency. The new allocation methodology, the department tells me, rigorously allocates all costs and FTEs based on work effort to service areas with overheads allocated based on relative FTE allocations. The 2019–20 actual results were an actual snapshot of FTEs at 30 June, with temporary agency staff added as requested by the OAG using the revised allocation methodology.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: With respect to note 3, as it appears on that page, particularly the last sentence—that it is including additional fixed-term contractor staff up until 31 December—I suppose there are two questions just to clarify. It says it includes additional fixed-term contractor staff. Could I get more specific information about how many fixed-term contractor staff are being referred to and what the department’s plans are post–31 December in terms of staffing?

[2.30 pm]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There were 59 FTEs right across the agency on fixed-term contracts. They were due to expire in the middle of this year, but a COVID measure taken by the government at that stage was to keep those going, so to extend those, purely so there were not workers going out of the workforce during the pandemic when there was no work available. We extended it to the end of December, so those workers across the agency will depart. The projects they might have been on

might have finished in the middle of the year, but they were extended to do other work in the agency as part of the COVID measures across government. I think I have mentioned previously that staff from different state government agencies helped out central agencies in terms of the COVID response. Some of those FTEs would have backfilled our people who helped on the COVID response, but as I indicated, they were due to finish in the middle of the year, but because of COVID they were extended.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I appreciate that, thank you. What likely set of management arrangements will apply from 31 December onwards, noting that that engagement is going to terminate in about six weeks' time?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In terms of the EPA, there are no fixed contractors leaving at the end of December. They are all staying on.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I asked just because it is quite specific in the budget papers.

With respect to staffing, are there any particular skill sets for which you are experiencing a supply-side shortage?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Not particularly, but, obviously, every mining company at the moment now has got significant plans to expand. I think over the next few years there is \$100 billion worth of projects planned—I think that is over the next five to 10 years. What that means for us as an agency, though, is that we are at risk of losing staff to higher paying mining companies. Obviously, you work for the state because you enjoy it and you value public service, but there are times and places where people decide that getting paid an extra 50 grand for working for a mining company is worth it and they go and do it. I am always at pains to point out to the mining companies that they should not be pilfering from the state, and particularly from my agency, because it is robbing Peter to pay Paul. If they are taking staff out of my agency to help them get their approvals through, it is self-defeating, because we end up not having staff in the agency to do the work that we need to do. We have not seen it yet. It happened during the boom time, but it is something that I continue to be mindful of. I continue to remind mining companies that they should not be taking staff from my agency.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Are you anticipating or considering any attraction and retention bonuses or payments to safeguard from that poaching?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, we are not at this stage. We have not had the need for it yet. In terms of what we might face in the future, who knows? Obviously, we need not only to keep the lights on in the agency, but to keep the agency functioning. It has been for the last couple of years; it has been doing extremely well. In terms of numbers through the door for approvals, it has risen significantly, so there is a great deal of work going on. Staff are working incredibly well. I do want to keep them. If there was a risk of losing them, obviously, consideration would have to be made at that time as to what we would need to do to retain the quality staff that we have got.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Just following the same line that we were going on with the public environmental reviews, I have a number of questions myself about that. I have noticed in the annual report, pages 71 and 73, that there are two tables showing public environmental reviews, both on the decline in the previous year. What would lead to this? I was thinking it might be a lack of staff, but you seem to have done that. Is it the streamlining process?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, it is simply a fact of the projects coming before the EPA—the types of projects. From year to year you might have some big mining projects. You might have Metronet, for example; we would have had some Metronet in 2019–20. It is proponent led, essentially, so it depends on what they put forward as to what the EPA assesses as needing a certain level of

assessment, so be it PER, environmental review or, indeed, the decision not to assess. It is not because the agency has not got resources; it is simply to do with the nature of the projects.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Can you tell me, with public environmental reviews, they are just there to advise the government or provide advice. Do they ever knock a project back? Do you ever have a public environmental review end up where it says, “No, this is not a goer”?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely. Obviously, the PER process is undertaken by the EPA, so that is part of its decision-making process. Then the EPA makes a decision, and the EPA can say yea or no, and it has in the past said no to projects. That is open to it. Obviously, once the EPA makes its determination, the decision is appealable, and so the Appeals Convenor on my behalf undertakes that appeals process. The initial EPA decision can be appealed by a proponent, as it can be appealed by an opponent. The Appeals Convenor deals with it, gives a report to me, and then I make a decision in collaboration with the various decision-making authorities as to whether the proposal should go ahead. Obviously, the EPA makes decisions on environmental issues. I can take social and economic considerations into my decision-making process.

Hon DIANE EVERS: If you are saying there has been no hold-up in the PERs, the southern forests irrigation scheme has now been put off until July. It was originally supposed to have been done in March 2020.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is proponent linked. We can only deal with what is before us once we have all the information before us, but if a proponent decides to change course or not to submit information that is required of the EPA, the EPA cannot move forward. In relation to the southern forests irrigation scheme, it is a proponent-linked delay and that means the EPA will not make an assessment until later.

Hon DIANE EVERS: In the budget papers or the annual report, it does not really give the detail I am after. With public environmental reviews, is there a guide as to what one might cost and how long it might take?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Normally a PER is open for six to 12 weeks, so it is open for public comment during that period of time.

Hon DIANE EVERS: That is right, and then the assessment must take considerable time after that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It does. It takes 12 to 18 months for the rest of the proposal to be assessed properly, so the whole process. As part of the changes to the EP act that we got through this place last week, we could now go into a bilateral agreement with the commonwealth that would enable us to do some of the work on the commonwealth’s behalf that should hopefully lead to a six-month time saving in terms of the whole environmental approvals process for a proponent that is required to get state and commonwealth approval.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I note that on page 35 of the EPA’s annual report there is a list of the review reports it has done, yet there is no column for ones that have been knocked back; it is just the date of approval. Going back to that previous question, is it just that it chooses not to show us those ones?

[2.40 pm]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Obviously, the division we are dealing with today does not include the EPA’s annual report; it is a separate decision. I might ask Anthony Sutton if he can make a comment about refusals.

Mr SUTTON: With regard to the EPA’s report for 2019–20, there would not be a report that the EPA recorded a no to for that particular financial year. I think the last one was the Bungalbin J5, which

would have been a couple of years ago. In 2019–20, which is the EPA’s report date, there would not be a no in that annual report for that year.

Hon DIANE EVERS: And also back to the other part of the question on the cost of a public environmental review, is there a ballpark figure?

Mr SUTTON: It would be \$150 000 to \$200 000.

Hon DIANE EVERS: For the 12 to 18-month period that you talked about?

Mr SUTTON: Correct.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Obviously, we do not currently charge for that.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Depending on the proposal.

Back to the budget papers, on page 653, this is where you have your key indicators. It occurred to me, just glancing through this, there are a few indicators where the department has not been able to meet the targets and then the next year, the target is shown considerably lower. Is there something that has changed where you realised you cannot meet it or are we just setting the bar a bit lower so that we can meet it? It is the middle one—“Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months”. I did see the notes there, but the notes did not help.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Note 4 is I think the one that you suggest is the most marked. That indicator is new from the 2017–18 budget estimates. The indicator aims to provide assurance that the department staff work to identify where a licensee fails or repeatedly disregards licence conditions or there is an omission or discharge, and enforcement action is considered in accordance with the department’s compliance and enforcement policy. During 2019–20, a total of 292 noncompliances were identified due to inspections under the waste sector program and prescribed premises compliance program. The target of 80 per cent of noncompliances being closed within two calendar months was not achieved due to the prescribed premises compliance program targeting inspections at the areas of greatest risk. The resolution of noncompliance is often protracted and relied upon work undertaken by third parties, so it requires longer than the two calendar month time frame. So, 43 per cent of noncompliances were closed within the specified time frame. Because we have decided to focus on those issues of most concern, which I think the community would expect us to do, that target was not really achievable.

Hon DIANE EVERS: So the 80 per cent was never going to be achievable because of the work you were doing?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It could be if you dealt with everything on a cursory level, but because we have targeted the areas of greatest risk or the areas where we thought there was risk of noncompliance, it meant that we focused on the right thing but we did not meet the target.

Hon DIANE EVERS: For the two just a little bit down from that—the percentage of municipal solid waste reported as diverted from landfill, and the one below that, commercial and industrial waste—I have noticed that the targets there have also both dropped by 10 per cent.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again, in this case, and in note 6, the indicator is a direct measure of the effectiveness of the government’s waste management goal of diverting waste from landfill and reflects the target in the waste strategy. The data used to calculate these indicators are based on the “Recycling Activity in Western Australia 2018–19” report, which was the same basis used in previous years. These annual reports allow comparison of performance across years. The 2019–20 estimates are set against the 2012 waste strategy targets set for 2019–20. In 2019–20, 34 per cent of municipal solid waste was reported as diverted from landfill through recycling compared with the

waste strategy target in the Perth metropolitan region of 50 per cent. This is obviously expected to improve as a result of the Better Bins Plus funding program. It has been difficult.

As to our earlier conversation in relation to what is reported, it has been a challenge. But we do believe now, because of the Better Bins Plus funding program, that the number is expected to increase to about 18 local governments across the state. That will have a significant effect on the numbers that are being recycled. We have not had great confidence in our recycling figures to date, but as a result of the new requirement to report, I think probably from next year onwards we can have more confidence. The figures thus far have been rubbery.

Hon DIANE EVERS: It sounds like you will be getting more accurate figures and therefore the effort will be increasing, so hopefully the outcome will be good.

On page 652, in the service summary, with regard to service 7, “Environmental Impact Assessment Services to the EPA”, I note that last year it was \$12.5 million. This year it is \$11 million and then in the next forward estimates, it is down to \$8 million a year. Why would that be dropping off at a time when we are actually going to be trying to push through so many more developments? It is on the bottom of page 652.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Obviously, the department conducts environmental impact assessments of significant proposals and schemes for the EPA. Developments across the state and development guidelines provide certainty and clarity to proponents and other stakeholders on the environmental assessment process. The increase in total cost of services between 2019–20 and the 2020–21 budget estimate is due to additional resourcing for the EPA’s assessments but also relates to an election commitment around Westport, and that is the port and environment strategy. It also relates to changes in cost allocation methodology to allocate cost to this service. There are a range of reasons, but certainly extra money was received for Westport. We will not always need that.

Hon DIANE EVERS: So Westport used to be included in that?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Westport is included in those early figures, but once that work is done, obviously we do not need the appropriation, that amount, anymore. This is what we anticipate needing. Obviously, if a future government decides to have a big project like Westport, and it needed environmental approval, obviously we would need to get an appropriation to enable us to do that extra work.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Given the COVID changes that have gone through, we are expecting quite a bit of development to happen over the coming years. Has that been taken into account?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes. We will have cost recovery available to us in the future.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Just one more on the budget. On page 649—this may relate to the same things we have just been talking about—in the “Spending Changes” table, the third item down is “Continuation of Resourcing of Environmental Protection Authority Services”. What was that extra \$2 million for?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again, that related to an earlier answer I gave to Hon Tjorn Sibma in relation to extra FTEs that the state government provided funding for in 2018–19. In 2018–19, an appropriation of \$3.3 million was given to the department and then this further \$2.086 million allows us to keep those workers on until we get cost recovery in place, which would then replace that.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Which will be coming?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes.

Hon DIANE EVERS: The only other question—somebody else may be asking it anyway—is about the waste export ban. You have it in the budget for \$2.5 million this year and the next and then \$10 million. This is on page 666. I am interested to know more about the progress of it. There will be a bit this year, a bit next year, then a large amount and then nothing.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Is that on page 666?

Hon DIANE EVERS: It is near the bottom of page 666—“Waste Export Ban”. It is under the controlled grants and subsidies.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Obviously, we are working incredibly closely with the commonwealth on this. They have a recycling modernisation fund of about \$190 million that we are seeking to access funding from to be able to develop critical waste processing infrastructure in Western Australia. One expression of interest process is underway to select plastics and tyre projects and regional infrastructure, and another is being run for increased paper and cardboard processing capacity. As we spoke about earlier, \$35 million has been allocated by the McGowan government for these projects, and that will be matched by \$20 million from the commonwealth.

[2.50 pm]

Because the ban—which starts from next year—will be happening over a number of years, we are confident that the way the phase-out has been done, in collaboration with Treasury, will allow us to deal with the issues that are phased out at the time they are phased out. The contribution from the state government, along with the commonwealth’s contribution and its requirement that a proponent also puts in one-third, will mean that we will be able to deal with the things we need to deal with at the time the ban comes into place.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Thank you.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I take the minister to page 650 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, for the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. The table at the top of that page is a continuation of the “Spending Changes” table at page 649. The line items under “Other” are in alphabetical order. I refer in particular to the line item “Payroll Tax Liability”. Given that payroll tax is paid by the state government to the state government, that seemed to me to be an unlikely line item. I am interested to know what payroll tax liability DWER might have.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There have been some changes relating to payroll tax. This is due to changes associated with the machinery-of-government amalgamation. Prior to MOG, only the salaries of staff from the former Department of Environment Regulation were liable for payroll tax due to the agency being industry funded. None of the other former agencies were liable for payroll tax. At the time of the amalgamation, the Commissioner of State Revenue advised the department that no payroll tax was due. Since then, the commissioner has made a determination that the department is liable to pay payroll tax on industry-funded staff from 1 July 2020. We have received an additional appropriation of \$2.495 million to meet the payroll tax debt.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That is interesting. So the minister would be joining us in trying to push down payroll tax on behalf of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, I presume!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I could not possibly comment on that in this session.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I thank the minister for that. That is very interesting.

We will stay on the same page for a minute and play with this chart for a while. I refer to “Ongoing Initiatives” and resourcing of the Port Hedland dust program. It is only \$200 000 this financial year and going up to half a million dollars. Can the minister give us an indication of what that money will

be spent on and how that program is progressing? Particularly given that it is in the minister's own electorate, he might be well across the issue, I suspect.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Additional FTEs will be required through the eight years to 2023–24. That will help us meet the commitments that were in the Port Hedland Dust Management Taskforce report. Obviously, that commenced under the last government and we came into it at the tail end. Two full-time equivalent staff have been employed to implement the department's five-year regulatory program. That is now proposed to run to 2023–24, and these two FTEs were funded until 2020–21. Industry will contribute to funding through licence fees and cost recoupment. Due to the number of air monitoring sites needed, the complexity of contractual obligations and community sensitivities of the monitoring program, an additional FTE will be funded through industry contributions. That FTE will be required in this financial year and onwards to manage and coordinate the transfer of the maintenance, and also the reporting of the air quality network. DWER will enter into a contract with industry to transfer the air quality network and then to recover the costs associated for the ongoing operation, and also the maintenance of that network and monitoring program. Obviously, as a result of changes that went through last week, we can now seek industry contributions or recoupment of these types of things.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The department will probably be paying payroll tax on that as well by the sound of things.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is a good point to make. We need to consider payroll tax in any cost recovery stuff that we do into the future.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: That will be interesting.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is a good point, and that might not have been considered otherwise, to be honest.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: So there is a possibility that the compliance costs will include the payroll tax component?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We would have to think so, yes.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Which would give it sort of a whole cost of employment component, which might be interesting if we went to that process.

I want to move on from that one. Presumably, the FTEs will be measuring the dust at all those various sites. Is there a component in this for additional monitoring, additional sites and plan preparation, or is this purely the monitoring component?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: This obviously relates to the monitoring, but also it relates to the ongoing work in relation to the maintenance and the reporting of the air quality network up there.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Just out of interest, have you come up with a solution for the dust issue in Port Hedland?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. Certainly, work is happening at the moment in relation to dust up there, and obviously work is happening across portfolios in relation to dust in the west end, and Minister MacTiernan is leading some work in relation to a buyout of the west end. Ordinarily, Port Hedland is a very dusty place, but having a big iron ore port there as well adds to that. We are certainly working with our various agencies across government to deal with this issue.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: If I come up with a solution, I will let you know!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Please do!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I refer to page 649. The second line item under “New Initiatives” is “Election Commitment—Westport: Port and Environs Strategy”. It is only nearly \$300 000 a year, so it is quite small. I am very interested in how the environmental assessment of the Westport strategy might look. Can we start with what the government might be investing in? I presume that sounds like one to two FTEs doing something. Can we find out what that is?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The port and environs strategy task force is a multi-agency task force. It is to help deliver the location for an outer harbour container port, and also the necessary road and rail infrastructure to assist business in Western Australia. As the member indicated, it was an election commitment. Funding from my department will provide four staff to assist with the strategic support on environmental issues. The program has an expense limit of \$0.29 million in 2020–21 and \$0.882 million over the forward estimates to 2023–24. Two FTEs in my agency will be dedicated to this issue. Obviously, it is early days in relation to this work, so in terms of where it might go and what it might lead to, we do not know at this stage.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Because the line item says “election commitment”, precisely what was the election commitment?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The election commitment was around that we would build Westport.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: No, not what was it around. What was the dot point on the election commitment—we will something?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It was not related to my portfolio. It would have been in the transport or planning portfolio that we will build Westport. As a result of the Westport Taskforce’s work and in terms of the sites that it has looked at, it was obvious, as part of that process, that there will be environmental issues. As a result of that, we got this money to help do our bit to help the Westport Taskforce navigate our processes.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: There will be significant environmental questions, so I am sure that the department will at some point require significant resources when it gets into the absolute examination phase.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is absolutely correct.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am not aware of precisely what the election commitment was in terms of Westport, apart from the Treasurer suggesting that Westport would be built. I would be interested to know if there is a specific commitment around that.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Again, it is not in the environment portfolio.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Okay. At this point, from DWER’s perspective, what sort of preliminary works or thoughts have been put together in relation to this project? I am sure it is doing a comprehensive look at Roe 8–9, but outside of that, I would be interested to know precisely what it is doing.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure. There will be work happening, like increased monitoring in Cockburn Sound, for example, to determine baseline levels. There is also a research program happening with the Western Australian Marine Science Institute. That work is happening now, at an early stage, obviously; it has only just kicked off. That is the type of work that will take place.

[3.00 pm]

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Just to finish on this one, has DWER been asked to—because this is quite a small amount of money—or has DWER initiated the investigation process of its view of the entire proposal, or is that still some time down the track?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The proposal will require EPA assessments at some stage. That has not happened yet. This is just the early work to enable another agency, because it is a multiagency task force and it is a multiagency kind of project. This has enabled us to do the early bits that we will need to help them get their proposal to a state where it could go to the EPA for assessment.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Has DWER provided any environmental advice to the cross-multiagency task force?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, we have, and we were involved in the task force.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Is that advice publicly available?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I do not suppose you would care to drop it on the table today?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have not got it with me, but, no, it is part of that cabinet-in-confidence process around Westport.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It certainly does not hurt to ask.

Slightly above that, minister, “Offsets Fund for Recovery Program” is a bit over \$2.6 million. What is that going to purchase? It is on page 649, the second last line item under “COVID-19 WA Recovery Plan”, “Offsets Fund for Recovery Program” at \$2.6 million.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That relates to the green jobs plan. As part of the green jobs plan we announced an offset fund for our recovery program. This was about creating jobs in the NRM space and for not-for-profit environmental groups to help deliver rehab and revegetation projects across the south west land division in particular. Conservation groups will work to improve vegetation conditions and build on vegetation corridors through a range of work including fencing, seeding, planting and managing threats to native vegetation. I have recently signed off on the first lot of these projects, and many of them went to groups to undertake seeding, in particular to gather seeds, to enable us to do revegetation in the future.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Will you be announcing what is happening in the program at some point?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Absolutely. I gave out the first lot of money, and then as we progress, we will keep announcing. Obviously, I was keen to use COVID-19 and the green jobs stuff to enable us to deal with your favourite issue in the south west, arum lilies. I have not been successful yet, but I keep prosecuting the case.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I hope you are aware of the Margaret River environmental group that is doing some very good work on arum lilies in the last year or two.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am certainly aware. I have been briefed by them previously. I have asked mostly DBCA, who manage land in the south west —

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: The tuart forest in particular, which had a spectacular bloom this year.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes, it had a carpet of arum lilies, so I have asked them to see, but I have also pushed DWER to see whether there is any way we could deal with the arum lily issue, as Mr Seares understands and nods, in the south west.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Excellent work.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: My question relates to the green jobs plan, which there is mention of on page 651 at paragraph 10, with \$60.3 million allocated towards that jobs program. Can you tell me how many jobs we can expect to be created directly through that \$60.3 million?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure. We anticipate about 1 000 jobs over three years. That \$60.3 million went to a range of different projects or programs. There is a \$2 million investment in fencing around Whiteman Park that was creating business and employment opportunities for new contractors. There was \$5 million to be used by Main Roads to improve and increase roadside vegetation in the ag region to offset the impact of roadworks aimed at making our roads safer. There was \$3.3 million for conservation work for Pilbara Aboriginal conservation groups, and that was made available through the Pilbara environmental offsets fund. There was some money for the Swan River. There was an additional \$2 million that went towards foreshore protection works, undertaken by local governments. There was \$25 million for the Healthy Estuaries WA program, which was for estuaries in the south west of the state, and there were two programs, investing about \$23 million, to restore and revegetate habitats in areas where past land clearing practices have impacted the extent and health of our native vegetation. The job figures were arrived at in consultation with Treasury, who kind of know this stuff and manage this stuff, but the estimate is approximately 1 000 jobs.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: What is exactly a green job?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Obviously, the green jobs plan is the title. I did not call them green jobs themselves, but, obviously, it relates to people doing work like rehab, revegetation work, loosely linked to environmental initiatives. It is a commonly used term. Because it has “green” in it and it is a political party in this place, it is not a favourite term of mine to use, but certainly it is a well-used and understood term in the community.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Sure. Some of the jobs created directly through this program might be things like construction, transport and truck drivers?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, it will not be building. It will be people doing, for the most part, on-ground work, but in some cases, to be honest, some of the groups that have been funded, it will allow them to be transported from one place to another, but it will not be construction jobs. Just in terms of some of the other work, things like native seed collection, plant propagation, weeding, fencing, replanting and that kind of stuff. So, a variety of stuff, but it will mostly be on the land.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Okay. Turning to page 650, the first paragraph “Streamline WA/One Stop Shop”. I have been reading a lot about Streamline WA since it was announced back in, I think, 2018; it has been two years now. I am wondering what tangible results has Streamline WA actually delivered within the portfolio of environment and water? What regulations have been removed, what approval processes have been sped up and do you have some measurable, tangible result that you can share with us?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure. What we have started doing essentially is trying to simplify and standardise water and environmental assessment approaches across the agency. So, looking at how we consider, assess and manage impacts on water. We have implemented a standardised tiered assessment approach to enable simpler assessments to be fast-tracked and efforts to be focused on more complex issues and risks. It is helping us to continue to address assessment time frames and if there was a backlog, address those. It has helped us to integrate business support capability across both water and environmental regulation. Since the machinery-of-government changes in 2017, it is an area that we have focused on to try and progress a program of work to achieve a one-stop shop. Basically, it has been trying to standardise processes to make them be able to run in parallel with each other, so if there was a water process and an environment process separately, to help standardise those. It has been about trying to increase transparency for proponents. We have also worked on developing guidance to support applications and then we have improved the internal coordination of applications with the department. Then, I guess, Environment Online itself is about

consolidating water and environmental regulatory processes into a simple-to-use online platform, which is harder than you would imagine to do.

Certainly, from my perspective, we are starting to see benefits in relation to this. From those proponents who need to access the agency and who need to go through our processes, we are hearing positive comments coming back from them about how this stuff is actually starting to make a difference.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Is there somewhere in the services and key efficiency indicators in the budget or somewhere in the annual report that you could point to and say, “There is an approval time frame that has been sped up as result of Streamline WA”? Is there something measurable you can point me to?

[3.10 pm]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is not that easy to do, but certainly our internal work so far has been about publishing regulatory procedures and guidance products. It has been about our internal stuff to make sure that we are focused on how we deal with regulatory performance reporting and how we work with our other partners to make sure that what they need to do is developed and delivered the same way as we do. It is not as easy as what you are asking for, honourable member. I cannot say that this project has been a major beneficiary of this, but, generally, across the board we are seeing that how we do things internally in the agency is better, so conversely that is leading to better outcomes for any proponent who requires our assessments.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: I would like to believe you. It all sounds very, very good. I am keen to see something measurable as an outcome of that, so I will be paying close attention in the years to come to see if we have something we can measure.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You can continue to do that, and that is of course your right, but certainly from my perspective as someone who has to face mining companies or other proponents, I hear good things about this and it is doing what it set out to do.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: I understand that we are really looking at the environment part of this portfolio and not water in this hearing, but I draw the minister’s attention to page 657. I generally look for improvements in efficiency and for the cutting of green tape resulting in some kind of improvement to approval time frames. I note that the KPIs for water licence approvals are all over the shop. There are targets that are higher than actuals for the last two years. The minister does not necessarily have to give me an answer, but I thought I might bring to his attention the fact that this is the kind of thing I would generally look at for some kind of improvement in regulatory processes with the cutting of red and green tape, resulting in some kind of tangible outcome for water users.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: As you pointed out, it is not in the division before us today; this relates to the Minister for Water. I am told that we are meeting our time frames for the water side of the agency, so watch out for next year’s budget papers and annual report; I think there will be some good news to see in those.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: I would hope so, because I am aware that recently there was partial cost recovery implemented for water licences in the agricultural sector. I would hope that that would start to show some dividend.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sorry, that was not in the agricultural sector; it was only in mining.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Resources, sorry; thank you for correcting me.

My last question is around the container deposit scheme. I refer to paragraph 2 on page 650. It has been a while since we have looked at this, so I am going from memory. The Department of Water

and Environmental Regulation will be responsible for enforcement. I know the scheme is really only coming into its own now, but has there been enforcement of the labelling requirement for containers? Have there been warnings or infringements issued to anyone for not complying with their labelling requirements?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There have not been any infringements issued, but given that you have asked the question, I am going to take the opportunity to talk about Containers for Change. From 1 October to close of business last Sunday, more than 44 million containers were returned as part of that scheme, which is pretty significant. There have been about 240 000 individual transactions around the state, and community groups and charities have received about \$207 000 in donations as part of the scheme. We currently have 209 refund points around the state and we continue to work with WARRRL, which is running the scheme on our behalf, in relation to the number of container refund points across the state. On 1 October they had to have 75 per cent of the minimum network standards in place on that date, and they did; they met and exceeded that target. Then, by 1 October 2021, they need to have the full 100 per cent in place around the state. We have continued to register beverage containers. More continue to come out of the woodwork; drinks come in from all over the world, and there are some strange drinks coming in from strange places that have not been part of the scheme so far, so when they come to our attention, we continue to work with the supplier to make sure that they are registered. It will be two years before the labelling requirement is enforced, and that is part of the scheme in place; we have that two-year window.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I had four questions lined up and Hon Aaron Stonehouse is a damn good crossbencher because he has asked the exact same questions I was going to ask! However, you always have to have something up your sleeve, so I will not talk anymore about streamlining or the deposit scheme.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: There is a lot more I could say about the deposit scheme, if you wanted to ask more!

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: I go back to page 653 of budget paper No 2, and the table under “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”. I refer to the line “Percentage of potential environmental risks identified during compliance monitoring program that are rectified within two months”. Why was the 2020–21 budget revised down from 80 per cent to 40 per cent?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The question was actually asked earlier by Hon Diane Evers —

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: There you go—that is five in a row, now!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Great minds think alike is probably what I would say in that case, honourable member!

Just in brief, not to be rude to you, we have targeted our inspections on the areas of greatest risk and those that need resolution of noncompliances. Rather than doing everything and not doing anything well, we have focused on the areas of most concern. That target was way too high, and we looked to change it in the future. The community would expect us to target the issues of most concern rather than everything.

Hon COLIN TINCKNELL: This next question sounds like a water question, but it is not, really; it is a science question. Who does the modelling for water flows?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You would have to ask the Minister for Water, because I do not know. It is not part of my portfolio, but I am told this department does it themselves.

Hon SAMANTHA ROWE: I want to ask a question in relation to single-use plastics. This specifically relates to page 650 and the “Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2030”. What

initiatives will the government implement to reduce single-use plastics as an action under this strategy, in both the short and medium terms?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I thank the honourable member for the question; I am sure Hon Tjorn Sibma is going to ask a similar question later on. A couple of years back—2019, in fact—we did some community consultation called “Let’s Not Draw the Short Straw”; it was a survey on reducing single-use plastics. That came after our ban on single-use plastic bags, which has been a tremendous success. It came out of a call from the community to do more on single-use plastics. As part of the survey we had 9 500 submissions from Western Australians, and since that time we have been working through those submissions. Last week I announced a plan to phase out single-use plastics over the next three to five years, essentially. They relate to products like plastic plates, plastic cutlery, thick plastic bags and polystyrene food containers. We also announced a ban on helium balloon releases by 2023—not helium balloons, but helium balloon releases. We will do it in two phases.

I want to make a point in relation to straws, because as Minister for Disability Services, I have an interest in straws. Many people with a disability and people with mobility issues, including some seniors, need to use those bendy straws in particular. We are working with the disability community and the hospitality industry to work out how we might phase out the use of single-use straws generally for the community, but allow for people with a disability or seniors to be able to access those bendy straws from behind the counter. We will work on that. We are about to establish a working group on the issue with straws.

[3.20 pm]

That was the first phase—the products that I mentioned. By 2026, there are plans to phase-out those plastic barrier bags that you get at the supermarket: those that you put your meat in; cotton buds with plastic shafts; polystyrene packaging; microbeads; and then oxo-degradable plastics. For all those products, there are now other options in the marketplace. There is a cost differential at this stage. Sometimes we are talking about cents, so a few cents more. Sometimes it is a little bit more than that. Sometimes, in fact, it is less than a cent. But we anticipate that once those products are bought and sold at a higher level—more of them are bought and sold—those price differentials will drop. Certainly, there is bamboo and other products out there at the moment that can replace these single-use plastics.

Why are we doing it? Essentially, single-use plastics are used once and thrown away. There are other products out there that are better for the environment that can be recycled, and it is something that the community has demanded action on. I am very pleased and I want to acknowledge that the opposition came out soon afterwards and said that it supported it, so regardless of who wins the next election, I think that Western Australians can be confident that these phase-outs will happen over the next few years. It is a good thing for the environment.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: I would like you to talk a bit more about Containers for Change, which is at page 650. I think it is a fantastic program and I am really pleased that you have finally been able to deliver it, minister. I am not just saying that as a Labor member; I think, as a member of the community, before I was involved in Parliament, it was certainly something that I thought was a progressive change that could greatly influence our environment. What I am more interested in now is the social enterprises that you have included in this program and what benefits we are seeing delivering to them from this Containers for Change program and their participation in it.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Thanks; that is a good question. I have to say, I am very pleased with how Containers for Change has gone. At the outset, I tried to marry my two agencies or portfolios, being the environment side and also the disability side. You would know that many people with disability

in particular struggle to get a job. We designed this program in Western Australia differently from other states and territories around Australia in that it would have a job focus, and the job focus was for people with disability, long-term unemployed and Aboriginal people, and we have done that to great success. At the very beginning, we had all the players around the table, so we had social services and also environment groups and everybody involved in the recycling sector all around the table. They all helped us to design the scheme that we have in Western Australia.

On that first day of October, the commencement date, the figures I have, about 680 jobs were created in this scheme. Over 40 per cent of those—about 44 per cent—went to those cohorts that I mentioned, so people with disability, the long-term unemployed and Aboriginal people, and it has been a tremendous success. I mentioned earlier on that the latest figures I had were from Sunday. About \$207 000 has been donated to charity. There are about 1 200 charities or not-for-profits who have signed up for the scheme, so \$207 000 that they would not have got has so far gone to them. Also, we have a number of charities and not-for-profits involved in running the scheme and the refund points. It is particularly pleasing to hear. There is a couple in Karratha, Jake and Jodie Swaffer, who run North West Recycling and have a fantastic facility in Karratha. They have employed a young man with Down syndrome who helps them with the service in the Wickham community. This is a young man who struggled to get work previously. He works on the weekends now and he gets time and a half and double time, and that is double time in real money. Right around the state, I mentioned down in the south west, Green Skills in Albany is running a container deposit facility down there. They started off with two people on the first day; within a week, they were up to nine staff. They, too, have focused on employing people who either have been out of work or have disability or have psychosocial disability. It is just exceptional. Right around the state we are seeing people engage in this and get jobs under this scheme who have struggled to get jobs before.

Separately, of course, 44 million containers have been recycled so far. Many of those would have gone to landfill previously. A requirement of the scheme is that the material is recycled. Because it is separated at source, there is no contamination in it, so it is very clean material; it is highly sought after, so there is a market for it. The stuff is being bought, it is being recycled, there are jobs being created, and these organisations are running many of the refund points. In the Kimberley, in particular, I think all the refund points are run by Aboriginal organisations as well, so that is great. We are seeing jobs created across the state, and it is good for the environment. For someone like me who represents regional Western Australia, for many of my communities, littering is a big issue. Putting a 10¢ value on this product, on these containers, bearing in mind there are 1.3 billion eligible containers sold in Western Australia every year, there will be a lot less littering going on and a lot of groups out there doing clean-ups. It is nice to hear of families—we saw in Kalgoorlie a few weeks ago a family post on Facebook that they have been out for the weekend in one of the parks collecting cans and bottles to bring in. It is happening right across the state. During the school holidays, up in Hon Tjorn Sibma's neck of the woods, we saw kids come in with 12 cans, happy as Larry, getting \$1.20 back, some of it for savings, some of it to buy lollies. Right across the state, we are seeing really good things happening. It has been a success thus far and I am very pleased.

WARRRL are doing a great job. We will continue to keep an eye on them but work very closely with them to make sure that the extra refund points that need to be in place by 1 October are in place. But I have to say, already, we have seen some of those refund points that are required by October next year come on board. There was a new one opened in Joondalup in the last couple of weeks, so we are seeing it continue to grow. It has been a great success so far. I am very pleased. I am thankful to the department; Sarah McEvoy, who was involved in it here; and thankful to everybody involved. Western Australians want to do the right thing, and this is a perfect example of if you put the policy in place, people do it.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes, and there are a few businesses in my electorate that were vacant that are now occupied because they have the container deposit return sites.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I think it is up to 209 refund points now around the state, so that is 209 locations that would have been vacant previously that now have a business there and are bringing in custom for the other businesses around them—so it is definitely a win-win. It is a good news story. Again, this was something that we promised at the last election; so, too, did the former government, so whoever came in would have put it into place, but I am particularly pleased with how we have designed it in Western Australia with that jobs focus. Some of the other states are focused on reverse vending machines, but, from my perspective, I would rather real jobs for real people in Western Australia than jobs go to European factories to build machines. There is a place for both. We have seen success thus far.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Yes. I think that the \$200 000 that you talked about that has gone to charities is most welcome during the time of COVID, because many of them have been significantly affected in their fundraising activities, so their capacity to participate in a program that has delivered \$200 000 to them in two months is pretty exciting for a lot of them.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It is pretty good, and it ranges—it could be a school P&C; it could be a local environment or sporting group, and it is right across the state. There are 1 253 groups involved in this. You are right: the last few months have been particularly challenging in terms of fundraising for all these groups, so this is \$207 000 that was not available before that they have. It is a win on multiple levels. Certainly, in the early numbers we have had back in terms of the containers refunded, we are tracking very well. We are tracking better than Queensland and New South Wales at the same stage in their process over the last few years, so it is good.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: This question relates to “Clean Energy Future Fund” on page 649. I see there is funding for \$10 million under the COVID-19 recovery plan and \$9.2 million funding under new initiatives. I just wondered if you could provide an explanation for the purpose of this investment and what benefits you think will be derived from this fund?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I am happy to. Obviously, we announced the clean energy future fund in April this year, and so had that funding of \$9.2 million. What it is essentially for is to help us implement innovative clean energy projects in Western Australia. It is to help us and help the state’s low-carbon transition by getting these clean energy projects up and running and by accelerating technology innovation.

[3.30 pm]

We are hopeful that these projects, when they are funded, will help us achieve our aspirational target of net zero emissions by 2050. There was \$9.2 million put on the table in April and, obviously, as part of COVID, there has been an additional \$10 million put on the table to increase the fund. Clean energy innovators can apply for funding of between \$250 000 and \$2 million for each of their projects. Between myself and Bill Johnston, Minister for Energy, we anticipate that there will be a first round of funding announced very, very soon. The priority projects for the funding are facilities that are on the fringe of, or not connected to, the south west interconnected system or the north west interconnected system. From my perspective, I think that additional \$10 million will certainly support us getting clean energy industries and jobs happening, but also at the same time reducing the state’s emissions, so it again is a win for the state. That first round was open, closed and those announcements will be made very soon. Hopefully, that will be good news for people.

Hon MATTHEW SWINBOURN: Did you anticipate some of the targeting of this to be outside the metropolitan area because you were saying not with the south west integrated network and the north one as well?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes. The priority areas are for outside the SWIS and the NWIS or if you are on the edge of the grid. It is to help those communities in particular, but certainly that does not preclude others from applying for and receiving the grants.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Minister, I have some questions concerning the actual operation of the container deposit scheme that are about the day-to-day experience of everyone in the system irrespective of the merits of the proposition. I might begin first by noting on page 650, where reference is made to the container deposit scheme, I think it just rounds out questions asked by others. The financial assistance package provided to the government that is referred to in the last sentence there says that it was provided as a loan to the scheme coordinator. I want to double-check that that reference there corresponds with, I think, the “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” table as it appears on page 666, and an amount of \$126 000 for the 2019–20 year. Is that reference to that loan that was first made on page 650?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No; it is definitely a much larger amount than that. I will ask Ms Byrne if she can comment on that.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: There seems to be a reference to the CDS on page 666 as part of the table there concerning controlled grants and subsidies.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Ms McEvoy has indicated that she is in a better place to answer it.

Ms McEVOY: Part of it is in 2019–20. Part of that loan was drawn down in that year because the scheme was delayed from June because of the impacts of COVID and actually commenced in October. The purpose of that assistance was to help those impacted network operators for that period between June and October, and only part of that funding was paid before 30 June.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That \$126 000 referred to there for that transition period is referred to as a grant or a subsidy. I want to know: is that the case or is it a loan? If it is a loan, is it repayable and on what terms?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Yes; it is repayable. From memory, we put about \$3 million —

Ms McEVOY: There are two separate loans. There is part A and part B. So there is a loan to the scheme coordinator, which is to make sure, based on the New South Wales experience, that we did not require payment in arrears from small operators. That was very much a learning that impacted some beverage suppliers. That was the purpose of that loan. There is a second part, which is the financial assistance part. That financial assistance part is very short term and it does not have interest. The other one is based on normal interest.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Were both those loans made to the scheme coordinator, and the scheme coordinator, I take to be WARRRL. Is that correct?

Ms McEVOY: Yes.¹

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Can I get a sense, minister, or perhaps from one of your advisers, of what the direct relationship is between the department and WARRRL in terms of monitoring the success or otherwise of the scheme, particularly in terms of complaints resolution should complaints arise?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sure. I will ask Ms McEvoy to comment on that.

¹ A letter of clarification about this part of the transcript can be accessed on the committee webpage.

Ms McEVOY: The department has an oversight role in terms of the requirements of the legislation and regulations and the deed of agreement between the government and WARRRL. All of those things have a lot of conditions that apply to the way WARRRL undertakes its operation, so it is our role to ensure that that happens in those ways. In terms of day-to-day complaints, WARRRL has a hotline. In the normal course of things, most of them I understand—this is based on feedback we have had from WARRRL—are around, “Where is my closest refund point?” to, “I don’t understand why this bottle isn’t going through this machine.” So they are quite day-to-day operational things. Obviously, in the event that there are any issues that are more systemic, if you like, it is the department’s role, and obviously informed through the minister, to look at whether there are any implications for the running of the scheme, and that is our responsibility.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: You raised a case in here, and so did Mark Folkard, the member for Burns Beach, that related to a refund point in Clarkson, from memory, where a neighbour complained about the noise associated with it. In that case, I think my office contacted WARRRL. I have regular meetings with WARRRL; I think I have meetings once a month, so we have a relationship with WARRRL. As with anything else, if someone comes to my office and says they have an issue, we will take it up with whoever it is—in this case WARRRL. But as Sarah pointed out, they do have their own phone line. If someone came through you to me, we will happily raise the concern with WARRRL and ask them to look into it and fix it where appropriate. In the case of Clarkson, that was fixed the next week, I think. I think some noise attenuation was put in. I think rather than leaving certain doors open, they were closed, and I think that has had a positive impact on the neighbours.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That is good to hear. Can I ask in terms of containers that are rejected, because this seems to be a bugbear? There are a couple of correspondents who have highlighted some issues to me. I will identify just one. I will not refer to the individuals but I might refer to the company because I think that might assist in a resolution. A brewery in South Australia trades under the name Prancing Pony—never had their beers; sure it is a fine product. It appears that people presenting those cans are having those cans rejected. The CEO of that company assures their customer base that they have registered for the scheme. It is operational in Western Australia and, effectively, they have remitted money. I would be interested in clarification of the process of enrolling. I am presuming that you pay money through WARRRL; it is held in trust; it is then remitted out. It comes from the supplier of the product; that is the scheme. I have been led to believe, at least in this case and at least two weeks ago, that Prancing Pony Brewery had enlisted in the scheme and was assured that its containers were compliant. Nevertheless, people presenting those items were rejected, and this issue was elevated by the brewery directly to WARRRL, seeking some kind of resolution. I would like to know whether or not this particular issue has been resolved. Does this indicate a systemic issue or is it a transition piece? I am very interested to know.

[3.40 pm]

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: As of early November, there were 16 052 types of drink containers approved for sale in Western Australia, so it is an extraordinary number.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That is a lot.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: For each different product—you have got a Prancing Pony pale ale versus amber ale or whatever—you need to register both products. My understanding in relation to that company was that a number of the products had been registered, but a number had not been registered. That has been brought to our attention.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Sorry, minister, for the example of a brewery—you have got an IPA and an XPA—you have to register every specific product line? It does not apply globally?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It applies to each product that you sell. I am advised that the issue in relation to that company has been resolved now and that those containers are registered, but, initially, I think there was a misunderstanding. The company had registered some products, but not all of the products. It has been fixed, according to my information. Because it is at hand, WARRRL has advised that as of that same date—early November—it had received 40 complaints to its call centre. That is pretty significant. There were 200 000-odd transactions in the scheme since 1 October and they have received 40 complaints through the call centre. It does not say how many of those might have been multiple, but that just shows, I think, the success of the scheme.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Are they complaints from which side? Is it from the vendors' side or the —

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: These are complaints that WARRRL have received through their call centre about the Containers for Change scheme. These are all the complaints.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: But it does not demarcate whether that is the customer rolling up or the actual supplier.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. They are the 40 calls that they have had through the call centre with a complaint about the scheme.

The CHAIR: Honourable member, we need to move on because other members have questions.

Hon DIANE EVERS: One simple question—I believe, back when we were talking about the PERs and whether any had been not approved, Mr Sutton mentioned one from a previous year. I was just wondering what that was.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It related to Helena and Aurora—the Bungalbin project J5 at Helena and Aurora.

Hon DIANE EVERS: That is right. I do remember it now. Thank you. The other question I have again relates to the southern forests irrigation scheme and the PER that will be done on that. Recognising now that, I understand, it is going to be saline water that is going to be released from the dam to fulfil its environmental flows, which seems to me a big environmental issue. Earlier you said that once the PER is done it comes back to the minister, yourself, and you can also take into account economic factors and community factors. I notice that the funds have already been pulled, basically, for this. Noting also that we have seen revised figures for the water that will be available from the original proposal, is there any possibility to stop this scheme before going to the PER, given that there are so many factors weighing up against it?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: My agency is the regulator in this regard and approvals need to be sought through my agency. It is up to a proponent as to whether they leave a proposal in the system or take it out. It is not for me to make a comment. I will be a decision-maker on this in the future, so it is not appropriate for me to make any further comments. If the proponent of the project decided not to go ahead with it, that is their own business.

Hon DIANE EVERS: As you said, when the PER comes back, you can still take into account other factors.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: On any project, obviously, once the EPA makes their decision, then there is that appeals process and after that I am a decision-maker. I am not trying to shunt you off. It is just that this is the process. It is not for the environment minister to kill projects. That is not the role I play. But, obviously my agency has a role in assessing. The appeals committee has a role on my behalf in dealing with the appeals. After that, depending on what the decisions are, I have got a role in making a decision too.

Hon DIANE EVERS: The only other question I have is related to the COVID changes, where we are actually trying to get proposals through very quickly. It is likely to be a very busy period coming up over the next year; is that correct, and is that being planned for?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We have not really seen any increase in relation to COVID, but we are very busy anyway. There is a positive sentiment in the air. All of those bigger mining companies in particular have got projects that they want to get through the pipeline. We have also got state government projects like the various Metronet projects that are also seeking environmental approval at the same time. There is plenty of work around for the agency.

Hon DIANE EVERS: I guess I am thinking of the smaller ones because regional projects only had to be over \$5 million, I think, to go directly to the SAT. The one down at Lake Vancouver, of course, has come up again.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not think we have seen any of those yet.

Hon DIANE EVERS: So not many developments?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It has not been an issue for us yet.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Thank you.

The CHAIR: Hon Aaron Stonehouse.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Thank you, Madam Chair —

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: Sorry, honourable member. Were you talking about planning reforms rather than —

Hon DIANE EVERS: The fact that the planning reforms are to streamline the process so that —

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We have not seen them.

Hon DIANE EVERS: You are not seeing any of them? Maybe there will just be a lag if those should come through.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: It could be on the way still. Who knows. I am not sure. It just depends, obviously, on what the projects are as to whether they need environmental approval under the EPA in the first place.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: You saved the environmental process from being rushed with the new planning rules.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We certainly did.

Hon DIANE EVERS: Which is a bit of a shame, given we are supposed to be protecting the environment.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No. We protected the environment.

The CHAIR: Thanks, honourable members. It is actually not a conversation; it is a hearing. In fact, Hon Aaron Stonehouse has the call.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Minister, I have another question about the container deposit scheme. Beverage suppliers pay the levy to the scheme operator. That levy is paid in advance.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: For the smaller providers, they pay in arrears.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Right. For small suppliers, they pay in arrears; larger suppliers pay in advance. The levy is made up of the 10¢ refund plus a charge to cover the operating cost of the scheme operator. What is that charge per container?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I do not think we have it here because it ranges. I will ask Sarah to give you an answer to that. It is not a simple answer.

Ms McEVOY: The exact numbers are on the WARRRL website. They range between about 11¢ and 13¢. By law they cannot be more than the cost of running the scheme. It is restricted to the actual costs and no more. It is a not-for-profit scheme.

Hon AARON STONEHOUSE: Of course. That is all I have for now.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I have a couple of quick ones, minister. Page 656—the water planning allocation and optimisation component of what DWER does. Just a couple —

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That is water stuff. It is not for me. It is not for this division today. Sorry, Steve.

The CHAIR: The committee made it clear that this is about environmental regulation. Good try though!

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I will go back then to page 651—the native vegetation policy. There were some drafts put out at the beginning of this year. Are we expecting it before the end of the year? I guess my question then is: first off, are we expecting that on time; and, secondly, what is the likely impact, I suspect, particularly in relation to wheatbelt vegetation? That is the area where residual vegetation is at extremely low percentages. Is this likely to push us down to a place where it is virtually impossible to remove vegetation in a shire where you have got your three per cent vegetation—almost all of it on road verges, for example?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: In relation to your first question, I am hopeful. It has not been through the cabinet process.

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: I am hopeful of winning the election too, but that does not necessarily mean anything.

The CHAIR: Correct!

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I have probably got more chance of getting this policy through sooner, honourable member! No, I am not being disrespectful. Who knows? You are probably as hopeful as I am, but we will see. It is in the cabinet process at the moment. In terms of what it might do, because it has not been through cabinet yet, I cannot really answer that properly for you other than to say that, really, this is about having more transparency around what is cleared in Western Australia at the moment. The vast majority of the community would be shocked, if not alarmed, to understand the vast amount of clearing that is going on. It is about being transparent. It is also about ensuring that people only apply for permission to clear when they absolutely need to do it.

Part of it, too, will be about improving the mapping that exists in relation to native vegetation, and also then the monitoring and tracking of state government decisions that might affect it too. Because it has not been through the cabinet process yet, I cannot really give you any more than that—in case it gets butchered!

[3.50 pm]

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: Are you dealing with the healthy estuaries program?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: No, because that is —

Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS: It goes back under Water—all right; I will pass it on then.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: I seek some clarification, please, about page 663 of the *Budget Statements* and the reference to “Environment Online”. Obviously, it has been heralded in the last few budget papers. There is an implication here about a funding split between the state and commonwealth for

the \$28 million project. I just want to make sure I am reading this right; that is, effectively \$20 million is coming from the state government and the residual is coming from the commonwealth. Is that right or is this a different program?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: The state's contribution is \$20.5 million and the commonwealth contribution is about \$7.5 million.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: There is a rollout of the program forecast for 2020–21, 2021–22 and 2022–23. Will there be a measure of system access and usability in the first year? I do not know whether to read that it will take three years to build the platform before you can use it, or can you commence using this system but it is being built as you go? That obviously implies a measure of risk.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: My latest advice is that it will be delivered next year, so we are hoping to have it up and running by about August 2021, or certainly parts of it. That is the part that will deliver the industry one-stop-shop portal. We are also planning a digital environmental assessment under part IV of the EP act. That is the area of our act that the commonwealth is most interested in. We are leading the pack on this work. The commonwealth would like to see other states and territories have similar schemes in place, so they put some money on the table to help us, as a kind of leader, get our project or platform up and running, and then they hope to get other states to do something similar. Next year is when we are hoping it will be up and running.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That said, minister, I am relieved to hear that, but I am curious about the balance of the funds from 2021–22 and 2022–23. Does that imply still that the system is being built around the users as they are accessing specific portals that you are going to have ready before the other bits? I am just trying to get a sense of the whole project's scope.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I will ask the director general to make comment on it, but I want to take the opportunity to point out that my understanding is that the budget paper is wrong. The allocations are revised, I think. The spend is different. The original allocation was over three years, whereas the revised contribution is now over four years. I will ask the director general whether he wants to make a comment about that.

Mr ROWE: In answer to the question, the program will be delivered over multiple years, and it is being designed in such a way that users will get improved access on an ongoing basis. What we are dealing with here is basically addressing a legacy of about 10 or 11 dysfunctional systems, in many cases, so we are overhauling all of those over a period of several years. As the minister indicated, the priority 1s relate to part IV of the Environmental Protection Act process, so that is the front end of the stuff that comes into the Environmental Protection Authority, followed soon after by the land planning advice function, by which we provide a variety of referrals to multiple agencies, and then on an ongoing basis several of our other systems will be replaced. That includes the contaminated sites register, everything to do with native vegetation clearing approvals and everything to do with industry approvals, and then ultimately we will be rolling in our water systems as well, which are already reasonably functional. We will be looking to integrate that into one big system. The benefits will be significant for our proponents, because they will be able to have a single point of access. They will be able to see all of the approvals that they have with us. They will be able to track those in terms of where they are at with the system. We are anticipating very significant improvements and efficiencies for proponents, for our own agency in terms of how we work and also greater transparency of information for the community.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Can I just ask a few follow-ups to that, minister? I am obligated to ask this almost administrative question. Will an erratum be issued that reflects the proposed spend of money now? I think you are almost obligated to do that now.

The CHAIR: Or is that done in the midyear review?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: I think it might be done in the midyear review by Treasury.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Okay; I will keep an eye out for it then.

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: If you are interested in the revised allocations, I can give them to you.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: That might be getting ahead of my next question. I was wondering whether you could potentially provide as much as you are able to about the project rollout plan with the appropriate spends per year, just so I understand what you are likely to deliver in terms of functionality and by when. Are you able to table that document or will you take it as a supplementary?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: We cannot. We are about to embark on a procurement process, so I cannot table anything yet. What I can give you is the revised allocations. The original allocation in 2020–21 from the state was \$5.146 million and then afterwards \$7.56 million and \$7.795 million, for a total of \$20.501 million. The commonwealth contribution was \$4.557 million in the first year and in 2021–22, the second year, it was \$2.943 million, for a total contribution of \$7.5 million. The revised commonwealth contribution is now \$2.25 million in year 1 and \$5.25 million in year 2, for a value of \$7.5 million. Our state contribution will start in 2021–22, and that will be \$7.56 million in that year, \$7.795 million, and \$5.146 million in the third year, to the value of \$20.501 million.

Hon TJORN SIBMA: Are they all system development costs or does that also include, say, train the trainer, onboarding and those kinds of processes as well?

Hon STEPHEN DAWSON: That includes everything. It is system, training and whatever else we need to do.

The CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I thank you for your attendance today.

I remind members that due to time constraints, the electronic lodgement system will not be reopened for additional questions this year.

For witnesses, I advise that the committee will forward the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions you have taken on notice highlighted—I do not think there were any—as soon as possible after the hearing. Responses to questions on notice are due by 5.00 pm within 10 working days after receipt. Should you be unable to meet the 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.

I ask you to promptly leave the chamber for COVID-19 cleaning between sessions. Once again, I thank you for your attendance.

Hearing concluded at 3.58 pm
