

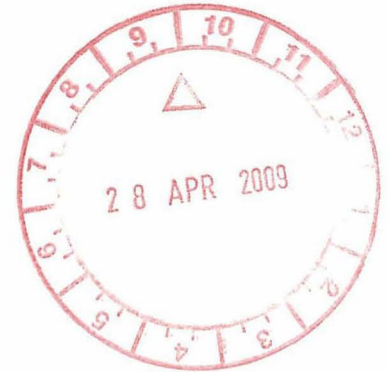


PUBLIC

Premier of Western Australia

Our Ref: 200901822

Hon Giz Watson MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000



Dear Ms ^{Giz}Watson/

REPORT IN RELATION TO BALGA WORKS PROGRAM

Thank you for your letter of 9 March 2009 regarding the *Report No. 12: Balga Works Program* (tabled paper 4019) ('the Report') prepared by the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations (the Committee).

I note that the Committee has not yet received a response to Recommendation 1 of the Report, namely,

The Committee recommends that the Government develop guidelines requiring all public servants to report on the outcome of travel undertaken for a public purpose.

I note that a response was originally sought from the previous Government in 3 June 2008. It appears that the response was delayed due to the caretaker period and change of Government.

The Government accepts this recommendation in principle acknowledging that it is good public sector practice for officers to make notes and prepare written records in relation to investigatory and research trips undertaken using public funding and for a public purpose. The Government does not accept the need for a mandatory requirement for a report to be prepared on the outcome of travel undertaken for a public purpose as this would create an extensive administrative requirement that would negatively impact on public sector efficiency. As a matter of public sector best practice it is considered that public sector officers should exercise their personal discretion in relation to the nature and scope of any written report on the outcomes of any travel they have undertaken. It is likely that most public sector officers already prepare some form of record of the outcome of their travel whether that is in the form of minutes from meetings or other documents.

The public sector already maintains high standards of accountability in relation to public sector travel with regular reporting to Parliament on quarterly travel undertaken for a public purpose. Premier's Circular 2007/01 requires reporting of the dates, destination, purpose of trip, cost and names of officers undertaking all interstate and overseas travel. The value of such travel and its contribution to broader outcomes can also be demonstrated in the outcomes specified in the budget and annual report documents produced by public sector agencies.

It should also be noted that Clause 10 of the *Guidelines attached to Premier's Circular 2007/01* requires Ministers to provide the Director General of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet with an overseas travel report within 2 months of the completion of each trip.

In order to reinforce the principle the Government will examine the requirements of Premier's Circular 2007/01 when it is next reviewed and consider amendments to encourage public sector officers to appropriately record the outcomes of any travel undertaken for public purposes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Barnett', written in a cursive style.

Colin Barnett MLA
PREMIER

17 APR 2009