

Division 28: State Solicitor's Office, \$50 242 000 —

Mrs L.A. Munday, Chair.

Mr J.R. Quigley, Attorney General.

Ms A. Komninos, Acting State Solicitor.

Mr N. Kabugua, Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr W. Meier, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr J. Lee, Principal Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with those details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon on Friday, 2 June 2023. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

The Leader of the Liberal Party.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the third significant issue impacting the agency on page 437 and note that the volume and complexity of child sex abuse claims against the state continues to rise. The State Solicitor's Office is looking at opportunities to better manage those claims for the state. What is driving the increase in the volume of child sex abuse claims against the state?

Mr J.R. QUIGLEY: I would like to defer to the acting State Solicitor because she will have a good idea of the driver behind that.

Ms A. Komninos: The nature of child sex abuse claims is that we removed the statute of limitations. It appears that for many, many years, people have stayed silent and it is a very slow process for people to come to terms with bringing a claim. Since the statute of limitations was removed on 1 July 2018, we have received 382 claims. There does not appear to be a slowdown in those claims. In the last six months, we received 57 more claims.

Ms L. METTAM: In what period?

Ms A. Komninos: From 1 January we received another 57 claims. There is a significant continuation of claims coming forward and the claims are highly complex and factually complex, and because they are historical, it is also difficult to get across all the facts and details.

Ms L. METTAM: I have a further question.

The CHAIR: You have 10 seconds!

Ms L. METTAM: Given the significant body of work, what can be done? Is there a dedicated agency to support these individuals, given that they are historical cases?

The CHAIR: Sorry, Leader of the Liberal Party.

The appropriation was recommended.