

**COMMITTEE REPORTS AND MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS — CONSIDERATION**

*Committee*

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Hon Jon Ford) in the chair.

*Standing Committee on Legislation — Fourteenth Report — “Inquiry into the Jurisdiction and Operation of the State Administrative Tribunal” — Motion*

Resumed from 19 May on the following motion moved by Hon Ken Baston —

That the report be noted.

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I want to make a few comments about this report, which took up a considerable number of months of the lives of many of us in this chamber. As honourable members know, it was referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation in June 2007, and nearly two years later the report was laid on the table of this chamber. A few of us served our full time on the inquiry. One such member was Hon Giz Watson, who made a substantial contribution, partly because she tends to make a substantial contribution to everything she participates in, but also because she was a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation that considered the State Administrative Tribunal Bill between 2001 and 2005. She was one of the members who came to the review with a great deal of background knowledge about the issues and the original deliberations that were put into refining the bill before it finally came to this chamber. Hon Ken Baston also did the full two years, and spent the latter part of that time as chair of the committee when he took over from Hon Graham Giffard, who did the first 12 months or so. It is probably fair to say that members on both sides of the house miss Hon Graham Giffard for any number of reasons, not the least his very capable chairing of that committee. Hon George Cash was a substitute member who served the full two years. Again, as we came to expect, Hon George Cash made a very substantial and thoughtful contribution to the debate right throughout that time. As Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich said, he was a genuinely good bloke.

**Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich:** He should have been on our side!

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** I think there were many times when he wished he was on our side of the chamber.

**Hon Norman Moore:** I can give you an absolute assurance!

**Hon SALLY TALBOT:** We will not disabuse Hon Norman Moore of that notion.

I should also acknowledge the contribution of Hon Matt Benson-Lidholm, who came on to the committee only a matter of months before we reported and did a sterling job of dealing with a report that was already, at that stage, several hundred pages long. There was the odd occasion when we let him off not making comments in detail on particular sections, but all in all he set a fine example of how many of us are required to get our heads around very complex material in a very short time.

I make particular note of the contribution made by the legal advisory officer, Denise Wong, who we thought at times was probably putting together her job application for the State Administrative Tribunal when she eventually tires of us in this place. She did a job that can only be described as superb. She coped with some material that was very, very dense and complicated, because as honourable members know, the SAT jurisdiction ranges right across every act in Western Australia, either by inclusion or exclusion. Denise did a superb job of putting this report together, bringing what can at times be fairly diverse meandering trains of thought from committee members and turning them into something that looks like a coherent statement of review.

I should also add my personal thanks to all the people on that committee. The second half of 2007 was a very traumatic time for me when I lost both my parents within 29 days of each other, so I spent a considerable amount of time in that first six months either literally absent from the committee or not in the ideal frame of mind to be dealing with such complicated material. In that regard, I think that I played a very minor part in contributing any substance to the report, but I did appreciate the personal support that I received from the members of that committee in their patience with me and my irregular attendance at certain periods during that time.

I note that this report outlived the first committee and, not literally, outlived in terms of his professional engagement the President of the State Administrative Tribunal, Hon Justice Michael Barker, who was replaced about halfway through the inquiry. As I say, it took a very long time. I think it was all worth it, though. As members will see, we came up with 60 recommendations, most of which go to matters of real substance to do with the way the SAT works. I was impressed during the two years that we undertook this inquiry by the degree of bipartisan support for the processes of SAT that was manifested by all the members of the committee during that time. We all have an interest in getting this right and in taking an active part in determining whether SAT provisions need to be extended, whether they need to be reined in and whether they are working in the most effective way. It is fair to say that all in all the conclusion of the committee was that they are indeed working

pretty much along the lines that were envisaged by the Attorney General, Jim McGinty, when he introduced the bill into the Parliament, and by the Standing Committee on Legislation, which reviewed the bills during the period between 2001 and 2005.

We had no difficulty attracting comment to the committee. We received close to 100 submissions, and that would not take into account all the correspondence that we entered into in an attempt to clarify points or gain additional information from people.

**Committee interrupted, pursuant to temporary orders.**

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*Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm*