

**Lotteries Commission —**

Mr Terry Healy, Chair.

Mr M. McGowan, Premier.

Mr J.S. Hubble, General Manager, Corporate Services; Chief Finance Officer.

[Witness introduced.]

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I refer to page 581, "WA Recovery Plan—Other Initiatives". Paragraph 1 states —

... Lotterywest, has allocated all available profits of the lottery (up to \$159 million) directly into the newly created COVID-19 Relief Fund.

Has that target of \$159 million been reached; and, if so, does the Premier have any plans to ask Lotterywest for any more funding?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** In late March, maybe one month into COVID, or maybe less than that, I went to meet with the Lotterywest board and said that we were in extraordinary times and we needed to reallocate everything we could towards what was happening. A whole bunch of organisations were losing support because all their functions, events, concerts and whatever by which they raised money were going, and we were expecting huge additional demands on some of the relief agencies out there, such as food, housing and all those sorts of things. Therefore, the \$159 million COVID-19 relief fund was established in March 2020. A total of \$55 million has been paid to 524 applicants. A list of the grant recipients was published in Lotterywest's 2019–20 annual report. I think further applications are being considered by the Lotterywest board at every meeting, which is monthly. Obviously, the whole trajectory of Lotterywest has changed from what it used to be, which I understand is sad for some organisations, and, eventually, it will change back. Currently, \$55 million has been allocated towards those projects, but, as each meeting comes, more money will be allocated, and I suspect the allocations will grow.

**The CHAIR:** Do you have a further question, member for Kalgoorlie?

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I will have a new question.

**The CHAIR:** Now or later?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Go ahead, member for Kalgoorlie.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** Okay. Mr Chair, you will probably tell me whether I am drawing a long bow on this next question.

**The CHAIR:** Are you referring to a page number?

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** No, I am referring to this next question. I am still on page 581—that is the only page I have—and the grant management system. Am I able to ask a question about giving grants to charities? It is in relation to a query that I have.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Is it in relation to an individual application?

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** Yes, Premier. But I do not know whether this is the forum —

**The CHAIR:** Perhaps, member, if you ask the full question, I will see whether the Premier can answer it.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** All right. It has been brought to my attention that a charity applied for funding and it was refused, allegedly based on its views about same-sex marriage. The church was denied the grant based on its biblical views on same-sex marriage.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes, I am aware of the case. The Lotterywest board makes decisions independent of the government. As I said, in late March, I went to see the board to say that we needed to focus on COVID and COVID recovery, which it agreed with. But in terms of its individual assessments on grants, it is independent of government. With the exception of one grant ever, I have signed off exactly what the board has recommended over the course of my three and a half years as the minister responsible for the agency. In the case of that particular grant—I think it was the Royal Agricultural Society of WA—in between the board making its decision and the document coming to me, the government, obviously, changed policy, so I had to reject the recommendation, which was agreed to by the Lotterywest board. In answer to the member's question, Lotterywest is a discretionary grant provider. The board's grant decision is independent of government. I can only support or reject. I do not have any role in the assessment of grants. I have approved every single grant that has come up to me in my time as minister, with the exception of the Royal Agricultural Society one, which was because the government's position changed between the decision of the board and the application arriving on my desk. The board made no recommendation for Margaret Court Community Outreach. Increasingly over this year, the board has made lots and lots of grants to emergency relief and agencies that provide support for people in need—more so than any year ever—so that is an ongoing program.

Lotterywest is working with the food relief forum to confirm that any such decision that it makes would not affect those in need.

In summary, these are decisions for the board. It makes them in accordance with its constitution and its guiding documents. But this year, more Lotterywest money has gone to emergency relief than in any year ever.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** Thank you, Premier. I accept that. Premier, am I able to have permission to converse with Lotterywest?

**The CHAIR:** Member, the best way is if you ask your question in full, I will ask the Premier to deliver his response.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** Am I able to have permission to converse with Lotterywest on behalf of —

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Member, you are a member of Parliament; if you wish to call Lotterywest, you are free to do so.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** I did not know whether it was under —

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I do not think there is any rule that says you cannot call Lotterywest. Whether or not it wants to converse with you is another matter!

**The CHAIR:** Member, if you have a question —

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** What line item is that?

**The CHAIR:** If the member would like to ask the Premier a question, we will do our best to facilitate that within the boundaries of this chamber.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I am not banning Lotterywest from speaking to the member. I think members often advocate on behalf of certain projects or whatever. That is not unusual.

**Mr K.M. O'DONNELL:** Yes. I was not out to champion it or anything. I was trying to possibly get a second side of the story. Thank you.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** On the same page, 581, I note there is a \$300 000 allocation towards the property program for Lotterywest. I am keen to understand what that is.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I will get Mr Hubble to comment on that.

**Mr J.S. Hubble:** There are actually two elements for the property program. One element is an expenditure and one is a revenue. The expenditure of \$300 000 is for the development of an additional product for Lotterywest called a game service fast ticket, so it is not property in the physical sense of property. On the revenue side, we have an intended sale of property for \$1.3 million.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Out of curiosity, as part of this, how much money does Lotterywest provide to responsible gambling services and the like or to gambling support services or gambling counselling support services?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I will hand that to Mr Hubble to answer that question. I assume the member is referring to some line item.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** I am sure I am.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes. Mr Hubble.

**Mr J.S. Hubble:** I would not be able to give the member a hard figure today. We contribute to responsible gambling in two ways. We make a contribution to a state facility, as do other gambling agencies. I recall that our contribution to that is quite substantial, in terms of between \$100 000 and \$200 000 per annum. We also run our own responsible gambling practice. We have recently received the highest level of accreditation for responsible gambling, so we wish to maintain that.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** That completes the examination of the Lotteries Commission's authority. I will now vacate the chair until 7.00 pm.

*Meeting suspended from 6.00 to 7.00 pm*