

GOVERNMENT OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

**225. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Minister Assisting the Treasurer:**

I am pleased to see the minister's recent announcement regarding the government's new approach to government accommodation. Would the minister please outline to the house —

**Mr P. Papalia:** It's looking a bit dodgy, isn't it?

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Given federal Labor's attempts to destroy our economy, maybe the opposition might want to hear about how we are saving taxpayers' money.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, all I want to hear from you is the question; I do not want to hear anything from anybody else while the question is being asked.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** Would the minister explain to the house the new strategic approach to government office accommodation, and how it might save taxpayers in Western Australia something in the region of \$20 million to \$25 million?

**Mr W.R. MARMION replied:**

I thank the member for Scarborough for this question. As a member of the Red Tape Reduction Group, she is a strong advocate for the efficient use of taxpayers' funds.

This government is committed to efficient government. One area in which we can be efficient is in the provision of government accommodation. I was astounded when I found out that the government has 148 lease agreements and 96 buildings across the central business district, East Perth and West Perth. This is costing the taxpayer \$220 million a year. Therefore, even a 10 per cent improvement in that cost will result in a saving of \$22 million. The government is working with Treasury to coordinate a better master planning approach to the delivery of government accommodation. This has three elements. The first element is the consolidation of accommodation into fewer buildings. We will take advantage of the power we have in being a large provider of accommodation in the CBD. The second prong of our efficiency measure will be to decentralise about 15 to 20 per cent of our office accommodation out of the CBD into the metropolitan regions. I can see a big smile on the face of the member for Joondalup! I will get to that in a minute. We will also reduce fit-out costs. Currently, fit-out costs are based on 19 square metres per person, and we will move to 15 square metres per person; that is still rather a large area. As an example of one of our initiatives, we will be moving 2 500 public servants from 10 agencies into one building at 140 William Street. The previous regime of 19 square metres per person would have allowed only 2 000 people to move into that building, so that is just one very strong, deliverable initiative that I have announced today.

In another good example of decentralisation, we are moving the Department of Treasury and Finance offices, along with the Department of Training and Workforce Development, from five city buildings into one building at Herdsman Business Park. Over the next five years, we will move agencies out of the CBD to areas close to public transport, and we will look at places like Joondalup, which will please both the member for Ocean Reef and the member for Joondalup.

This strategy is good news for workers: they will be able to work locally and pay less for parking. It is good news for areas like Stirling, which is looking to grow as a major centre. It is good news for taxpayers. For example, if we had stayed at Governor Stirling Tower rather than move to another location, it would cost us \$780 per square metre; we will now get that figure down to \$520 per square metre by moving somewhere else. These are massive savings.

I reject the argument that this will affect the vitality of the city. Some 80 per cent of public servants will still be in government offices in the city. The vitality of the city is more about increasing the number of people living in the city, and delivering the Northbridge Link and the foreshore project, which the government is getting on with doing.

There will be an up-front cost of \$43 million to put this strategy in place, but once it is fully operational, we predict it will save the taxpayers of Western Australia between \$20 million and \$25 million a year. This government is focused on delivering more efficient administration and reducing the burden on taxpayers. This demonstrates how smart governments can save taxpayers' money without sacrificing service delivery or employee conditions.