

Division 4: Public Sector Commission, \$28 637 000 —

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr M. McGowan, Minister for Public Sector Management.

Ms S. O’Neill, PSM, Public Sector Commissioner.

Mr L. Warner, Executive Director, Workforce Policy and Diversity.

Ms T. Milici, Executive Director, Data Analytics and Technology.

Mr S. McLeod, Acting Executive Director, Organisational Governance and Development.

[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. I 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.

Leader of the Opposition.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Welcome along. Premier, I refer to the list under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 76 of budget paper No 2. The first paragraph refers to data collection of the public sector undertaken through a census in 2022–23. I wonder whether the Premier can explain how that was actually undertaken, whether it would be possible to simply aggregate the information supplied by the various departments through their normal reporting processes in a desktop review, and how this actually occurred?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will let the Public Sector Commissioner explain to the Leader of the Opposition the data reform census and direct access.

Ms S. O’Neill: We ran a pilot in 2021. The census is a little different from the stock standard data collection of workforce information; it goes beyond that. We already collect information from agencies and publish a quarterly report on general workforce collections, but the census goes further than that. It asks about staff’s experience of working in their agencies, across a range of factors that are not just about whether they work part-time or full-time. It looks at their experience in terms of diversity; whether they feel welcome in the workplace; and where they live, obviously de-identified, so that we can look at how we map where people work. It is a much richer data source than the standard workforce data that we collect, and always have done, to inform agencies’ planning.

We did the pilot, and this year there was a trial for all public sector staff. We had a very large response rate—more than 47 000, which is five times the number that responded to the old perception survey we used to do for employees. It is the largest data collection we have done of this kind, and the first time we have done it.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Thank you for that. Premier, the information actually looks at workforce experience as well. I wonder whether it has also provided insights into where there might be difficulties in finding staff with the correct experiences to actually work in the sector. Can the Premier offer some insights into where there are some glaring issues in terms of shortages of those experienced staff?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will hand to the Public Sector Commissioner to answer the Leader of the Opposition’s question.

Ms S. O’Neill: The collection does not carry out the strategic workforce planning role of finding out where vacancies are, agency by agency; as I said, it is a different kind of collection. Agencies are responsible for vacancy management, so each agency will undertake its workforce collections to align to their strategic priorities and where they need to have staff. This workforce collection is, as I said, based on best practice design methodologies and looks at the wealth of information that we do not get from the standard workforce collections. For us, it is a combination of having the quarterly workforce report, which as I said is made public, and this new collection, which is a vast data repository. That report will become available later in the year, with our state of the state report. A lot of information will be there. It goes into job role and function. There is a breakdown in that collection of different jobs that people do and the functions they undertake. Also, interestingly, we are looking at the education qualifications that people have in their current roles. That is also really good information for the future to align where we might place people, or they

might be interested in other roles alongside the education qualifications that they bring to the role. It is not a collection that looks at the gaps in where we might have staff; that is more in agency workforce planning.

[3.00 pm]

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to paragraph 3 on page 76 of budget paper No 2 and the significant issues impacting the agency. How many reports of misconduct were received over 2022–23 and how many of those were investigated?

The CHAIR: Just one at a time, member. You can ask further questions.

Mr M. McGOWAN: The number of year-to-date matters of minor misconduct reported is 381. By the end of last year, excluding vaccination issues, there were 454. On that basis, it is probably tracking slightly below last year. It is a 16 per cent reduction.

Ms L. METTAM: How many of those 381 matters were investigated?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will let the Public Sector Commissioner answer this.

Ms S. O'Neill: Of the 381 matters as at 31 March, because we are on a year-to-date data collection, 126 were matters that were assessed as not being minor misconduct, so there was already one-third or so out of scope. As per the normal process after we assess them—all matters are assessed under our responsibility under the Corruption, Crime and Misconduct Act—121 were referred to authorities for their investigation and then to provide a detailed report back to us for review. Seventy went back to the authority and the authority was required to advise the commission of the outcome of the action taken. Forty-six were referred to a third party—primarily the CCC—in cases in which we might have suspected potential serious misconduct. Eight were referred to the authority but we did not require anything further. Ten of those 381 matters were ongoing with us at the time of this data publication.

Ms L. METTAM: How many of these matters resulted in disciplinary action?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will ask the Public Sector Commissioner to respond.

Ms S. O'Neill: I know that as at 31 March, 19 dismissals had been finalised. We have had no claims resulting in breaches of standard so far. In terms of tier 1 officers, we have not had any terminations for minor misconduct. I am looking for the general breakdown, but I might have to come back to the member while we find that.

Ms L. METTAM: Can I clarify that this breakdown was until 31 March year to date?

Ms S. O'Neill: Yes.

Ms L. METTAM: When making a comparison between 381 and 454, they are both 12-month periods.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Correct.

Ms L. METTAM: There were 19 dismissals in the previous 12 months to 31 March. How many dismissals were there in the year before that?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will hand it to the Public Sector Commissioner.

Ms S. O'Neill: I do not think we have the comparison with the previous year with us.

Ms L. METTAM: Can this breakdown, with a comparison of the previous year, be provided by way of supplementary information?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am not exactly sure what the member is asking for.

The CHAIR: You will need to articulate that, member.

Ms L. METTAM: Yes. I am asking for a breakdown of cases of misconduct in relation to reports received, how many matters resulted in dismissals and how many matters had been directed to the Corruption and Crime Commission.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I think we have that information; perhaps we can read it out now.

Ms S. O'Neill: Remember that there is a difference between matters and allegations, each matter can have multiple allegations. In the matters, they are broken down into 639 allegations that relate to 403 individuals. That is the number that has been closed so far, remembering that not all those cases would be closed. Nineteen individuals were dismissed, as I said. On a three-year trend since 2020–21, 50 individuals have been the subject of 82 allegations that were dismissed. From 2020 to 2023, 50 people have been dismissed, whereas year to date we are looking at 19 so far. It is a reasonably steady comparative picture for dismissals.

Ms L. METTAM: What was the nature of the 19 dismissals?

Mr M. McGOWAN: What for? There are about 166 000 people in the public sector, so there will always be issues. Do we have a breakdown? I will ask the Public Sector Commissioner.

Ms S. O'Neill: There is a range of categories of allegations. The large number of allegations in the public sector for any potential misconduct is around the personal behaviour category, so most likely many of those, excluding the mandatory vaccination that occurred in the previous year, would be in the personal behaviour subcategory.

Dr D.J. HONEY: On page 76 of the budget papers, paragraph 2 refers to the commission's agency capability review program, which was a trial. It cost \$2 million a year or a bit more. Could the Premier please explain what that program involves?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is a program that we are implementing progressively across various agencies to review individual agencies and identify capabilities that might need to be improved. It uses a framework for effective public sector management and administration to assess an agency's current capability and the extent to which it has the right structure, governance systems, processes and resources to achieve the highest possible outcomes. Each review is led by an independent external reviewer or reviewers, supported by a dedicated team at the commission and a senior reviewer co-opted from within the public sector. Eight agencies have been reviewed so far: Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety; Department of Water and Environmental Regulation; Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage; Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries; Department of Finance; Department of Communities; and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. The executive summaries of the review findings are available on www.wa.gov.au. The total cost of the program is \$3.9 million, including internal resources as of 31 March 2023. The trial is due to conclude at the end of June. I expect that we will undertake further of these going forward and other agencies will be subject to them. It basically provides an analysis of an agency that is then provided to cabinet and ministers and senior staff in the agencies so there can be a continual process of improvement. It has been highly recommended by the Public Sector Commissioner as a way of improving the performance of government agencies. As I said, we publish the executive summary. We must be careful about identifying people by their names. That is the process we have gone through.

[3.10 pm]

Dr D.J. HONEY: Is the Premier able to provide an example of where that review has led to a change in an agency—where a particular change has been made as a result of that review?

Ms S. O'Neill: There has been a range of improvements but one that I would talk about is workforce planning. Across a number of the agencies we have identified that workforce planning needs to be strengthened, and that builds on the back of shortages as well. It is evident to us that the longer term view of supply and demand of staff needs to be strengthened in some agencies. Some agencies do it well. That would be an example of an area where going in, talking to staff from the lowest level to the highest level, to stakeholders, to other experts in the area, that more can be done in a number of agencies around workforce planning. As a result, as a commission we work with agencies to build and strengthen that aspect. For example, on the basis of that theme, we will put out new guidance, new materials, that support those agencies. Although there is an individual benefit to agencies, we bring that together to develop further advice that can be used across the public sector.

Dr D.J. HONEY: When the government came to power, the Premier made some major changes, forming mega-departments, as some have described them. Does this review process look at the effectiveness and the outcomes of that process in delivering the efficiencies or the synergies the government expected?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I would probably dispute the member's term "mega-departments".

Dr D.J. HONEY: Larger departments.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Just so the member knows, Victoria has eight departments and Western Australia has 26.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I am aware of that.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Victoria has eight, we have 26, and Victoria has two and a half times our population.

Dr D.J. HONEY: The Premier explained that it was a basket case.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I have never said that Victoria was a basket case, but it has eight departments and we have 26. The argument that there are mega-departments does not really hold water. I would say that it is a more rational allocation of agencies, particularly coming down from 41.

As I said earlier, the commission has reviewed some of the agencies that were brought together—I gave the member a list—and it uses a framework to work out whether they have the right structure, governance systems, processes and resource use in place.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I appreciate that the Premier explained that the commission is reviewing those internal structures. Does that also include consultation with the organisations or groups the Premier would consider to be customers of those agencies to see whether they believe the agency is meeting the needs?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Yes; some of the reviews would go to 60 or 70 stakeholders or related entities.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to page 77 of budget paper No 2, under public sector leadership, and the Solid Futures Aboriginal traineeship program and the deferred implementation of a high potential senior executive development program. What was the target for the Solid Futures program and how many undertook the program?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We have a target of 50 in the 2023 calendar year. Thirty-six have commenced this year, but that reflects the very strong labour market; a lot of people got jobs elsewhere. Last year and the year before it was 47.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does the commission measure the attrition rate—of those who commence, how many finish?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Obviously, we do not for this year because it is only May. In 2021, 47 commenced and 35 completed. In 2022, 47 commenced and 20 completed, but four part-time trainees are not included in that as they are due to graduate in August this year. As the member would understand, there is a significant attrition rate.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is that program run through the Public Sector Commission? Obviously it is in this sector, but it is a little difficult to understand where some of these programs land now, given that there is no department of Aboriginal affairs. Who has control of the program and how does that work between different departments?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am advised that the Public Sector Commission employs them and they are farmed out to various agencies around the state. I will get the Public Sector Commissioner to elaborate.

Ms S. O'Neill: We run the advertising and recruitment. Solid Futures is a new brand for the Aboriginal traineeship program, as it was once called. We are trying to invigorate and generate more interest in the program to start with and position it well for young people. We used a lot of young people to help us design that. We recruit and employ—they are employed by us—and then they are placed in agencies. Agencies are really keen to have those young people, so they sit out there and work in the agencies in that sense, but they are employed by us, and we then have a group of mentors who work with those. Out of the 36, 30 are in the metropolitan area and six are in regional areas at the moment. We work with young people in the regions as well. To try to do something about the numbers we are getting in the current market, we also worked with another provider to see whether it could source any other young Aboriginal people that we were not reaching who might be involved. We are also looking at increasing the age range; it is up to 24. It might be that some slightly older, but still very young, people might be interested in taking on a traineeship. We are trying to strengthen it. The other thing we are now doing in this area is looking at getting into universities much earlier and looking at young people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background who are working their way through university to see whether we can do early offers. The private sector has historically been more proactive in early offers into the university sector than we have. We are trying to do a range of things around Aboriginal employment. Primarily Aboriginal people are employed by agencies, but we take some responsibility for this group.

[3.20 pm]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Can I clarify, out of the current cohort, are six in regional Western Australia?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am advised that is correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is there an aspiration or a target to increase that number in regional communities?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The target is 50 across the state. We are doing more promotional work to attract people. As I said, if people are getting jobs outside the public sector and we cannot recruit enough, it is good that people are getting jobs. It is good that the labour market is strong. It is an opportunity for people, should they wish to take it.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to page 80 and “Income” under the financial statements. It refers to the deferment of the high potential senior executive development program. Why was the program deferred?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Where is that on the page, sorry?

Ms L. METTAM: It is on page 80, the second paragraph up the top.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will get some more fulsome information, but there was a deferral of that program on the basis of people being deployed to COVID-response initiatives over that period. The commission is now working on a new high potential senior executive initiative. The initiative identifies high potential senior executives across the sector who have demonstrated potential to move into critical agency roles such as assistant or deputy director general positions. Identified leaders will be engaged in a bespoke development program to provide them with accelerated development to prepare them for what it takes to be a state leader in Western Australia. That is something the commission is currently working on. I will let the Public Sector Commissioner expand. We are furiously hunting for a piece of paper and will no doubt find it by the end of today’s proceedings.

Ms S. O'Neill: We started developing the high potential senior executive initiative a couple of years ago. We really want to give people the experience and learning to make the next shift in their leadership journey. During the COVID period, we redirected internal resources so that the people who were working on this program assisted in other areas of the commission. It was an internal redirection of those resources because it was not a program that was committed publicly. It was something we had been working on and developing. We sought to change our

funding level to show that where we were going to collect fees for that program, we would not be doing that over last year and the next period. It was a deferment. The Expenditure Review Committee approved that as part of the 2022–23 midyear review process.

The CHAIR: After one further question, would the Premier like a comfort break?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am tracking okay, as far as I can tell.

Ms L. METTAM: Can the Premier advise how many of these positions the public sector currently has approved in previous years?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The program was deferred because of COVID. The commission is looking to reinstate it. I thought I said a number a moment ago. The anticipated number of people is 25. Is that what the member was asking?

Ms L. METTAM: I asked whether any of these positions have been filled in previous years.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will let the Public Sector Commissioner comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: If the member is referring to the new high potential roles, they have never been created before. They are brand new. It is something we are developing and working on. We anticipate that it could be 20 to 25 people, but with all high potential development processes, a testing benchmark is set and perhaps a target of 20 to 25, but depending on the number who come through the process successfully, we might end up with 15 or 18 or whatever the number will be. There is no such program in existence, so we cannot identify a previous number. That is the whole point. We are trying to get on the front foot and do some high-end development of exceptional leaders who can move from general leadership into senior leadership.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is a good idea across the public sector. Obviously, we have to renew the leadership in agencies over time. Because of distance and a range of other factors, attracting people from interstate is not as easy here as perhaps it is in other states where people move around a bit. Training and grooming our own people for these roles is very sensible. As the member would know, directors general and deputy directors general move on, particularly in a very tight labour market, so it is very important to have a group of people willing or ready to fill in. I think this is a terrific initiative and I urge people across the public sector to look at it, once it is up and running. If they are of the mindset to go into a higher role, they should take advantage of it.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the spending changes table on page 75. The agency capability review comes under “Ongoing Initiative”. What is the general length of time to complete a review of an agency?

Mr M. McGOWAN: It is up to six months.

Ms L. METTAM: I note the cost of \$2.1 million. Will the cost differ across different agencies? What is the breakdown in cost for those reviews?

Mr M. McGOWAN: For agency capability reviews, the anticipated total cost for each review is \$476 000. That is the average cost for each of the reviews. We have done eight so far and we are looking at doing more over time as a progressive program to improve the performance of government agencies.

Ms L. METTAM: How are the key reviewers chosen for these reviews, or is it done in house?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I will let the Public Sector Commissioner explain.

Ms S. O'Neill: We have a panel contract with which we go out to seek people who are interested in undertaking such a review. We set the specifications for them. Then we match potential reviewers, depending on which agencies we choose. Obviously, we want to look at their skills, expertise and background to make a match for them. For example, we have used Colin Murphy, the previous Auditor General, who did the review of the Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage. That is one example. We do a matching process of their background and then I recommend to the Premier which reviewers might be suitable for each review. On one occasion we used two lead reviewers. For example, we are doing one of the Department of Communities right now because it is an enormous department with lots of complexity. Each lead reviewer is engaged under a contract. The departments pay the cost of the lead reviewer. They are capped at \$93 000. The agencies pay for that themselves through us. The total process for those lead reviewers is that we have a selection process to get them on the panel, we match them, we recommend the reviewer to the Premier, we appoint them and then they undertake their review.

[3.30 pm]

Ms L. METTAM: Is the panel independent? Is everybody on the panel independent of government?

Mr M. McGOWAN: They are independent and respected people. As the commissioner said, we can choose from these lead reviewers: Colin Murphy, PSM; Diane Smith-Gander; Carmel McGregor, PSM; Professor Margaret Seares, AO; Dr Michael Schaper; Mr Reece Waldo; and Susan Hunt, AM, PSM.

Ms L. METTAM: How are the reviews actioned if issues are found or the agencies are lacking?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The review comes back to cabinet. The executive summary is published. The relevant minister is briefed. The leadership of the relevant agency receives a copy and is briefed, with a remit to take note of whatever the review found they need to improve. I will let the Public Sector Commissioner provide a further answer.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is put into the director general's performance agreement. Each agency also has to develop a statement of commitment, which is what they are going to do as a result. They also report that in their annual report. It is quite a rounded process from review to implementation to follow up with those agencies. In fact, over the next couple of weeks, we will go back to the first agencies reviewed, and we are having meetings to discuss their process on the review findings.

Ms L. METTAM: I have one last question.

The CHAIR: Last question—that is a relief.

Ms L. METTAM: It is my last question on this section. When is it anticipated that the review on the Department of Communities will be complete?

Mr M. McGOWAN: At the end of June this year.

Ms L. METTAM: I refer to the public sector training programs on page 81 of budget paper No 2.

The CHAIR: That is at the top of page 81.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I am waiting for the member's question with bated breath.

Ms L. METTAM: What is the yearly update of the public sector training programs?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The three that are run by the Public Sector Commission include the graduate launch program, which has a participation level of 108 people in 2023; the Elev8 program, which has 26 participants; and the Propel program, which has 221 participants. They do different things. There are a range of other continuous improvement courses for public sector staff. It might take a while to give details of all those, but lots of people do lots of training.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: I refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators on page 77 of budget paper No 2, volume 1, in particular, KEIs to enhance diversity in the public sector. I understand that the government has set aspirational targets for the representation of women in leadership in the public sector. Can the Premier advise what progress has been made to meet the women in leadership target?

Mr M. McGOWAN: I thank the member for the question, and thanks to you guys for working so hard this afternoon!

Mr D.R. MICHAEL: It is a great quorum.

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is right. The members are really kicking goals over there.

We made a commitment at the last election to ensure that women would comprise 50 per cent of the senior executive leadership. When we came to office, 34 per cent of the senior executive were woman and I think 60 to 70 per cent of the public sector were women. As of February this year, 50 per cent of the senior executive leadership were women, from 34 per cent in 2017. The commissioner is leading a number of key initiatives and has coordinated events over the last year with senior public sector executives to discuss the issues impacting women in the public sector workforce. To facilitate ongoing gender parity in the sector's executive positions, the Public Sector Commissioner launched the women's executive leadership initiative as part of International Women's Day this year. The initiative enables departments and SES organisations to appoint a woman in their agency to a temporary level 9 position for 12 months. The selected women will be part of their agency's corporate executive to expand their leadership exposure and skills. This is a deliberate move to promote women across the sector. We have done a range of these sorts of initiatives but to go from 34 per cent senior executive positions held by women to 50 per cent over six years would be almost unprecedented.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have a further question. That is 50 per cent across the sector. I would assume that is not consistent across each department. Are some departments performing better than others and where does the Premier see there needs to be improvement? Which departments need improvement?

Mr M. McGOWAN: That is an average. I will ask the commissioner to respond. For instance, I think about 70 per cent of the Department of Education's workforce are women, so naturally it may well do better in the percentages of senior executive positions. I do not know about the other agencies, but off the top of my head, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety probably has more men in its ranks. Maybe it has a different profile. I will ask the Public Sector Commissioner to comment more fully.

Ms S. O'Neill: That is right. Some agencies have quite a bit more and some are just below. Everyone is certainly focused on it. For example, the Department of Fire and Emergency Services appointed its first woman deputy commissioner in the last little while. Treasury had its first Assistant Under Treasurer in the last months. Agencies that have not had high numbers of women in diversity in the executive are coming up. It is true to say that everyone

is coming up a bit; some have come up a lot. We have a list of not only those departments, but also SES organisations because it is more fulsome than just the 20 departments that are not yet at that target. That is a subject of discussion with me, ongoing with them.

[3.40 pm]

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does that get published? Is there a key performance indicator in the budget for the targets that the Public Sector Commissioner is talking about or the work that is being done? How is it measured or is it just an internal policy target as opposed to something that gets reported on in the budget?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We had an election commitment and we delivered it. I do not think there are KPIs for anything broader, but I will ask the Public Sector Commissioner to comment.

Ms S. O'Neill: It is an election commitment and the target that is expressed in the government's public sector diversity plan is 50 per cent women. We have gone on and reticulated, if you like, that target—not formally but in discussions with agencies—that agencies will meet 50 per cent. We also work with them and provide to them a quarterly diversity dashboard across all the diversity targets. We are then able to have discussions with them about their actual outcomes in the state executive service, but each agency's set target is not officially published.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is the government aiming for 50 per cent women across the public sector or 50 per cent within each department or service?

Mr M. McGOWAN: The target is 50 per cent across the SES, because naturally some agencies will have more women in senior positions—it is just the nature of the workforce and people coming through—compared with other agencies. I think that is sensible.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does it include government trading enterprises?

Mr M. McGOWAN: No, it does not.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: This is just the departments.

Mr M. McGOWAN: Only agencies have SES officers and, as the member knows, the boards of GTEs appoint the CEO to manage the organisations in accordance with Australian Securities and Investments Commission rules and so forth.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I snuck in late so my apologies if it has already been asked. It may have been asked before I walked in, so the Premier can correct me. I refer to page 76. Paragraph 5 under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency", in part, states —

... modernise employment frameworks and policies, and support the public sector to manage staff attraction, retention ...

The question is general, with regard to attraction and retention. Is it possible to provide some advice on attrition rates? Are we seeing more workers leave than we are attracting to the public service in total?

Mr M. McGOWAN: Vacancy rates are held by individual agencies. I am advised that the Public Sector Commission does not have that information to hand. It is obviously a competitive labour market; that is staring us all in the face. Generally with the public sector, when economic times are not as good, people are less willing to give up a secure job, and when economic times are so extraordinarily strong, people are prepared to move elsewhere. That is just the nature of these things. We do not have those figures so the member would have to ask the individual agencies.

The CHAIR: No, it had not been asked yet.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Thank you. Is there any oversight from the Public Sector Commission on global figures around attraction and retention for the public service?

Mr M. McGOWAN: We know the total number of people employed in the public sector, but we do not keep a running tally on retention rates of individual agencies. We may develop that in the future. As the member well knows, people are moving on to other opportunities.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: They may well be.

Mr M. McGOWAN: I know someone.

The appropriation was recommended.