

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Division 61: Local Government, \$21 783 000 —

Mr J.M. Francis, Chairman.

Mr G.M. Castrilli, Minister for Local Government.

Ms J. Mathews, Director General.

Mr G. Brennan, Chief of Staff, Office of the Minister for Local Government.

Mr L. Nagy, Manager, Financial Services.

Ms M. Osman, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests.

Mrs S. Siekierka, Principal Policy Adviser, Office of the Minister for Local Government.

Mr B. Jolly, Executive Director, Governance and Legislation.

Mr A. Shaw, Executive Director, Strategic Business Management.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published by 9.00 am tomorrow.

The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. This is the prime focus of the committee. While there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the budget statements while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates. It is the intention of the chairman to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. For the purpose of following up the provision of this information, I ask the minister to clearly indicate to the committee which supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk by Friday, 11 June 2010, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements.

I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by Friday, 11 June 2010.

It will also greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the program statement volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program and amount in preface to their question.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Before I ask for the first question I will make some points as Chairman. Members should seek the call. I am happy to provide as many further questions as required to resolve a matter, but I ask that members do not interject or directly ask questions to advisers. The member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to page 759 of the *Budget Statements* and to the line item on local government reform under "Major Spending Changes". What modelling has the department done to identify the costs associated with amalgamations?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Is the member referring to the amount of \$7 168 000 and the make-up of that?

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am referring to that line item in reference to the reform process, which the minister has publicly said is about reducing the number of councils. What modelling has the department done to identify the costs associated with that process?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That is the amount of money that has been put in the budget to assist with the amalgamations of local governments that want to amalgamate. The figure was based on information and submissions supplied by local governments about the cost of amalgamation. That is the amount I sought in the budget to assist with the amalgamations of local governments that want to amalgamate.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This is not question time; this is estimates. The question was: what modelling has been done by the department to identify the cost of amalgamations?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That line item refers specifically to the amount of money.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Has any modelling been done?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We requested submissions from local governments on what they believed would be the cost of amalgamation. Based on what they submitted to us, we then calculated what we thought was the amount needed to amalgamate the local governments that had agreed to amalgamate. That is what that line item refers to. It is about the \$10 million the government has put in the budget to assist those local governments that have agreed to amalgamate. That is the amount we have put in the *Budget Statements*.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does that mean that, other than the submissions the department received from individual local governments, it did not do any modelling to predict the costs of the amalgamations that the government wants to achieve?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The modelling involved asking local governments to come back to us with what they thought would be the cost of amalgamations.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The department did not do any?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Not in the way the member is talking about. As part of the voluntary amalgamation process, we asked local governments to make submissions on what they thought would be the cost of amalgamation. We have based it on several items and areas. That is the amount I have put in the budget for that process. It is based on what local governments outlined in their submissions as what they thought would be the cost of amalgamation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay. Quite apart from the local government submissions, as part of that process did the minister direct his department to undertake its own modelling to anticipate the cost of the amalgamations that might be achieved?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It was done on a case-by-case basis in terms of what the local governments thought would be the cost of amalgamation. That was the basis on which I asked for money out of the budget process.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister took their advice on what it would cost and asked for the amount they identified?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We asked what they thought the cost of amalgamation would be and assessed it based on specific parameters, such as costs involved with project management, specialist human resources support, redundancies, legal matters, information technology harmonisation, general administration and town planning scheme harmonisation. They are the sorts of costs we asked local governments to identify. That is what we based that costing on.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I refer to the "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" on page 761 of the *Budget Statements* and specifically to the second dot point, which refers, amongst other things, to a study by the Local Government Advisory Board dated March 2006. Can the minister explain what that study was concerned with and its relevance to the capacity-building component of this budget?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: This is all about the reform of local government. The reform process was begun under the previous government. In 2005, the then Minister for Local Government and Regional Development undertook an inquiry into local government structure and electoral reform. That report basically said that 59 per cent of local governments had no detailed business plans, 70 per cent had no long-term financial plans and 35 per cent had no detailed asset management plans. The recommendation of that report was that local governments needed to develop long-term financial management and asset management plans. The reports primarily dealt with structural and electoral reform. That capacity building was not taken up. We went from there. Of course, the steering committee that I appointed arrived at similar outcomes. In its capacity assessment of the sector, the committee found that 36 per cent of local governments undertook little or no strategic planning, 81 per cent undertook limited or no asset management planning and 77 per cent undertook limited or no financial asset management planning. We have allocated \$2.39 million per annum over the next four years from the country local government fund for capacity building in the sector. We have been able to supplement that in 2010-11 with the \$2.3 million that we received from the federal government. That will cover frameworks, guidelines and templates to assist local governments to achieve those things. It will provide training advisory services and grants will be given to individual local governments so they can get consultants to assist them with their business and forward planning. As a result of that reform, we will need to make some legislative changes. The federal government assisted us with the \$2.3 million because this is in line with the nationwide focus and push to get local governments to build their capacity.

[7.10 pm]

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister referred to those items identified by the Local Government Advisory Board report—the inadequacies in business plans, financial plans and asset management plans. I understand all of those have been targeted by the current process. Does the minister know what percentage of councils have each of those plans in place as a result of the action taken in the past 16 months?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The findings of the steering report reflect the current situation.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That cannot be right, because the minister told me and the public of Western Australia that in order for councils to meet the minister's criteria to meet the number of deadlines that had been placed on them through this process in the past 16 months, they had to, among other things, compile the plans that the minister referred to. I understand that a significant amount of consultancy was done to ensure that things like asset management plans were in place as part of the process. That cannot be the current status.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: In the first place we provided each local government with a checklist and asked them a heap of questions. Local governments were asked to assess what they had and what they did not have. The checklists came back to us. The steering committee and the department put those together and the findings reflect the current situation of the state of local governments.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was an asset management plan not a requirement of the checklist? Councils were required to provide an asset management plan. Part of the sales pitch for imposing that process on councils was that they would get out of it things like asset management plans—and the minister would be able to say that they all had them. Councils around the state were given money—more than \$1 million—to assist with that process. Surely they must all have asset management plans.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No. We gave them money to assist them to get together with their neighbours and to undertake community consultation and that sort of work to determine whether or not they wanted to go ahead with reform. When we sent out the checklists, we asked the councils whether or not they had an asset management plan. It was not about them producing one; it was about asking whether they had certain things in place. That was part of what we did to learn about the health of local government at that time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Earlier the minister said that 35 per cent of councils have asset management plans. Is the minister saying that that is what the steering committee identified?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes. That is what has come back from local government. We asked them to fill in the questionnaire and tell us whether they had certain things in place. What I said before is the reflection of the current situation of local government in Western Australia.

Mr P. PAPALIA: In the first financial year after the Liberal–National Parties took office, \$100 million was allocated to country local governments, 35 per cent of which did not have asset management plans. Does the minister think that that was appropriate?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That money was given to local governments to assist them in their consultation process.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking about the country local government fund. I criticised the government at the time for being so liberal in distributing money to country local governments that had been identified as inadequate.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: As the member knows, as from April the country local government fund was transferred to the Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am talking about two years ago when the Minister for Local Government was responsible.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It has been transferred over and everything has been backtracked. All that has been isolated and responsibility has been transferred to the Minister for Regional Development.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Warnbro, as I said when we started, I ask you to not interrupt when the minister or his advisers are giving answers. If the member seeks the call, I will be more than generous in allowing him to ask questions.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I beg your pardon, Mr Chairman.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to the second line item on page 762, which refers to the improvement in local government capability in fulfilling their responsibilities to communities. I refer to the City of Albany. Has there been an outcome on the inquiry into bullying that commenced more than six months ago?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Is the member referring to the inquiry into the City of Albany?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am referring to the inquiry into the bullying —

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Does the member mean the situation at the City of Albany?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am referring to the inquiry undertaken by the deputy mayor. I think one of the minister's staff helped him with the application.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Complaints of that nature are lodged with the department and go before the standards panel. I have nothing to do with them.

Mr P.B. WATSON: We approached the minister about having the inquiry. I raised the matter in Parliament and the minister said he would follow it up. The minister sent staff to Albany, but no-one has heard anything since.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There are two things. First, complaints are lodged with the Department of Local Government and they go before the standards panel. If a complaint involves a serious offence, the matter goes before the Corruption and Crime Commission. That has nothing to do with me as the minister. A better practice review is going on at the City of Albany. Is that what the member is referring to?

Mr P.B. WATSON: I am referring to a complaint that was made by the deputy mayor of Albany. I think the minister's chief executive officer helped him fill out the form—at least that is what I have heard in Albany. Has that been acted on? I am aware that there is an inquiry into the running of the City of Albany, but the inquiry I am talking about seems to have been lost in the system. No-one knows anything about it. The City of Albany has not received a reply. My constituents want to know what is happening, because there has been a lot of media interest about this issue. It has been more than six months. If the Department of Local Government was an efficient department it would have provided some feedback about such an important matter, especially to the minister.

[7.20 pm]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will get the director of compliance to answer that.

Mr B. Jolly: There are two separate processes occurring. I think that the member's question was initially directed towards complaints that were made against council members of the City of Albany to the Local Government Standards Panel. There were 17 individual complaints and 21 complaints in total made against a number of councillors. Those matters are dealt with by the standards panel, which is an independent adjudicative body. The panel would only normally communicate with the complainant, the complaints officer at the city and the person who is the subject of the complaint. There would not normally be a communication to the city or the broader community in relation to those matters. If I am correct in assessing that that was the purpose of the member's original question, I would add that those complaints are being progressively dealt with by the standards panel; in fact, the panel met as recently as this morning and dealt with a number of those complaints. The panel has communicated the status of each of those complaints to each of the persons who are the subject of those complaints. Separate to that process, the department is undertaking a better practice review with the City of Albany, which the minister touched on a bit earlier, and officers of the department were in Albany as recently as last week interviewing each of the elected members of the city and also the staff. That process will culminate in a report, which is intended to assist the city to overcome some of the administrative and governance issues that have been identified through that process.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is the minister happy that it is probably about six or eight months since complaints were made about staff? Since then, we all know what has happened in Albany. There has been a complete meltdown there. Does the minister think that he is responsible in some way for not dealing with this issue and stamping it out instead of having these people in the background? Surely if there are complaints, it does not take eight months to get them dealt with, because otherwise they fester. We can see what has happened in Albany when they go on.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I must tell the member first that I have that process under review, because I want to review the process and how to streamline it. Of course, the other point on that is that processes of natural justice come into it. When a complaint is received, it must be investigated, and the process of natural justice must be dealt with, so it is a process we must be very careful about to make sure that we get it right. Everything depends on the complexity of the complaint, so we cannot say that everything will take one month, two months or three months. There are different time lines. We must be very careful about due process and natural justice. However, as I said, I have the process under review.

Mr P.B. WATSON: So the minister is disappointed with the way that it has been handled.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I try to review every process, because I think that it does not matter what we are doing —

Mr P.B. WATSON: But, honestly, it is not a good process, is it?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am just trying to answer that I want things to improve right across the board. In everything we do in life, we always want to keep reviewing to see whether we can do things better; and, if we can, we should implement the processes. That is a general statement about everything, I imagine—not just about that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to this question of inquiries in particular into councillors and the process associated with them, staff have indicated that it is not normal practice to reveal the outcomes of an inquiry to people beyond the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is made. What if one of the individuals concerned feels that his reputation can only be restored through public revelation of the outcome of an inquiry? I am referring specifically to the Shire of Cue and an inquiry that was initiated under the previous government, continued under this government and has not yet, as I understand it, been revealed publicly. The previous chief executive officer, who lost his job and caused the inquiry, feels that he can only be vindicated through public revelation of that inquiry. As I understand it, it has not been made public. Does the minister intend making it public?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will get Mr Jolly to comment on that process as well.

Mr B. Jolly: The authorised inquiry into the Shire of Cue has been completed. The inquiry report was submitted to the shire, which was the subject of the inquiry under the governing legislation. A number of recommendations were incorporated in that report. The shire has 35 days to respond to the minister, informing the minister how it intends to address those recommendations contained in the report. That is the status.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further —

The CHAIRMAN: Just before you do, member for Warnbro. I do not in any way want to stifle any questions on these very important issues but I think you might be drawing a fairly long bow as to the relevance of this division in this budget document, but I will allow a further question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I can give the Chair another line if he wants.

The CHAIRMAN: No, please go ahead.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That was about an inquiry. If you want another reference —

The CHAIRMAN: No, that is fine, member for Warnbro. I am happy for you to ask a further question.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is to do with the provision of effective regulation, I would say—if you wanted something, Mr Chairman. Can the minister tell me when the 35-day period commenced? Through the minister, when did the shire receive that report to give it time to respond?

Mr B. Jolly: I do not have the date that the report was sent to the shire to hand, but we can certainly provide that information. I would say that I think it was about two to three weeks ago.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I can provide that information.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think you need a supplementary information number for that. The minister has undertaken to provide that information.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I can if the member wants.

Mr P. PAPALIA: No, I am happy that the minister has given an indication. The person concerned is sweating off wanting to find out when it is coming, but that sounds fair enough. I have more questions about inquiries, but I will let you give it to someone else.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Member for Swan Hills.

Mr F.A. ALBAN: I refer to the bottom of page 763 and to the second last item “Employees (Full Time Equivalents)”. The budget provides for additional staff for the Department of Local Government. Can the minister explain why this recruitment is necessary?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Presently the resources available to the department are insufficient to support the reform initiatives. Three major areas require support, which include the Local Government Advisory Board, which has to do a whole lot of work, as the member may probably imagine. There needs to be people to provide case management, work on local government and structural reform and also support for the work of the local government reform implementation committee and its working groups. With the reform process that is going on, as the member would understand, there is a lot more work to be done.

At the moment, the Local Government Advisory Board is supported by only two staff, and extra staff are required to assist them in that work. At present, a lot of that work is being carried by the director general and the executive director. There is a fair bit of pressure on those two people to keep up with their own regular work. We also need somebody to provide a consistent point of contact for local government reform. Extra staff are required

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

for administrative and executive support for the local government reform implementation committee and the working groups to do that reform work properly and to meet deadlines. As members can imagine, there is a whole heap of work going on and we need extra staff over and above the staff we have at the moment.

[7.30 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: About 16 months ago, when this process started, there were 139 councils. How many are there today?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There are still 139.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The extra people are needed for a process that has not yet resulted in anything except the same number of councils. Leaving that point aside, I want to ask some questions about extra staff. The other thing that has changed in the past two years is that the minister used to have responsibility for \$100 million in country local government fund monitoring and administration. Now he does not. He has lost that \$100 million for administration out of his budget process, yet he is still increasing his staff by some five or six people.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: In response to the member's first point, we have a group of councils that are going to amalgamate by 2011.

Mr P. PAPALIA: How many is that now?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: One group will be Geraldton–Greenough and Mullewa; another group will be Mingenew, Perenjori, Three Springs and Morawa; and a third group will be Westonia and Yilgarn, which will amalgamate by 2012. Those three groups are going through a process now. Of course, we have allocated more than \$10 million to assist in that reform process for harmonisation and to allow the Local Government Advisory Board to do all the work required under the act. There is a helluva lot of work to be done, and that is why we need the staff.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Just to clarify this, Geraldton–Greenough and Morawa —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is Geraldton–Greenough and Mullewa.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — will be before 2011.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, 2011.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What time in 2011?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It will be 1 July.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is this financial year.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The aim is 1 July.

The CHAIRMAN: Do not speak over the minister, member.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Sorry, Chair; I am just trying to clarify it. There will be two councils in this financial year— and when are the other three going to do it?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There are another four—Morawa, Perenjori, Three Springs and Mingenew—that want to do it by 2011 as well.

Mr P. PAPALIA: This financial year?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The intent is by 1 July 2011, which is the beginning of the next financial year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is 2010 now.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The beginning of the 2011–12 financial year is 1 July 2011.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, but the activity is actually going to take place in this financial year.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, the activity will.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is six councils. The Westonia and Yilgarn group will be in 2013?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: They want to do it by 2012, so they will be doing some activity as well.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Effectively, we have increased the budget, the full-time equivalents and the resulting cost of personnel by roughly \$7 million; is that right?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is \$7 million this year and about \$3 million next year.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is for achieving the outcome of eight councils amalgamating by 2012. That is a reduction of five councils, because we will end up with three. We are going to get a reduction of five councils,

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

and that is going to cost \$7 million in personnel costs. It has already cost \$1 million for the process to date. How much per council amalgamation is going to be given out of this year's budget?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will get the director general to comment on the additional staff.

Ms J. Mathews: Fundamentally, we are looking at engaging an additional five FTEs at a cost of around \$540 000. That is the component of the additional reform budget allocation that will be devoted to staff. They will be engaged with quite specific responsibilities. We are looking at engaging two staff to support the Local Government Advisory Board in considering the amalgamation proposals before it at the moment, and there are three of those. In addition to that, the Local Government Advisory Board is required to consider all the proposals that go before it in relation to the reduction of elected members, and there are many of them, as well as the proposals for boundary adjustments. At the moment, the board is supported by two staff within the department. That is insufficient, so the extra two staff will be required to support the additional workload flowing out of the reform process, bearing in mind that we are moving into the implementation phase of the process. It is not just about the amalgamations that are on the board at the moment; we are also looking at a number of regional transition groups and regional collaborative groups. In addition to those two staff, we are looking at two of the five staff being engaged to case manage the specific amalgamation proposals and also the regional transition groups and the regional collaborative groups. They will work with them in the development and finalisation of agreements for the regional transition groups and the regional collaborative groups, and there are a number of those. They will work with both the transition groups that are moving towards amalgamation by 2013 and the regional collaborative groups to finalise the regional business plans that are required as part of that process. One of the five extra staff will be engaged to support the new structure that we have put in place to take the reform process forward. That staff member will support the implementation reform committee and also the five working groups that sit underneath and report to that committee, and will look at all the various issues related to reform implementation, including strategic community planning, governance and legal issues, information technology, finance, human resources and change management. We are dealing with some complex issues with the amalgamations and also as we plan for those regional transition groups to move through to amalgamation. There is quite a lot of work involved in working with the regional collaborative groups and with the Kimberley, Pilbara, Gascoyne and Goldfields to develop their regional business plans and their planning for the future on a regional basis.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Let me hop back to the reference to what the minister used to administer with the country local government fund. Did the loss of that \$100 million a year for the administrative role not have an impact on the workload of the department?

[7.40 pm]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We transferred one staff member to the Department of Regional Development and Lands.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was just one staff member monitoring the expenditure of \$100 million across country local governments?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes. That was a reporting requirement of local governments under that fund.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to page 762 of the *Budget Statements*. In an answer to a question from me in Parliament, the Minister for Local Government told me that he would receive monthly reports from the City of Albany. Has the minister received any of those reports yet? The ratepayers have called for an inquiry. Is it possible for the minister to release those reports to the local residents? They are as concerned as the minister is to ensure that the City of Albany is going down the correct path. Can the minister either release those reports or let the people of Albany know what is happening at the City of Albany?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I thank the member for the question. I have asked the council to report back to me on a monthly basis, as I mentioned to the member. I have given him a blow-by-blow description of what is happening in Albany. The first report is due to be given to me on 24 June. I imagine that the council's report to me will be part of the council's minutes and therefore will be public information.

Mr P.B. WATSON: How will that be public information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The council minutes are public information that anyone can access. That is what should happen. If it does not happen, I will consider the matter because, at this stage, unless I receive information that is confidential—I will assess that when I receive it—generally speaking, I should be receiving the council minutes, which are available to the public.

Mr P.B. WATSON: Did the minister ask the City of Albany to appoint an interim chief executive officer when the minister went to Albany?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I think I told them that it was absolutely important to get a good CEO to help the council through that process.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I asked the minister in Parliament whether he would ask the council to do that and the minister told me that he did not have the power to do it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I cannot force the council to appoint a CEO. The appointment of a CEO is totally within the province of local government. I cannot tell local governments who to appoint and who not to appoint. I just said that it was important for the council to make the right choice. I cannot direct the council about who it can and cannot employ. That is entirely up to the council.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I have been advised by a councillor that when the minister went to Albany, he said that the council had to do it. The minister said to me in Parliament that he could not do that. I wonder where the crossover is.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I say again that I cannot force anyone to employ anyone. The elected councillors appoint the CEO and the CEO appoints the other staff. That is how it is. I repeat: I do not have the power or the capacity to force the council to appoint anyone.

Mr P.B. WATSON: One final point —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Sorry to interrupt, but tomorrow night the council will consider the appointment of its CEO.

Mr P.B. WATSON: I refer to page 762 of the *Budget Statements* regarding the improvement in the ability of local governments to fulfil their responsibilities to communities. Does the money to send inspectors to Albany come out of this budget? Perhaps if we had looked at the issues under the previous system six months ago we could have nipped it in the bud. The minister has increased the budget. Maybe the budget would not have increased that much if action had been taken a lot sooner.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is an operational issue. The staff go down there at the cost of the department. However, if it goes to the ultimate step —

Mr P.B. WATSON: The city pays for it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have mentioned to the member in the corridors, and I have said publicly, that that is why I would prefer to have a practice review to sort out the cooperation between the staff and the City of Albany. If I have to suspend the council and then put in a commissioner and conduct an investigation, it will cost a lot of money. I cannot put an exact figure on that.

Mr P.B. WATSON: The council is costing the ratepayers a lot of money at the moment.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I know, but this would cost them a hell of a lot more.

Mr P.B. WATSON: We lost \$9 million on Lehman Brothers alone.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to local government reform on page 759 of the *Budget Statements*. I note that the funds for local government reform vary and are provided to assist them to prepare regional business plans. What outcomes can be expected from these plans?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The regional business plans are part of the wider government agenda for local government reform and capacity building. I said in an answer to a previous question that very few local governments have access to robust planning information that they require to make decisions about their business and financial functions. This is about providing good services to the community. We are providing \$1.44 million in 2010–11 to support local governments to address this. Those plans will cover the cost-benefit analysis and due diligence of the review of the key business functions of the participating local governments. That will provide local governments with a comprehensive review of where they are going. The plans will look closely at the administrative structures and strategic business functions of local governments because they need to deliver top services to their communities. I expect that those plans will improve the ability of local governments to provide those services to their communities. The regional business plans will be provided to regional transition groups and regional collaborative groups. The regional transition groups will form business plans, harmonise their core services and transition into one council. The aim is for the regional transitional groups to amalgamate into one council by 2013. It is about doing a due diligence cost-benefit analysis and harmonising key work areas to help local government along the path so that in 2013 they can transition into one council.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to strengthening good governance in the local government sector and providing effective regulation under the heading “Service Summary” on page 760 of the *Budget Statements*. How many inquiries into councils are currently being undertaken by the department?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr B. Jolly: There is one authorised inquiry under part 8 of the Local Government Act, and that is an inquiry into the Shire of Shark Bay.

[7.50 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: For how long has that specific inquiry been going?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not have that information at hand. I can provide that to the member as supplementary information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is that an undertaking?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not want to give an approximate time —

Mr P. PAPALIA: As part of that, is it possible to give a time line for its expected completion?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Mr Jolly.

Mr B. Jolly: That particular inquiry is currently in the natural justice phase. All the persons who have provided evidence to the inquiry have been provided with relevant information contained within the report that relates to their evidence, and they have a period of about two weeks, I think, remaining to provide comment back to the department. The department will then be required to make an assessment of the feedback provided by those persons and form that into a final report. We anticipate that the report will be completed early in the new financial year, probably in July.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further, with regard to inquiries —

The CHAIRMAN: I am not sure, member for Warnbro, and I do need to be crystal clear on these things, whether the member is asking the minister to give an undertaking to provide that information.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Can I get some clarification of the question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can the minister provide as supplementary information the status of that inquiry into the Shire of Shark Bay and the anticipated completion date of that inquiry?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister agrees to provide the supplementary information as discussed.

[*Supplementary Information No B40.*]

Mr P. PAPALIA: With regard to the same line item on page 760 in the “Service Summary” table, is the minister aware of having received a complaint regarding the Shire of Dalwallinu?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have not personally, no.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What about departmental staff?

Mr B. Jolly: I am not personally aware of that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Just so that the minister is aware, I received some correspondence that suggested that someone had written to the department and had not heard anything back.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am not aware of any inquiry.

Mr P. PAPALIA: So there is only one inquiry that is ongoing—the one at Shark Bay—that the minister is aware of?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Under section —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Under the minister’s powers.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I refer also to page 760, under “Service Summary”, but my question relates to item 1, “Build the Strategic Capability of the Local Government Sector”. I understand that a proportion of the capacity-building funds are for the development of Indigenous business plans. Can the minister provide the background and the progress of this initiative, and detail the amounts that have been allocated for each region?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There are 22 local governments in Western Australia that have Indigenous communities within their boundaries. Historically, I suppose for a number of reasons, local governments have generally not provided all the normal local government services to those communities. However, the commonwealth government has indicated its intention to transfer that responsibility to local governments by 1 July 2012. In

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

2006, the Australian government, through its bilateral agreement, promised to make an increasing effort to rectify the situation and improve the circumstances of the people in these communities. That came about through the Council of Australian Governments' Closing the Gap initiative. The basic premise was that communities of similar size should receive similar services. That was the premise behind that. In 2008, the Local Government Advisory Board conducted an inquiry into the local government delivery of service to Indigenous communities. It recommended, first, that a business plan be completed for each of the local governments to identify exactly what services were required, who was going to supply those services, how they were going to be supplied, and, importantly, how much it was going to cost. That was to identify the exact parameters of the work that needed to be done. We have allocated \$960 000 for 2009–10 and 2010–11 for the completion of those business plans. We have prepared a template for what those business plans should look like to assist these communities in preparing their business plans. They will also be allocated funding, as I have said, out of that \$690 000 to enable them to employ consultants to do that work. In 2011–12 we will be making available another \$480 000 to further the business plans for those 22 local governments that need the delivery of these services. It is not about saying to local governments that it is their responsibility to find out the information about what needs to be done, how it is going to be done, and, importantly, how much it is going to cost. That is what that preliminary assessment is going to do.

[Ms L.L. Baker took the chair.]

Mr P. PAPALIA: When was the Local Government Advisory Board report released to the local governments that are the subject of that report?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I got that report, I think, in August. It was released to local governments on 6 August 2009.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is after the minister got it back from the federal government.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Sorry?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The Local Government Advisory Board report that the minister is referring to was done in 2008. The minister released it in August 2009. As I understand it—because I asked the minister about it in Parliament—the report was withheld, and the minister did that on the basis, as he said, that it was being used for negotiations with the federal government with regard to funding.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That report was effectively held for almost 12 months.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, it was, because a lot of negotiations were going on, we were considering the report, and then we were using it in the negotiations with the federal government. The federal government was considering our funding application. We had put in an application to the federal government as part of the \$25 million that the commonwealth government was giving for local government reform around Australia.

I think the total ask from the federal government was about \$75 million. I do not have that figure; I will assume it is right. If it is wrong, I will let the member know. We were not successful with the commonwealth government in terms of that funding and we had to wait for further negotiations, which were not forthcoming. We have now funded that through the country local government fund for 2009–10, 2010–11 and 2011–12.

[8.00 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: The \$960 000 in 2009–10 and 2010–11, followed by the \$480 000 in 2011–12—is that state money?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is that royalties for regions money?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is country local government fund money.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Where is that reflected in the *Budget Statements*?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I refer the member to page 760. There is more than \$10 million there. On top of that —

Mr P. PAPALIA: It would be on page 765, would it not, under “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies”? There is some country local government fund money there.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, \$5.739 million

Mr P. PAPALIA: That \$5.739 million incorporates the \$960 000 this financial year?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No, in 2010–11 it will incorporate \$480 000. In 2009–10 it was also \$480 000.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr P. PAPALIA: Okay. As I understand it, the Local Government Advisory Board report assessed what local governments needed to do to provide better services to those remote Indigenous communities within their municipalities. The minister is suggesting that it did not and that it is not adequate, or something. Is that correct?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No, the report basically said that it was a very complex issue. The board was not able to identify exactly what was required. That is why it recommended that business plans needed to be done by each individual local government; there are 22 of them. That is why it recommended the business plans be done, and that is why we asked the commonwealth government for assistance to help us fund that. The \$1.44 million that we are allocating over three years is to assist with those business plans.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister initially withheld the report because he was negotiating with the federal government.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We failed to get money from that negotiation process, which was to access \$25 million—is that correct?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There was \$25 million up for grabs around Australia.

Mr P. PAPALIA: What was that program called?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It was the commonwealth local government reform fund. We got about \$2.35 million out of that from the commonwealth government, which we had to use for capacity building in local government. We missed out on the component part for those business plans, hence we are funding that out of state money.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Over three years, we are going to spend about \$1.4 million to plan to do something about helping Aboriginal communities—is that correct?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is \$1.44 million to assist with business plans. I think there are more than 220 Indigenous communities within those 22 local governments; that is an approximate figure. It is a very complex issue because the federal government has funded this directly for quite some time, with varying degrees of success. The federal government said that by 1 July 2012 it would hand over responsibility. It was very important that before it handed over responsibility, it found out what impact it would have with regard to roads, waste management, dog control and all the other services that local governments provide: what are they, how are they going to be delivered and, importantly, how much they will cost. Unless we know the aggregate total for the 22 local governments, how will we know how much funding we need to go into negotiations with the commonwealth government? The Local Government Advisory Board said that it was a very difficult process for it to get definitive answers about infrastructure costs et cetera, and that is why it strongly recommended that we get business plans up for each individual local government. That is why we went to the commonwealth government on the basis of asking it to help us to fund those business plans. That is why we have been negotiating and now, as the member knows, we are funding the \$1.44 million out of state money for this year, next year and 2011–12.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the hope that the \$1.44 million of planning will let us access federal funds to enable local governments to do this?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: This is what we are hoping. This is about negotiating with the federal government. Once we understand the full package, the government has to find out how much we are talking about before we can negotiate with the federal government for joint funding or whatever else we can get to deliver the local government services that have been identified.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to page 765 and the “Supplies and services” line item under “Expenses”. What outcomes have there been to date from the Choose Respect program? I am a big supporter of the program in Armadale and Serpentine–Jarrahdale; it is a great program and I would like to hear more about it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I thank the member for the question. I do not know whether members know much about the Choose Respect program, but I will provide a very quick background on it. In the City of Bunbury I do a lot of community consultation. People have talked about antisocial behaviour, hoons and all that sort of stuff, and people are very anxious to work out what they can do about it. I came across this program being run by Carey Park Primary School. It was created by a former Armadale Senior High School chaplain by the name of Gary Butcher. I thought it was a fantastic initiative; a program will start and finish, but an initiative never stops. I thought it would be fantastic for the City of Bunbury to become a Choose Respect city; it would effect generational change and would change the behaviour of people in the community to show respect, care and consideration towards one another. I called a community meeting that was attended by more than 150 people, and a committee was formed to look at the Choose Respect initiative. I approached the government for funding,

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

and one of our election commitments was \$160 000 over four years—\$40 000 a year—to employ a project coordinator to implement the systems, structures and resources around the program. Ms Sarah-Jane Smith was appointed to that role, and she now coordinates the Choose Respect activities. The committee promotes initiatives and motivates community involvement in a number of ways, including forums, periodic community newsletters, presentations, events and distribution of promotional materials. They presented these materials to rotary clubs and business groups and they have gone to the chamber of commerce. They have got the Bunbury City Council on board. The police have been involved. Sports groups have been involved. This is about putting a values-based approach into the community. They deal with schools, local organisations, businesses and community members.

[8.10 pm]

Mr P.B. WATSON: Is this a ministerial statement?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I hope that it will become a pilot program for other regions in Western Australia. We talk about respect in communities in Western Australia and a lot of towns and schools are very interested in taking it up. It is a great initiative, and maybe I should introduce Choose Respect into Parliament.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am all for that. I have been briefed on it, minister, and it is a good idea.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The member for Warnbro understands the process.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I understand what the minister is talking about but the minister has to convince local governments to embrace it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The City of Bunbury has embraced it. I am not sure about the rest of local government, but we have to start somewhere and I am glad that the member for Warnbro agrees that it is worthwhile.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have met with them and talked about it. I would like to get them to my electorate if I could.

I refer the minister to budget paper No 2, volume 3. On page 760 the second line item under “Service Summary” reads “Strengthen Good Governance in the Local Government Sector”. I picked this line item because it gives me the capacity to deal with the subject of animal welfare. I will pre-empt the minister so that he does not have to give the party line. In 2002 tougher animal welfare legislation was introduced—I would suggest the toughest in the country. In 2006 there was adequate funding for the animal welfare unit to have six inspectors or thereabouts. I understand that funding ended at the end of the financial year 2007-08. Two months later, the Liberal-National government won office. How many complaints of breaches of the animal welfare legislation has the minister received from interest groups since taking office?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I cannot give the member a definitive answer on that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Can the minister’s departmental advisers?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: They can if they wish. They cannot give a definitive answer, as I understand it—my department officers can tell me otherwise and I ask them to correct me if I am wrong—because they have to physically go back through each individual file and assess how many complaints there are. There is no electronic lodgement process to record the number of complaints.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that, is the minister saying that right now he has no idea how many complaints about breaches have been received or have even a ballpark figure?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I can give the member a rough idea now.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Would the minister provide that to me as supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, I will.

The CHAIRMAN: If the minister agrees to provide the supplementary information, could he state what that would be?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The number of complaints by interest groups regarding breaches of animal welfare legislation that the department has received since the Liberal-National government took office.

[*Supplementary Information No B41.*]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a few questions on the subject. Does the minister know the number of prosecutions over live animal exports that the department has undertaken in this financial year and how does that compare with the previous two or three years?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am not sure about this financial year.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr B. Jolly: There have been two prosecutions since June 2009, but neither of those relate to the live export industry. I understand they both relate to the transport of sheep

Mr P. PAPALIA: They were being transported to live export?

Mr B. Jolly: They were being transported from one of the saleyards, but I am not clear whether they were being transported to live export.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that, through the minister, how does that compare with prosecutions when the animal welfare unit was fully funded in 2002? Is the minister able to tell me that or is that too difficult?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The member is talking about 2007–08; we are talking about 2009–10 now.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is not the subject of this hearing.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am just trying to benchmark it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am not being flippant. I cannot give the member that information.

Mr P. PAPALIA: We all know that currently the animal welfare unit has been reduced significantly in staff. The only way of determining whether its effectiveness has been impacted is to benchmark prosecutions of live exports—or that is one indicator. We know there have been a couple of prosecutions in one year of transporters. I am sure that the department can provide this and perhaps we can take it as a supplementary question. It should not be too difficult to determine by perhaps going back two years when it was fully funded.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We can go back to 2001 when members opposite were in government.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would appreciate it if the minister could because, obviously, there are people who have raised this with me.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We can go back to 2008 when members opposite were in government.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It will have to be when we were in government because that is when it was fully funded. It will have to be the last year of our government, if the minister goes back to when the unit was fully funded.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: In terms of animal welfare, the member for Warnbro brought up the time when he was in government —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Do not get into a speech. I am just asking if the minister can provide the information.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I just want to point out some facts. I am answering the member's question. The member brought up 2006 when the former government funded six positions. That was a two-year funding program that ended on 30 June 2008. Therefore, the previous government did not provide any funding to keep those six on.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right. That has nothing to do with the question.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The member asked me a question about previous years and I am explaining this to him.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The question was —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: If the member does not mind! I have let him go on a bit.

Mr P. PAPALIA: When the minister finishes we will come back to it, so he either keeps going or we will be here for the long haul.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That funding stopped in 2008. The previous government never funded that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I said that at the outset; it is in *Hansard*.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Those six positions would have disappeared. The only reason there are two to three positions now is because the department found savings in its other operating budget. That is why those positions are there, otherwise there would have been none.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Will the minister provide as supplementary information how many prosecutions of live animal exporters there were in the financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08?

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: Point of order.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Does the member want me to supply information from when he was in government?

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister is saying that it was bad when we were in government in 2006-07 and 2007-08. If he provides that then we can benchmark how we went this year.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Madam Chair, the member has asked me for information about when the Labor Party was in government. I do not think —

Mr P.B. WATSON: In every inquiry I have been to this week, the ministers have provided information as far back as we wanted.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I cannot go through the files; the minister can.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am just asking the question —

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, minister. I think the question is: will you provide supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I know what the question is, Madam Chair, thank you. I want to make sure we are dealing with the period of the previous government. I do not see any reason why I cannot provide that as supplementary information. However, I find it a bit strange that we are talking about the 2010–11 budget and the member is asking about what happened in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

[8.20 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have explained why. The minister understood that it was to benchmark performance this year.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the minister confirm the information he will provide?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The information that I think the member for Warnbro is asking for is the number of prosecutions —

Mr P. PAPALIA: Would the minister like me to read it out?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, please.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a couple more.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No, the one the member said—the number of prosecutions in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was of live animal exporters.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes, from 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have a series of questions.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That is the supplementary information the member is seeking.

[*Supplementary Information No B42.*]

Mr P. PAPALIA: These questions relate to the last one. I ask whether the minister is willing to provide this information. I will read these out and the minister can say yes or no as to whether he will provide the answers by way of supplementary information. I apologise if the minister is concerned about me asking about the previous government, but I do not have access to the files and I was elected only 18 months prior to us losing government and was a backbencher during that time.

Mr P.B. WATSON: That is the member's fault!

Mr P. PAPALIA: I am trying to benchmark current performance so that I can determine whether the removal of this unit, either when we were in government or continued under this government, has had an impact on the ability of the government to provide effective regulation in accordance with line 2 of the service summary table on page 760 of the *Budget Statements*. We already have information on the number of prosecutions of transporters in this financial year; it was two. How does this compare with the number of prosecutions in the last two financial years of the previous government? Again, I am asking whether the minister is willing to provide the answer as supplementary information. What was the number of prosecutions of intensive farmers in this financial year and how does that compare with the number in previous years? I am assuming that there were none.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Intensive farmers?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, with regard to the animal welfare unit. It is covered by regulation and the legislation for which the minister has responsibility. Line 2 of the service summary table states —

Strengthen Good Governance in the Local Government Sector and Provide Effective Regulation

I know the minister is trying to hive it off, but at the moment it is still his responsibility. Will the minister provide those answers by way of supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The figures from 2006–07 and 2007–08?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, only so that I can benchmark.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: With all due respect —

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister can say that it was terrible that the previous government cut the funding if he wants; I do not mind.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No. With all due respect, I am happy to benchmark from my responsibility onwards. The member is asking me about previous governments. I am not willing to do that. I will provide the answer to the first one as promised, but the member is talking about what happened under the previous government. He is asking about 2006–07 and 2007–08; that is three years ago.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It is so that I can compare those figures with the number of prosecutions for this year, thereby benchmarking a performance level to determine whether the removal of the funding for the six inspectors has had an impact on the capability of the government to provide adequate supervision of its regulations. If the minister does not want to do that, that is fine. I understand where he is coming from. It is not to do with the previous government, although if the minister wants to, he can say that. I will tell people who are complaining to me about animal welfare that the minister does not deem that to be necessary. That is fine.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am happy to provide supplementary information, but I have to say again and put on the record that I am being asked questions about when Labor was in government in 2006–07 and 2007–08. We are dealing with budget items and *Budget Statements* for 2010–11 and beyond. I have answered enough questions about old matters, which I am not supposed to be answering. I will leave it at that if that is okay with the member.

The CHAIRMAN: I will ask whether the minister has agreed to provide supplementary information on the —

Mr P. PAPALIA: What was the number of prosecutions of transporters in this financial year? How does that compare with the last two financial years of the previous government? What was the number of prosecutions of intensive farmers in this financial year? How does that compare with the last two financial years of the previous government?

[*Supplementary Information Nos B43 and B44.*]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Before we go on, I will ask the director general to add some comments, if that is okay with the member for Warnbro.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like to hear those comments.

Ms J. Mathews: I would like to comment on the work of the unit. I would not want to leave the impression that it is not doing some good work in this area, because I think it is. Since June 2009, there have been two prosecutions with two convictions. The branch is currently conducting two major general investigations and several other smaller investigations. There are another three investigation files with the State Solicitor's Office pending advice on prosecution. We are investigating several general cruelty cases involving livestock. We work very closely with the WA Police in carrying out this investigative and prosecution effort. Two officers from WA Police are seconded to the department to assist with a major livestock cruelty case investigation. What we are trying to do with the FTEs that we do have in the unit is to take a strategic approach to the protection of animal welfare, both in terms of the general cruelty provisions of the act and also the scientific aspects of the act. We are trying to harness the other resources that are available to the department and the branch from elsewhere. The animal welfare branch has two general inspectors and a scientific inspector as the full FTE, but in addition, I have appointed 200 general inspectors through local governments, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Agriculture and Food, who are actively engaged in this area as well. The point, I suppose, is that we are trying to take a strategic view to the overall resource that is available to the department in this area rather than confining the responsibility to one small unit. When there is a finite set of resources, it is important that we try to tap into and develop good relations with those other agencies.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that, of the 200 general inspectors the director general referred to, how many are local government rangers?

Ms J. Mathews: I have appointed 200 general inspectors. There are eight from the Department of Agriculture and Food, 22 from the Department of Environment and Conservation, 18 from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and 157 from local governments.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Does the minister have the power to extend the duties of rangers employed by local governments to include this role?

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The 157 local government inspectors are appointed under the Animal Welfare Act. Is that what the member is asking?

Ms J. Mathews: In addition, police officers are automatically general inspectors.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Did the minister consult the Western Australian Local Government Association on this decision to extend the duties of local government rangers to inspect stockyards and live export facilities and to detail or stop vehicles for inspection?

Ms J. Mathews: It has been ongoing practice to appoint rangers as general inspectors. I think WAGLA is well aware of that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is that yes or no?

Ms J. Mathews: What was the specific question?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Was WALGA consulted prior to those responsibilities being extended?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The 157 rangers were appointed over time; it is not as though they were all appointed last week or last month. That has been the general practice for quite some time.

[8.30 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: Perhaps I misunderstood the director general. I thought she suggested that this was a new strategic initiative that would utilise our other resources beyond the inspectors who are directly employed for that purpose.

Ms J. Mathews: I will clarify that. It is not a new initiative. What I was saying is that we are trying to take a strategic approach with the unit and we are looking at the resources that have been available for a while. We are looking at how we can tap into those in a more strategic and collaborative way. The ability to appoint the inspectors has been around since the beginning of the act.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Has consideration been given to, or have we extended additional funding to local governments to enable those rangers to be trained, to complete the relevant qualifications and to have the ongoing support that is required to enable them to take on new duties that they previously have not had as general inspectors under the Animal Welfare Act?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: That is a general competency that they have had for quite some time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That may be the case. We used to have six inspectors and now we have one. I understand that there are two, but in the field effectively there is one inspector. I am trying to build a picture of the impact that the withdrawing of that funding had when we ended it at the end of the 2007–08 financial year. It has subsequently not been replaced. I am trying to determine whether there has been a significant impact. If the suggestion is that it is all okay because there are 157 local government rangers out there, I would like to know that they are properly trained and that they were doing exactly the same thing before, in which case there must have been some impact.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The Animal Welfare Act has been in place since 2002. Under that act, local government rangers have been empowered since its proclamation. Some people have been local government rangers for a long time.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is true. In 2006 it was determined by the previous government that to ensure adequate and robust enforcement of the legislation that had been introduced in 2002, it was necessary to increase funding and to increase the number of inspectors in that unit.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Which the Labor government stopped in 2008.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is right. The funding ended at the end of the 2007–08 financial year. Two months later the Liberal–National Parties came to office. There must have been some sort of impact, because those people are not there anymore.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Obviously the Labor government did not think there would be much of an impact; otherwise, it would have funded the six inspectors all the way through, which it did not do.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I was sitting down in Warnbro.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not care where the member was sitting. The Labor Party was in government. The member is making assertions —

Mr P. PAPALIA: I have prefaced everything I have said with “the funding ended at the end of the 2007–08 financial year”. Two months later we lost office. When the Liberal–Nationals came to office they did not have

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

that funding. I am trying to establish whether there has been enough evidence to suggest that perhaps the enforcement of this legislation has not been carried out in an appropriate fashion. Perhaps now that the government has handed down its second budget, the minister might respond.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I understand where the member is coming from. We are looking at how to get local governments, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and other general inspectors working together. How do we get better synergies and better coverage? How do we get better service delivery on the ground? We are going down that path. That is why we have been talking to and harmonising and collaborating with other departments.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I sensed a bit of hesitation when the minister responded to the question about negotiations. With regard to this subject, has the Western Australian Local Government Association recently been consulted to determine whether it believes that local governments are adequately resourced to carry out this role in a proper fashion?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have not consulted WALGA because it has been doing this since the act was introduced in 2002. Did the Labor government consult it?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the state–local government partnership agreement still in force? Does the minister or the Premier bother to talk to the executive anymore? Is the minister aware whether the WA Rangers Association has written to the Premier calling on him to reinstate the Department of Local Government’s animal welfare unit and to provide adequate funding to expand its operations?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am not aware of that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the minister absolutely certain of that? The Premier received such a letter, of which I have a copy, but he did not bother giving it to the minister.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will check that and respond to the member by the close of business next week.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Are any of the advisers here aware of having received that letter?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would appreciate it if the minister could provide by way of supplementary information whether the minister or his department have received a letter that was addressed to the Premier from the WA Rangers Association requesting that he reinstate the animal welfare unit and provide adequate funding to expand its operations.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the minister agree to provide that information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes. We will provide information about whether we are aware of a letter sent to the Premier from the WA Rangers Association requesting that the Premier reinstate the animal welfare unit and provide adequate funding to expand its operations.

[*Supplementary Information No B45.*]

[8.40 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: I refer to page 759 of the *Budget Statements* and to the local government reform line item at the bottom of the page. We have talked about the number of councils that have agreed to amalgamate at various times between now and 2013. Will the minister please inform the committee how much funding each of those councils has requested from the minister as a condition of their agreement to amalgamate? As I understand it, for instance, Geraldton, Greenough and Mullewa have publicly announced that they have requested \$5 million each. As an indicator, is that the case, and as for the others, if the minister cannot do it off the top of his head —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I can tell the member what I am giving them.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That was my next question.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have just been made aware that their submissions to us were made in confidence.

Mr P. PAPALIA: They have gone public with this particular fact. How about Geraldton and Greenough, then?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will get back to the member on the amount.

Mr P. PAPALIA: They are only two and they are the first ones that the minister is considering.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The other group are the four.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like to get the information on the others if the minister can provide it, but I do not know that they have gone public with their requests. I do know that Geraldton, Greenough and Mullewa have said publicly in the media that they have requested of the minister \$5 million each.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Is it \$5 million each?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, and this year the minister has \$7.168 million in total for local government reform. So what is the story?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There is \$10 million for reform over two years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister said that that these two would be amalgamated before the end of this financial year. The minister has \$7.168 million.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is between this year and next year, over two years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I asked the minister earlier on and he said that the particular amalgamation between Geraldton, Greenough and Mullewa, which is the flagship one at the top of the list, would be done by the end of June 2011, which is this financial year, in which \$7.168 million is allocated. As I understand it, they made a condition of their agreeing to amalgamate the receipt of \$5 million each from the minister's state government.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not know where the member got \$5 million each from.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was the ABC radio in Geraldton.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not recall that figure at all. It is not \$5 million each.

Mr P. PAPALIA: It was the chief executive officer of the City of Geraldton–Greenough, Tony Brun.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not know where the member got \$5 million each from, but I can tell him what I am giving them. It is \$5.2 million over three years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Are they going to get \$2.6 million each effectively?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No, it is not each; it is a new entity. There is Mullewa and then the City of Geraldton–Greenough.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister is effectively giving them a half of what they said was their precondition for agreeing.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: For the sake of *Hansard*, the member cannot say that, because what I have just said to him is that I have never seen a figure of \$5 million each. I just want to make that point clear. What I am giving them is \$5.2 million over three years. If the member read their press releases, he would know that they are extremely happy with that. The member has seen their press releases, as I have.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Yes, and they said they were going to get \$5 million each. That is why they were happy.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: With the other group of four, which I mentioned before, it is \$1.75 million.

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is for all four of them?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Over three years.

Mr P.B. WATSON: On the issue of amalgamations being paid for, going back even further than 2007, the Court government promised \$1 million to the former Town of Albany and the former Shire of Albany. I was unsuccessful in trying to get the money during eight years when we were in government. As it was a Liberal–National government that promised it, will the minister be willing to give it, because I think it would come in very handy at the moment?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I answer in the same vein as the remark by the member for Warnbro. I was not here then and so it has nothing to do with me. It was all member's fault; he obviously did not argue enough!

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister was utilising a bit of poetic licence when quoting me. This is interesting, though, because this is starting to give an indication of cost. It is something that I have been trying to determine for some time. We asked whether modelling had been conducted by the department to project potential costs of the amalgamations. The Premier has set a target to achieve fewer than 100 councils in the state by 2013. If the minister is looking at that, he will have to amalgamate 50-plus councils. We have eight now, and we are losing five now, so we are going from eight to three. Depending on how many the minister manages to amalgamate and squash together—it does not look very promising because one or two might be willing to do it and a third might not want to do it—a significant number of councils will have to be amalgamated to achieve that target of fewer than 100. For instance, in this case we are talking about six councils and it is costing in the order of \$7 million,

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

which is \$1 million a council. Are we talking about \$50 million plus to achieve the outcome that the Premier has set as a target of fewer than 100 councils?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We cannot extrapolate figures like that, because every council is a different size, has different complexities, different coordination and different groupings and all that sort of thing. That is something that we cannot say. The Premier made a statement that he would like to see fewer than 100 councils within five years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: He said that last year.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Within five years is what he said. On the issue of the ones that have agreed to amalgamate and the regional transition groups, personally I would like to see more.

Mr P. PAPALIA: The minister has reminded me that the Premier said in the middle of last year that he wanted to see fewer than 100 councils within five years, which takes it through to the end of the financial year 2013–14. I know that the forward estimates are never–never land in the Premier’s parlance; it is not only never–never but also no–no land, because in 2012–13 and 2013–14 there is no money for local government reform.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: There is a very good reason for that.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I would like to hear it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will tell the member. The money we are giving the RTGs for a regional business plan is to do with due diligence, costings, harmonisation and everything. Through that business plan they identify what it will cost them. By the end of December of this year, hopefully, they will get back to me, so then we can aggregate costings and say what it will cost. I cannot put money in our budget if we do not know what the cost is. When it comes to the next budget, what I get back from those business plans and the aggregate costings will form the basis of my budget request for the out years.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Further to that question, effectively what the minister has just said is that at the time of the next budget, for the first time the state of Western Australia will know what the minister’s amalgamation process will cost.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Bearing in mind that this is an ongoing process —

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is not what the minister said.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Bearing in mind that some local government authorities might be in and some might be out, as the member has said, and bearing in mind that others are contemplating it and so others might be coming on board, by the end of December I will have a good idea of the ones that want to do it and follow the process of the RTG through and I will know exactly what costings they are referring to. That will then form the basis of what my request will be in the budget round. That is the only true way in which I can say that it will cost X, and that is what I will apply for in the budget round.

[8.50 pm]

Mr P. PAPALIA: That is what I am interested in. Despite adding a lot of words, I think the minister just about said what I suggested earlier. Based on our experience with government amalgamations, it was about \$1 million a council. Maybe \$5 million a council, as asked for by Tony Brown, is a bit expensive and a bit of an ambit claim. Nevertheless, we are talking about in the order of \$1 million a council. To achieve fewer than 100 councils, it will cost in the order of \$50 million at least. The consequence will be that a big chunk of money will be required in the next budget and in the subsequent year and a half before the next election. I am talking about in the order of \$50 million that is not currently there. This is what I do not understand about the Premier. How does the government plan in advance its allocations and its dedicated activities without anticipating this sort of significant cost only a year down the track?

[Mr M.W. Sutherland took the chair.]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: As I have said, 50 per cent of local government councils have populations of fewer than 2 000 people. Some have 400 people and some have 300 people, and then there are larger councils. I cannot say that it will be \$1 million per council. I am giving those councils that have agreed to amalgamate a substantial amount of money, which I think they are applauding the government for. I can deal only with what I know. There is no point in putting money in the budget if some councils do not want to have a bar of it. Through the planning phase, I will get a very good idea of how much it is going to cost so that I can then put it in the budget. This government is very serious about local government reform, as was the previous government. We want to get the process underway and we have put money in the budget for those councils that we know are going to amalgamate; they have been allocated money. There is no point in going through a hypothetical process for who may or may not amalgamate and what the cost might be. We are relying on those local governments that are

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

going through the process to come back to us about how much money it is going to cost them, and that is what that very complex business plan is about.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to the line item “Office of Multicultural Interests” in the table of controlled grants on page 765 of the budget papers. Compared with the 2009–10 actual figure, the allocation for the Office of Multicultural Interests for 2010–11 and subsequent years has been cut by 11 per cent, or exactly \$100 000. Can the minister detail exactly what has been cut? Does it include any grants or assistance to the Australian Asian Association of Western Australia or the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Is the member talking about 2009–10 and 2010–11?

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes. In 2009–10 it was \$948 000 and in 2010–11 it is \$848 000. I think that is a \$100 000 cut.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is \$100 000 for funding to the ECC.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Page 114 of the midyear review budget papers indicates that there is \$1.9 million worth of cuts. Is the minister able to say whether there were any multicultural interest programs included in those cuts, or were they all local government programs?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Does the member mean the three per cent cut? I think OMI was exempt.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The midyear review had \$1.9 million in cuts.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No, there were no cuts to OMI that I am aware of in the midyear review. That is what I have been advised.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I have page 114 on my laptop screen.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: What is the member referring to exactly?

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am referring to the minister’s ministries of local government, citizenship and multicultural interests, and heritage. There was \$1.9 million in cuts for corrective measures in the midyear review.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I am not aware of any cuts to OMI, as I have been advised.

Mr J.N. HYDE: To save me asking this in 30 minutes, were any of those cuts to heritage programs?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Sorry; we are talking about OMI.

The CHAIRMAN: Member, you will have to ask that when we deal with that division.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Okay; I will come back to that.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: It is not OMI.

Mr A.P. JACOB: I refer to the service summary table on page 760 of the budget papers. The third item in the table refers to the promotion and support of multiculturalism in Western Australia. Can the minister please detail the community engagement projects that the Office of Multicultural Interests intends to implement during the next 12 months?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We have a strategic plan that was put together between 2009 and 2013, and that commits OMI to a range of community engagement projects. That plan will be implemented through a community engagement strategy. Over the next 12 months, OMI will undertake a very comprehensive range of community engagement, which will enhance that strategy. The strategy is about empowering people to explain exactly what is going on, providing better services, and getting an indication of what culturally and linguistically diverse communities want. The first community consultative meeting was held in March this year. It was on employment and I think about 120 people attended. I think it was held at the Mirrabooka centre. Another one will be held in June and that will be on transport. Others will be held in the future. At the initial phase, the community told us about some of its priorities, including community safety, leadership and governance for community leaders, mental health, housing and youth issues. The community engagement strategy, which I believe is very important, is going directly to CALD communities. What we can get from the community strategy is an early indication of issues that are arising. We are trying not to wait until things bubble and boil over. We are trying to identify those emerging issues through the community strategy so that we are in a better position to deal with them. We can then advocate on behalf of CALD communities through government departments and non-government agencies for substantive equality and a whole range of issues to provide better services to CALD communities. Those consultation processes are very important. The information that we get from that will feed into policy decisions that the Office of Multicultural Interests makes and that can be used to influence other government departments to deliver better services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities overall.

[9.00 pm]

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr J.N. HYDE: Further to that question, I refer to exactly the same line item and figures.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Where was that?

Mr J.N. HYDE: The minister just answered a question asked by a government member. The minister should have been looking at the page.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I flick around the *Budget Statements* and look at different information, member for Perth.

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is the third line item under “Services Summary” on page 760 of the *Budget Statements*, the promotion and support of multiculturalism in Western Australia. The estimated actual in 2009–10 is \$5.4 million, the budget estimate for 2010–11 is \$5.2 million and the forward estimate for 2011–12 is \$4.7 million. There has been a cut of \$260 000 for the 2010–11 budget and in 2011–12 there is a cut of \$450 000. What programs and full-time equivalents et cetera have been cut to achieve this year’s budget, and what will be cut to achieve the 2011–12 estimate?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No FTEs have been cut, as far as I am aware. I am pretty sure about that. The Department of Health is taking responsibility for the funding of the integrated service centre. That is where the majority of that decrease is from.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Are there no cuts to the grants given to the Australian Asian Association of WA or any other group within the minister’s department?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The lump sum money allocated for grant purposes is still there. As the member knows, we have gone to triennial funding for some of the grants. The money is there for community grants, subject to an application process each year.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Given that there are triennial grants and other firm commitments in the budget figures, can the minister provide as supplementary information exactly where those allocations are going to in 2010–11 and 2011–12?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I can. I might have that information for the member now, if he will give me a couple of seconds to find it.

Mr J.N. HYDE: It will take all evening to read where the \$5.2 million has been allocated, let alone to find it.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The triennial funding grants have been given to the Edmund Rice Centre in Mirrabooka, which received \$150 000; the Welcome project for the Coalition for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees, which received \$209 508; and the Metropolitan Migrant Resource Centre, which received \$249 092 for its Community Capacity Building program. That is the triennial funding.

Mr J.N. HYDE: We are talking about \$5.4 million. Where is the rest going? Can the minister provide that by way of supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I will have to provide that as supplementary information.

The CHAIRMAN: Can the member for Perth tell us exactly what he requires?

Mr J.N. HYDE: The budget breakdown —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I think that is the total cost of the service. Does the member want a breakdown of that amount?

Mr J.N. HYDE: I want a breakdown for the 2010–11 budget of \$5.2 million and for the 2011–12 budget of \$4.7 million.

[*Supplementary Information No B46.*]

Mr F.A. ALBAN: The sixth dot point on page 761 refers to the need for government agencies to meet community needs for all persons, including people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Can the minister explain how the Office of Multicultural Interests assists government agencies to meet this need?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I thank the member. I mentioned the strategic plan earlier. That supports the public sector in achieving that substantive requirement for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, which I also referred to earlier. The Office of Multicultural Interests provides advice about and information on that and is collaborating with government departments on policy development for that service delivery area. One of the most successful ways that OMI has assisted the CALD communities is through partnerships with other government agencies on a variety of projects. One of the first partnerships was the Integrated Service Centres. That was a partnership between OMI, the Department of Health and the Department

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

of Education. There are two integrated service centres at Parkwood and Koondoola Primary Schools. They helped deliver humanitarian services to children and their parents. As I explained to the member for Perth, the Department of Health has taken over the management of that centre.

I met with the federal Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Evans, about focusing on services provided by the federal government and the state government. The federal government puts in money and we put in money but there is no map to show who delivers what. There is no easy way to identify the gaps in the system, what needs to be provided, what is being duplicated and how the federal and state governments can get together to deliver a better outcome to CALD communities. We developed some valuable information on that. OMI is also responsible for the “Western Australian Language Services Policy”. That policy provides advice to all state governments and is about committing the government and each department to providing accessible services to all people by establishing better communications between the government and the people of Western Australia.

OMI has been involved in youth sports projects in a partnership with Department of Sport and Recreation and the City of Stirling. That was a very successful project and received the Premier’s Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management last year for strengthening family communities. We have also partnered with the Equal Opportunity Commission regarding the difficulty CALD communities have accessing private rental accommodation. We have also partnered with the Department of Transport and Transperth about the provision of free interpreting services and training program for migrants. People from CALD communities have difficulty getting drivers’ licences. The partnerships come about because of the community consultation program. It is about getting out there and talking to the people and identifying what they need. OMI has been involved in all those things, which is why I believe it is doing an excellent job. On a day-to-day level, OMI deals with departments and a range of people to further that cause.

[9.10 pm]

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 765, the heading “Income from State Government”, and the third line item, “Royalties for regions fund”. That shows that an amount of \$4.89 million has come from royalties for regions. I assume from footnote (d) that all this money will be going to local government. As an astute minister committed to multiculturalism, what royalties for regions funds has the minister managed to secure for multiculturalism?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: None that I am aware of, member for Perth, because we are reassessing and trying to achieve for CALD communities better outcomes, with better consistency, better transparency, better efficiency and a whole range of things in terms of service delivery, and better partnerships, as I have just mentioned. We are continually reviewing that. The strategic plan that we have put in place is about continuous engagement with CALD communities. We are looking at a range of programs to achieve better service delivery for CALD communities. If the member does not mind, I will ask the director general to add to that.

Ms J. Mathews: Just to comment on that particular line item to do with royalties for regions, that is sourced from the country local government fund. We are bound by the memorandum of understanding that we have with the Department of Regional Development to spend that money on specific purposes for country local governments. An amount of \$2.5 million of that is devoted to supporting voluntary amalgamations, and \$2.3 million is for capacity building.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am trying to find somewhere in the entire budget where multiculturalism gets anything out of royalties for regions.

Ms J. Mathews: What we have done is encourage CALD communities to apply for the regional grants scheme. There is money available under the royalties for regions regional grants scheme, through the Regional Development Commissions, which we have encouraged them to apply for.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 761, the final dot point —

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Sorry, page 761 —

Mr J.N. HYDE: That states that OMI works with the public sector to improve services.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Sorry, member for Perth. What dot point is the member talking about?

Mr J.N. HYDE: The last dot point—the round blob at the bottom of the page.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Well, member —

Mr J.N. HYDE: I have said it three times! The minister does this every time!

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: All I want from the member, if he does not mind, is a very sensible question. I have asked the member to clarify. I really do not need that sort of remark. It is up to the member. I am just trying to accommodate the member as best I can. Is that all right? Just a bit of civility would not go astray.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr J.N. HYDE: I have a lot of civility, but we are doing it three times. Okay. Has the minister got it?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Excellent. That dot point states that OMI works with the public sector to improve services. What cultural awareness training for various government departments, for example housing, is undertaken by the Department of Local Government?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: OMI is working right across the board with many departments to do that. I will get the director to comment further on that. OMI is doing a very good job, right across departments, about substantive equality, language service programs, and the partnerships that I mentioned before with transport and sport and recreation. I think it is doing a great job on that.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Can we get by way of supplementary information a full list of all these excellent programs?

Ms M. Osman: In answer to the question about cultural diversity training, particularly in the Department of Housing, OMI's strategic plan clearly states that it will develop cultural competency within the public sector. OMI has embarked on that in partnership with the Public Sector Commission. That is a major reform agenda that will take another 12 months, but we will see the outcomes of that in 12 months. I have consulted with the Department of Housing and a number of other departments about cultural awareness training. I am aware that the Department of Housing has had a private provider provide that training. But OMI will provide and develop a standardised tool across government so that some benchmarking is going on across the agencies.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Who was that private provider, and has that provider's funding been cut?

Ms M. Osman: The private provider of the delivery of some training into the Department of Housing that I am aware of was the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia.

Mr J.N. HYDE: So, minister, the funding is being done in-house and the service will be continued by someone within OMI rather than be outsourced as previously to ECCWA?

Ms M. Osman: Is the member referring to training?

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am referring specifically to the Department of Housing. Housing takes up nearly one-third of our state's budget. It is clearly a very big deliverer to the community and the CALD community.

Ms M. Osman: The Department of Housing has had a number of strategies in relation to building its own internal competency training. This is just one part of that. OMI will take a coordinated approach to the delivery of cultural competency training within that department.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is it possible to provide by way of supplementary information a list of exactly what programs are delivered to government departments, both in-house and outsourced?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: What exactly will the minister be providing?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The total number of programs delivered for cultural competency training both in-house and externally.

[Supplementary Information No B47.]

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 759, the first page of this division, which states at the top "Minister for Local Government; Heritage; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests". I refer also to page 760 and the table headed "Government Goals", and to page 761 and the heading "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency". There is nothing on any of those three pages that addresses citizenship. Do not take this the wrong way, minister, but has the Department of the Premier and Cabinet stripped the minister of the responsibility for citizenship, such as Anzac Day; and can the minister detail any expenditure or grants directly for citizenship?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have never had responsibility for Anzac Day, member for Perth, to my knowledge.

Ms M. Osman: In relation to citizenship, one of our major initiatives is to fund Celebrate WA, which runs WA Week, WA Citizen of the Year, the Citizenship Breakfast and the Anzac Day Gunfire Breakfast; and also the Australia Day Council.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is there anything else, minister; and, if there is, can I get that by way of supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I think that is it; but, if there is anything else, I will supply that information to the member.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I thank the minister. Next question.

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

The CHAIRMAN: I am not giving that question. The minister has given that information.

Mr J.N. HYDE: This is the next question.

The CHAIRMAN: That is right. It is the next question. We have clarified that.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I am taking the minister on faith that he will provide that information, rather than as a supplementary.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I have promised that if there is any other information, I will let the member know.

The CHAIRMAN: So it is not a supplementary. Right.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 760 again, “Service Summary”, item three, “Promotion and Support of Multiculturalism in Western Australia”. How much funding is allocated to provide services as set out in the Language Services 2008 policy, and how does this year’s allocation in the forward estimates compare with the allocation for previous years? Is there any consideration in this funding for the provision of Aboriginal language interpreter services in Western Australian prisons?

[9.20 pm]

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: We allocate approximately \$40 000 for interpreters and translators with the federal government as part of that process. Did the member ask about specific money?

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is there any assistance for Indigenous programs in prisons?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: As far as I am aware, there is no funding within our budget for Indigenous programs in prisons.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 760 and service summary 3, “Promotion and Support of Multiculturalism in Western Australia”. I refer to question on notice 2750, which I asked of the minister relating to the archiving and storage of documents. The minister replied that officers cannot access old electronic versions of files and volumes and that therefore the physical files must be ordered in. I am seeking further information as to the format of the corrupted files and the time line within the department for achieving full digitalisation of all files and records.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: The member for Perth has asked this question before. All our physical files are stored according to the guidelines of the State Records Office for retention and disposal, and comply with the State Records Act. That is how they are filed away. The State Records Office no longer accepts archival material.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes, it is chockers.

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Yes. The department now stores its boxes at “Iron Mountain”.

Ms J. Mathews: I can comment that the department will implement digitalisation of all records, historic and going forward, over the next 12 months.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is that all records?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: Over the next 12 months, yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is there a budget figure for the cost of that, and can I be provided with it by way of supplementary information?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: I do not think there is any specific budget item for it; it is done internally through the department.

Ms J. Mathews: We do that with existing resources within the department’s budget.

Mr J.N. HYDE: If the minister is confident that he can do it in 12 months, he must know how much it is going to cost.

Mr A. Shaw: The department has, since 2005, been scanning documents into digital format. All those records are available and recoverable. Over the next 12 months we will be commencing work with files that we hold in our office and digitalising them. As files come back from the State Records Office—or “Iron Mountain”—we will be digitalising those as well. As I said, the process of digitalising the documents held off-site will start over the next 12 months.

Mr J.N. HYDE: For clarification, is that for files and archives within the Department of Local Government? The answer I referred to may have been in reference to the Heritage Council, so I may have to ask that question again. I assume the answer is just —

Extract from *Hansard*
[ASSEMBLY - Thursday, 3 June 2010]
p593b-616a

Chairman; Mr Paul Papalia; Mr John Castrilli; Mr Albert Jacob; Mr Peter Watson; Mr Frank Alban; Mr Tony Simpson; Mr John Hyde

Mr A. Shaw: The Department of Local Government.

Mr J.N. HYDE: What about Multicultural Interests?

Mr A. Shaw: That will include Multicultural Interests as well.

Mr J.N. HYDE: And the Fremantle Cemetery Board and the other little things? Are they within this division?

Mr G.M. CASTRILLI: No.

Mr J.N. HYDE: No? I will ask that again.

The appropriation was recommended.