

Division 36: Communities — Youth, \$2 121 566 000 —

Mr S.J. Price, Chair.

Mr D.J. Kelly, Minister for Youth.

Mr M. Rowe, Director General.

Mr M. Richardson, Director; Management, Accounting and Financial Analysis.

Ms C.H. Irwin, Assistant Director General, Strategy and Partnerships.

Mr M. Crevola, Chief Finance Officer.

Mr L. Clarke, Chief of Staff, Minister for Youth.

Ms E. Knowles, Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. It is the intention of the chair 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 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. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

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. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what 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 principal clerk by close of business Friday, 1 October 2021. 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 through the online questions system.

Leader of the Opposition.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am on page 513, the general appropriations, the first table on the page. The minister will have to excuse me; I have not done the youth budget before. Could the minister point out to me whether there is an allocation within the Department of Communities specifically for youth, or are the initiatives dotted through?

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is dotted through, yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: It is dotted through, so there is not one line item?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I turn to page 535, under "Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies", the heading "Youth", and "Youth Support Grants". Could the minister provide me with an explanation as to what those grants are; how they are administered, or by what process; and what the government is seeking to achieve with those grants?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Sure. I think that the member will find that, in the main, I suspect the structure of those grants is fairly similar to how they were structured under the previous government. For example, there are Youth Week grants, which are up to \$3 000 for community groups for activities for 10 to 25-year-olds; there are youth engagement grants, which can be up to \$10 000, to implement projects and encourage young people aged 10 to 25 to develop knowledge, skills, leadership opportunities and the like; there is a new three-year grant that was developed in conjunction with the Youth Affairs Council WA to fund an advocacy group for the LGBTQIA+ community, so that is new; there is a youth partnership program, which is an early intervention program in the Armadale area, and those sorts of things. They are the main items in that grant program. I think that probably covers them all.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Are the details of those grants publicly available on the public record somewhere, like in the department's annual report or on the website?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The youth engagement grants and the Youth Week grants are all advertised. I am sure the member will find a press release from the minister saying who received what. I think the others would be recorded in the annual report, I would suspect.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Has that funding increased at all? I know that it is static across the forward estimates. Has it increased since the Labor Party came into government?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I think that in 2019–20 it was \$571 000, and I think we have budgeted \$650 000 across the forward estimates, so that represents an increase on the actual versus what we are budgeting going ahead, if that helps the member.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I was trying to see whether that global amount of \$650 000 that the department has budgeted has been static since 2017.

Mr D.J. KELLY: My understanding is that that grant category has remained fairly constant. The member will also be aware that there are areas such as grants to the scouts and the like and to the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, which has been new money since we came into government.

Mr H.T. JONES: With regard to page 514 and the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, I see that the youth advisory council has been allocated funding in this budget and the years going forward. Can the minister explain how the council will benefit young people in Western Australia?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The Ministerial Youth Advisory Council was an initiative of Peter Tinley when he was the minister. It is a great initiative. We have a bunch of about a dozen young people who give me advice on a whole range of issues. When that was initiated, people served in a voluntary capacity. We have now recognised that as a government board like any other, and so, for the first time, people now actually get remunerated. Given the enthusiasm and genuineness that those young people put into that work, it is only appropriate that they be paid. I point out, as has been mentioned already, that the \$120 000 in funding that is going to the Youth Pride Network for an advocacy group for members of that community came about because of the issues that they raised with me. Not only do they talk to me and give me advice on good things, but also they have delivered some real change. That Youth Pride Network project is now up and running and is already doing good work.

[7.10 pm]

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Paragraph 6.3 on page 516 of the budget papers refers to the \$3.4 million for Youth Futures WA to establish a new crisis accommodation facility. Can the minister tell me whether the location for this project has been identified?

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is being delivered through the youth-at-risk part of the Communities division, so it is not part of my portfolio responsibilities. Unfortunately, I cannot assist the member with that question.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That goes back to my question earlier about how we are supposed to understand which part of this division the minister is responsible for, because obviously there are things relating to youth dotted throughout the budget papers. How do we ascertain which ones the minister is responsible for and which ones other ministers are responsible for, other than just going through the list? Is that the minister's answer—to just go through the list?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am not sure that I can assist the member with how to read the budget papers.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I am not asking that, minister. Is there something that defines the minister's portfolio so that we are not wasting his time in asking questions?

Mr D.J. KELLY: As I have said, the budget papers are not laid out by me. There is a standard format. There is nothing that I can tell the member that will automatically point her to which bits are within my portfolio. As difficult as it might be for her to navigate, there is not an easy way for me to assist her with that—not that I am aware of.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I would have thought that the item for Youth Futures would come under —

The CHAIR: Which page number and item number are you referring to, member for Roe?

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: It is a continuation of the question about paragraph 6.3.

The CHAIR: Is that the item that the minister just said he is not responsible for? There is no point in furthering that question; sorry.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Let us try the next one. I refer to page 534 of volume 2 of budget paper No 2 and the empowered youth network. Is that what the minister was talking about with the member for Darling Range or is that a different program?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Unfortunately, that is also not part of my portfolio responsibilities. I will leave it at that.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Again, about a third of the way down the table on page 534, there is an item for "Small Commitments". I note that the estimated actual in the previous budget was \$4 million, but now there appears to be nothing showing. Is there any information that the minister can tell us about why this seems to have disappeared out of the forward estimates?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Again, that is not within my portfolio responsibilities, so I cannot assist the member with that line item either.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: I am starting to wonder what the minister does!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: That is a fair question! I would have thought that the minister would want to talk about what is in his portfolio.

The CHAIR: Are there any further questions on this division?

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Perhaps I can approach it in this way: in relation to the “Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies” table on page 534, could the minister point us to the initiatives on that page that relate to the youth portfolio?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I can certainly assist the member there. There is an allocation of \$3 million for a scouts hall in Tapping, and that is it.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Just so that I am very clear, the only portfolio-related commitment on that page is for the scouts hall. Could the minister tell me a little bit more about that? It was an election commitment, obviously.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That was an election commitment and it is to build a scouts hall in Tapping.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is that to deliver a new scouts hall, minister?

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is right. That is correct.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is it to build it from the ground up?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I have not visited the site, but I assume that that is the case.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does the minister not have any further information about the election commitment and the funding that is in the budget for that?

Mr D.J. KELLY: No, I cannot give the member any further detail on that election commitment.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Am I missing something, minister? The minister cannot give me any detail on an election commitment made by his government that is in the budget papers.

Mr D.J. KELLY: There is a funding allocation for the election commitment. It is to build a scouts hall in Tapping. That is correct. The project has not yet been built. The money has not yet been spent. It was an election commitment.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Is there a business case for the scouts hall in Tapping?

Mr D.J. KELLY: It was an election commitment to the tune of \$3 million to build that scouts hall.

Mr P.C. TINLEY: Do the members not like scouting!

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I have never met a minister who does not want to talk about an election commitment. It is quite remarkable!

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: I refer to page 535 and I go back to the youth support grants, which we spoke about earlier. Can the minister outline how the application process is run?

[7.20 pm]

Mr D.J. KELLY: It depends on the grant program. The Youth Week grants program is advertised by the department, but it is often eagerly awaited. Lots of local governments in regional WA regularly put in applications. The department assesses the grants and a decision is made. It is much the same for the youth engagement grants. It was a little different last year because of COVID. There was a particular flavour for those grants. They were directed to assist young people who might be struggling due to COVID, but again the process was much the same. They are advertised; then the department assesses them and a decision is made.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: How many proponents have received funding in each year of the program’s administration to date?

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is not contained within the budget. I am not sure I can give the member that information at this point in time.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: Can the minister provide it as supplementary information?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I would be happy if the member put it on notice.

Mr P.J. RUNDLE: What portion of the grants are expended in metropolitan versus regional areas?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I cannot give the member an exact figure, but my guess is that most of them, numbers-wise, would be in regional WA. We are seeing whether we can give the member an exact count. It is very popular in regional WA. There is certainly no lack of enthusiasm for them, especially from local governments.

Why does the member not ask the next question and if we can get that information, we can come back to it? I will let the member know.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: I refer to page 513 and the appropriation for the department. Could the minister give me an indication of the total for the portfolio of youth within that total appropriation?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I can give the member a figure for 2020–21. Under this portfolio there is \$5.696 million in grants, but they go to community organisations, local governments and schools. I can give the member that figure if that is of assistance.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Is that the figure for the youth portfolio for 2020–21?

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Wednesday, 22 September 2021]

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Chair; Ms Mia Davies; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Hugh Jones; Mr Peter Rundle; Mr Peter Tinley

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is right; it is for the grants within my portfolio, yes.

Ms M.J. DAVIES: Does the minister have that number across the forward estimates?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Including the number of staff who are dedicated to this portfolio would be very tricky for me; it is not isolated in the budget.

The appropriation was recommended.