

Chairman; Mr Chris Tallentire; Mr John Day; Mr Paul Miles; Mr Mark McGowan; Mr Tony Simpson; Dr Mike Nahan; Ms Alannah MacTiernan

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**Division 43: Planning, \$43 625 000 —**

Mr M.W. Sutherland, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Planning.

Mr E. Lumsden, Director General.

Mr G. Prattley, Chairman, Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr T. Evans, General Manager/Secretary, Western Australian Planning Commission.

Mr G. Finn, Director, Landmark Projects.

Mr M. D'souza, Executive Director, Strategic Corporate Support.

**The CHAIRMAN:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff, and the daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 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. Although 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 chairman's intention 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 greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the program statement volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, items, program and amount in preface to their question.

I now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Member for Gosnells.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** My question relates to page 541, regarding the decline in funding for the Department of Planning. The budget amount for 2010–11 is \$31 million and then the amounts decline. How is that decline justified in the face of rapidly increasing demand for the many services provided by the agency?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Which line is the member referring to?

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I am referring to the third line of figures on page 541, which shows total appropriations provided to deliver services of \$31.9 million, and in the forward estimates there is \$29.3 million, \$29.7 million and \$30.7 million. This coming financial year is the high point in funding. When it is very reasonable to anticipate that there will be a massive increase in the demands on the planning services—indeed, that is justified by much of the text outlining the work that will be done on the state planning strategy, regional planning strategies and many other issues—how can it possibly be that with that massive increase in workload funding is being reduced to the agency?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am sure the answer relates to the fact that there is often one-off funding provided for various purposes. Obviously when it comes to an end, there is then an apparent decrease, not necessarily in relation to general operational expenses of the department. I will ask Michael D'souza to elaborate.

**Mr M. D'souza:** The difference in the appropriations for the years 2009–10 and 2010–11 is an increase of \$4.226 million approximately. That is due to a combination of events. In last year's budget the department had

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coastal facilities in the budget papers, which were transferred to the Department of Transport. So there is an element of \$3.5 million in the difference between the coastal facilities business unit between the 2009–10 and the 2010–11 budgets, so that is an increase. There have been further increases with the public service general agreement, which are the salary increments of \$1 million. There has been an increase in the accommodation rents of the department of \$900 000. There is additional funding for the Office of Land and Housing Supply of \$300 000. The total of all those increases comes to about \$8.4 million, which is offset by some reductions. One of the major reductions is \$3.6 million because the department is moving corporate services into the Office of Shared Services from July 2010.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I note that the figures have been arranged in such a way that it is possible to make comparisons. Footnote (a) on page 541 shows that we could make this comparison between years even though there has been this rearrangement of agencies, so I think it is reasonable, based on these figures, to expect that what we are seeing here is a decline and it is not just something that has come about because a part of the agency's work is going to another department. I would note again that in 2008–09, there was funding to the agency of \$33.8 million and that in coming years it is going down to \$29.3 million, and that is in the face of a massive increase in the agency's workload.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I think the member is referring to the apparent reduction from 2011–12 to 2011–12. As the Premier has pointed out, it is a forward estimate and not necessarily the reality of what will occur when next year's budget is presented. Nevertheless, I will ask Mr D'souza to comment on that aspect of the apparent reduction from 2010–11 to 2011–12.

**Mr M. D'souza:** The reduction from 2010–11 to 2011–12 is not more than about \$1.4 million. When we get that appropriation, there are certain elements that are given for specific grants and subsidies. On page 547 is a list of grants and subsidies. That also usually has a flow-on effect from one year to another. Some grants will have been completed by 2010–11 and some may not be there in the 2011–12 out years.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** They are one-off payments.

**Mr P.T. MILES:** I refer to page 543 of the *Budget Statements*, and under "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency" and "State and Regional Level" to the fourth dot point. Will the minister please outline what benefit development assessment panels will provide to the state and when the panels will be operational in the state?

[9.10 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** As members will be aware, the provision to establish development assessment panels is contained in the Approvals and Related Reforms (No. 4) (Planning) Bill 2009, which has passed through the Assembly and is before the Council at the moment. The proposal to have a system of making decisions about development applications where there is a combination of input from elected local government councillors for the relevant area, together with professional expertise, has been around for some years in one form or another. We are now moving to enable that to happen in this state. I am pleased that the opposition has been supportive of that proposal. I think it will allow for the more significant and high-value projects in the state to be assessed on a more professional basis, together with a combination of local input, than has been the case in the past. We are trying to streamline and expedite planning approvals where good quality projects are proposed and to ensure that we can further assist economic growth and development in the state, and provide for a substantially growing population. That is the essential purpose. We have been through the debate in the Legislative Assembly; it was generally a constructive and positive discussion. I look forward to the panels being established, hopefully, in the early part of next year. The legislation obviously needs to be passed through both houses and the regulations prepared and completed. There will be further consultation, including with the Western Australian Local Government Association on finalising regulations. I hope they will be put into effect as early as possible in 2011.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I refer to "Outcome: Accessibility to serviced land and infrastructure" on page 544 and the number of lots given approval. The estimated actual is 33 203 and the budget target is 35 000 in the budget before us. Has the minister found it?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The number given preliminary and final approval is estimated to be in the 33 000 to 35 000 mark. The minister has historically said in excess of 70 000 lots are out there. The head of the Planning Commission said it is roughly half that and the budget figures say it is roughly half that. How does the minister reconcile what he has had to say with what the head of the Planning Commission, to his left, and these budget documents say about that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** My assumption in relation to the figures in the document here is that it refers to additional lots being created each year and those that have been granted final approval. I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment and

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then Mr Prattley. But as a prelude, I know Mr Prattley is of the view that he was misquoted in a publication about his estimate of the number of lots available, and I am sure he can clarify that.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Thank you, minister and thank you honourable member. As outlined on page 544, I want to stress it says “Number of lots given preliminary and final approval”. That means that the 35 000 lots have been created. They were no longer subject to conditions; the conditions have been cleared and the developer can take those lots through to issuing of title. The 70 000 figure the member referred to is the number of lots that have been given preliminary approval but not necessarily final approval at this time. Mr Prattley can comment further, but we have certainly been facilitating the approval process. But as the honourable member will be aware, even if the commission has given preliminary approval, it then rests with the developer or the applicant to facilitate clearance of those conditions so that final approval can be forthcoming. The larger figure includes the lots that have preliminary approval. It is then up to the applicant to clear those conditions and seek final approval. Where the applicant has done that, the figure of 35 000 is, as we understand it, the correct figure. Perhaps Mr Prattley would like to add more.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes.

**Mr G. Prattley:** Thank you, minister, and honourable member. I would like to confirm that I was misquoted in the *Business News* about the statement I made. I stated 70 000 lots across the state had final approval and our information at that time was that there were about 35 000 within the metropolitan and Peel regions. There was not an inconsistency in my statement, merely in the reporting of that in the media. The most recent figures we have, which I quoted publicly last week, are that the preliminary approvals number is back up to just under 50 000 lots for the metropolitan and Peel regions. That is as high as it has been over the past 10 or so years. As the director general mentioned, the major issue at the moment is that preliminary approvals have increased in 2009 by plus 28 per cent. But final approvals have decreased by 20 per cent. That is an issue that is largely outside the control of the commission or the department, although we are actively reviewing conditions on those preliminary approvals to ensure there are no artificial impediments to those proceeding. But it appears that, primarily, financial issues are delaying the progressing of lots to final approval at this stage.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I still do not quite get, minister, where the misunderstanding has taken place. Is it that there were 35 000 lots in the metropolitan and Peel areas and another 35 000 outside those areas? Is the department saying that across the rest of the state, outside Peel and Perth, 35 000 lots have received preliminary approval?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** My recollection of the figures is that about 46 000 in the Perth and Peel regions and about 24 000 outside the Perth and Peel regions have been given conditional approval.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I assume that, following my earlier comments on this, a briefing note or something came to the minister’s attention.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** They are the figures I have had in mind for some months.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The minister is saying there were always 70 000 lots and it was a misquote. Okay.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That is statewide.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** In relation to what Mr Prattley just said; that is, preliminary approvals are up 28 per cent and final approvals declined 20 per cent, over what time is that and what is the exact situation now on final approvals?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In relation to final approvals, obviously developers of land need to get all the construction works completed and need to satisfy all the conditions for a title to be issued. That is very much in the hands of the development industry. The downturn over the past 12 months has been due to reduced demand in part. The global financial crisis has certainly had a major role to play in that and the fact that, in many cases, developers have found it harder to get access to finance to undertake developments, and there has been market uncertainty. Developers are less likely to complete all works and undertake the necessary expenditure if they are not going to be fairly certain of selling the lots. Market uncertainty due to that general financial downturn in part and rising interest rates all have a part to play in reducing the number of lots actually created and final approvals given. No action that the government has taken or not taken has contributed to that. That is a reflection of the market. That is the overall comment. In relation to timing I will ask if Mr Prattley can provide more information.

**Mr G. Prattley:** I might need to check that in more detail. It is the previous year as I understand it, but I will confirm that.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Could I have that as supplementary information if Mr Prattley cannot provide it now?

**Mr G. Prattley:** Certainly.

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I agree to that.

[9.20 am]

**The CHAIRMAN:** The member for Darling Range.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We need to clarify what the supplementary information is first. The supplementary information that I am after is clarification of Mr Prattley's comments that there has been a 20 per cent decline in final approvals, what that equates to in actual numbers and over what time frame.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** And the reasons for it.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Yes. We never got away with any of those reasons for it, by the way.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** They were valid while the Labor Party was in government but not now.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The same standards should apply to everyone.

[*Supplementary Information No B11.*]

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I wish to ask one more question on that matter. On page 544 I pointed out the figure of 30 000 residential lots. Immediately below that it states "Median land price as a percentage of median residential property sales price", which shows that there is a projected increase in the cost of a block of land from 55.2 per cent actual to 56 per cent. How does that fit with the Minister for Housing's comments that there should be a pushing down of the median price of housing in Western Australia when the department is projecting it is going to go up?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The variation in figures that the member refers to is a pretty minor point. It is 0.8 per cent, so it is hardly significant. I think the Minister for Housing has clarified his comments to indicate what he is able to do, and I share the view, to ensure that we can do everything possible to ensure affordable housing is provided and there is a sufficient supply of land for development, in this case in particular from land owned by the Department of Housing. I am sure that he will be taking every action he can to ensure that Department of Housing land is brought on for development where possible. There are always constraints with privately owned land. All of the easier to develop land in the Perth metropolitan area has pretty much now been developed and there are substantial constraints, particularly in relation to environmental issues that need to be addressed and also water management issues and provision of water and waste water services that are significant constraints in a lot of cases. All those issues need to be addressed.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Can the minister confirm that there is a projected increase in the price of a block of land, particularly from 2008–09 to now of 53 to 56 per cent? That stuff about driving down the price of a block is not reflected in the budget.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We cannot necessarily draw a conclusion about the actual price of land from the figures here because these are percentages as opposed to actual dollar figures. In any case, there is a very minor change of only 0.8 per cent predicted. It is hardly significant.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** But not from 2008–09. It is 53 per cent to 56 per cent.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That is a 2.7 per cent change. It is not substantial. It is pretty self-evident to everyone that the price of land has probably increased slightly over the past couple of years going back to early 2008.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** My question relates to the third dot point on page 543 under the heading "Integrated Land Use and Infrastructure Policy". It states —

Directions 2031 sets the strategic spatial framework for managing the growth of the Perth and Peel regions ...

Directions 2031 takes in a huge part of the Peel region and it is a great document for future land developments within my area. Can the minister outline how the final report will be implemented and how the response to public submissions is going?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** That is tight!

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It was a very good question.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Hand typed.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is a good question on an important subject. Obviously, future growth of the metropolitan and Peel regions is a major issue that we are facing and dealing with. It is important to have a realistic plan to accommodate at least another 550 000 people in the Perth and Peel regions over the next 20 years, needing about 330 000 additional residences. To do that we need to identify where growth is going to occur and how it will

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occur. Our aim is to provide for about 53 per cent of additional residential development from greenfields developments in new housing developments and about 47 per cent from urban consolidation and urban infill projects. That is a more realistic target than the previous government had under Network City of 60 per cent coming from urban consolidation. Nevertheless, 47 per cent is a significant increase on what we are achieving at the moment, which I think is around 37 per cent. We still have a long way to go in getting more urban consolidation, which is important from the point of view of reducing transport costs, infrastructure costs, greenhouse gas emissions and a range of other issues. That is our target.

The “Directions 2031” document is being very actively worked on in the department at the moment. The final document will be going to the Western Australian Planning Commission in the next couple of weeks or so and then I will be taking it to cabinet within the next few weeks. I would hope that it can be put out publicly sometime in July. It is a very tight time frame. A lot of work is occurring in that respect. It is an important document and an important framework for growth of the Perth and Peel regions.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to page 547 and the line item “Urban Congestion Planning Study”, which was funded to the tune of \$452 000 in 2008–09. There is no further funding for that program, a program which relates to one of the most pressing problems that people of this city face—congestion and all the cost impositions on their lifestyle that goes with urban congestion. Why is there no further funding for that study?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I understand that it is now within the Department of Transport but I will ask Mr D’souza to add some more.

**Mr M. D’souza:** The government had apportioned a total of \$2 million for the urban congestion funding strategy, which was basically funded by the commonwealth. That was for the Perth master plan of the airport. We spent \$452 000 in 2008–09. That full division in terms of the transport planning moved across to the Department of Transport from 1 July 2009, hence that amount will be reflected in the Department of Transport’s budget papers.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will ask Mr Lumsden to add a little.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Notwithstanding Mr D’souza’s answer, it is also important to note that in terms of Directions 2031 and associated policies such as activity centres, which are also subject to review, the issue of urban congestion has been taken seriously from both a land use planning perspective as well as a transport perspective. The Department of Planning has been liaising with the Department of Transport in terms of not only Directions 2031 but also activity centres so that we can ensure more intense but appropriate development around areas such as railway stations in the various corridors and also to be able to add value from a mixed use development perspective around other areas such as Ashfield and Bayswater in the City of Bayswater. Whilst Mr D’souza is correct in terms of the specific allocation of that fund, the issue that the member raised is certainly one that has been foremost in the department’s mind in its strategic planning.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Picking up on Mr Lumsden’s point, it is pleasing to hear that there is a recognition in the agency that planning is fundamental to relieving this problem of congestion. I was concerned to hear the view that perhaps the whole problem could be shunted away as a transport issue. I am reassured to hear that it is viewed by the director general as being a planning problem as well. That leaves the question hanging: where is the funding for that?

[9.30 am]

If Directions 2031 is picking up on some aspects of this congestion planning, continuing on with the congestion planning study work, how can we be sure that there will be a sufficient allocation if there is no line item mentioning how much will be put into studying the problem? Why is there not; or at least could the minister indicate how much of the funding going towards Directions 2031 is being put towards this issue of congestion?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I suspect it is hard to quantify specifically how much funding, as part of the Directions 2031 document preparation, is being directed to considering urban congestion. It is all part of what is a very important aspect of planning for Perth and is really fundamental and one of the central aspects in considering how Perth is going to grow and considering the implications of how it grows. Just because there is not a separate specific line item here that one can refer to does not mean to say that it is not being considered. However, I will ask Mr Lumsden to add some more on that.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** I thank the honourable member. I would like to differentiate between planning and implementation. As I have mentioned before, the planning has been important in terms of identifying those centres that are important to develop to change what I call the transport equation. That not only requires a major strategic document such as Directions 2031 to be facilitated, but also requires amendments and support by the relevant local governments and their local planning strategies, as well as the government through its

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implementation of a public transport plan that is being developed by the Department of Transport, with input from the Department of Planning. My understanding, member, is that the Department of Transport will be finalising that plan over the next three months—do not take what I am saying as gospel on that; that is through the Department of Transport. That transport plan will certainly be complementing the work that we have done in terms of our strategic planning. It will also give guidance to the implementation of key priority areas for transport planning and implementation of facilities such as railway stations and that type of aspect, but linked with local governments' local planning strategies. There is going to be a need, from an implementation point of view, to make that happen, with an implementation strategy based on priorities to intensify these key centres, many where existing infrastructure exists, to add value to them. That will be a combination, I believe, of government initiatives, but also linked to local government support and initiatives in their own right. I hope that explains it.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** My question relates to page 541 and, at the bottom, to the Office of Land and Housing Supply. A regular program of creating new government departments, offices and so forth has gone on over the past 18 months to two years, and here is another one.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The member means over the past 10 years. It has been going on for the past 10 years.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I was amalgamating them, but the minister is creating new ones. Here in the budget it has \$300 000 each year for the Office of Land and Housing Supply. Can the minister give us advice on a few questions relating to this? I know the industry would like this office to be established within the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. I would like to know where it is going to be located, what the number of staff is expected to be and who those staff might be, and what the expectation is in terms of the on-costs of running that office. What is the cost of rent, office fit-out and so forth?

**Mr P.T. MILES:** It will be at Wanneroo!

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It will actually be in the Department of Planning. I do not think it is possible to identify a separate amount of rent for it. I am not sure whether it would even be able to be allocated, but I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment in just a moment. There is \$300 000 per annum allocated additionally, and there will be up to four staff—initially two, but up to four staff—who will be allocated to the office. They will be implementing the functions of this office, which will be to coordinate and be the primary source of information for the government on land and housing supply, and to provide clarification of key impediments to getting new land and housing on the market. The office will work with the Department of Planning to identify short and medium-term infrastructure requirements that are needed to support strategic land and housing projects and coordinate their delivery across government. It will also monitor land release approvals and assist stalled projects, including across other state government agencies and local governments. It will work with other government agencies to identify legislation, policies and practices that need to be addressed to provide for efficient and sustainable land and housing supply. It will assist in coordinating the state's responses to Council of Australian Governments initiatives on land and housing supply priorities. It will also work with the Department of Housing on realistic affordability interventions and liaise with industry and other private sector stakeholders. The office will report to both me, as Minister for Planning, and the Minister for Housing. I will just ask Mr Lumsden to add a bit more.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** I thank the honourable member. This office has been formally created, if I can use that expression, by the additional funds of \$300 000. This is actually an extension of activities endorsed and supported by previous governments—namely, that of the urban development coordinator or other terms that were used from time to time.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It was Marion Fulker, was it not?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Marion Thompson.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Thompson; I am sorry.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** And prior to that, going way back, there was, I think, Russell Perry, and the ex-chairman of Homeswest. What I want to stress, honourable members, is that this activity had been occurring to some degree through Marion Thompson within my office for a number of years. That office had obviously been working with parties in the development industry, such as the Urban Development Institute of Australia, to ascertain developers' intentions and also to provide input into resolving issues within the industry across agencies. That continues. This extra funding granted by the government is actually recognising that this is a larger issue that requires more resources in the department, not only to address the issue of land development, but also, just as importantly, to ensure that housing can be brought on stream more effectively. This is a role that has been added to or enhanced even further by the additional funding from the government, but it is consistent with past government initiatives over a number of years.

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**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I was aware of the role of Marion Thompson and so forth, so there was past work. However, my question is twofold. Firstly, will the staff for this office be drawn from the existing department; and, secondly, what are the additional on-costs of establishing this office as opposed to the existing arrangement?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Mr Lumsden?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** First of all, other than Marion Thompson, supportive staff have been directed to assist Marion Thompson in that role over past years. In terms of on-costs, I would have to take that on notice, but I do not consider they would be considerable, because those costs are already within the department in terms of support services.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The Office of Land and Housing Supply is basically some people sitting in existing offices in the Department of Planning.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Correct. They will be accommodated in the office in the department.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** And Mr Lumsden may well draw the staff for this office from the people who are already sitting in those offices.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** They will be specifically tasked for this purpose; and if they are drawn from other parts of the department, obviously the funding will allow those positions that the people come from to be backfilled, so there are clearly additional resources available going into this purpose.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Except that the total budget for the department to deliver services is declining from where it was in 2008–09.

[9.40 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We addressed that through the previous answers just after we started. One-off grants and so on that are provided give the appearance of a general reduction but do not actually indicate there is a general reduction.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Therefore, when the budget states that there is a reduction, that is not true?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** What I said was that sometimes one-off payments can produce lumpy results.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Then the department is creating an office that will be within the agency, probably using staff within the agency, but it is called an office. Will that office answer through the director general?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Correct.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Or will it answer direct to the minister? So there are people within the department answering to the director general who are already in the department in their existing offices answering to the same person they answered to through the director general; and that is now an office?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No; and the Minister for Housing. The point is that more staff can be allocated to this purpose than would otherwise be the case. There can be more effort put in than would be the case if the extra funding was not provided. That is exactly what is going to occur.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Is the minister saying definitely no on-costs and no additional rent; nothing like that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I would not have thought so.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Certainly to my understanding there is no additional rent or anything like that.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The funding will be used for salaries et cetera.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I refer to the third dot point on page 543, which reads —

Significant improvement and amendment to the planning framework is required.

It then refers to —

‘Planning Makes it Happen: A Blueprint for Planning Reform’ ...

Can the minister give me some indication what this is, what it is aimed to do and how the minister will know whether or not it is successful?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** There is an extensive program of reform underway in the Department of Planning and in the planning portfolio. We touched on some of that earlier in relation to development assessment panels in the bill that is currently before Parliament. There are other aspects to that bill to ensure that we have a planning system that is more responsive to the state’s needs, including the ability to put in place improvement schemes, where

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necessary, to follow on from improvement plans that can be created currently. Other aspects of that include ensuring that the WA Planning Commission, with the support of the government of course, can require local planning schemes to be amended to incorporate state planning policies. There is also a provision to ensure that data can be collected from local governments to indicate performance on the time taken for approvals and so on; and there are some other aspects to that bill as well. That is therefore one of the major aspects of reform that is occurring under the general heading of “Planning Makes it Happen: A Blueprint for Planning Reform”. There are other changes underway as well, including a review of the so-called model scheme text and other changes as well. However, I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment on that a bit further.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** The point I wish to make firstly on that planning blueprint is that it was not simply developed in-house; it was developed following extensive consultation with industry, local government and all the major players to try to identify the key issues that had to be addressed from the planning reform agenda; and the blueprint sets them out. As the minister said, there are a number of aspects to implementing that blueprint. Obviously the current bill to amend the Planning Development Act is one aspect. The other aspect is to amend the model scheme text to ensure that the generic key general planning provisions for town planning schemes are consistent across the state in both intent and clarity of the wording. The other part of the model scheme text would be more specific aspects relating to local government schemes in individual areas of local government. That scheme text is currently being worked on.

Another issue in the blueprint is reform of conditions or provisions relating to structure plans and outline development plans that often create confusion within the industry in not only the validity of those conditions, but also the detail being applied. We are also reviewing all the current planning conditions that are used by the department to ensure, firstly, that they are relevant, and if they are not, they will be removed; and, secondly, to assure the Department of Planning and other agencies that the conditions are appropriate and can be substantiated for any approval to be issued by the department. These are issues that have been raised by industry in particular, and we are trying to ensure that this planning reform agenda, which is ongoing—it is not just simply contained in the proposed amendment to the Planning and Development Act—can be implemented over the following 12 to 18 months on a progressive basis in conjunction and in liaison with relevant players in the planning reform agenda that we are running.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to two dot points on page 542 on the significant issues impacting the agency. The second one details that the agency is, in effect, the lead government agency when it comes to identifying and prioritising major infrastructure projects in the state. Can the minister detail how many staff members work in that area; and why submissions have not been made to the Building Australia Fund for extensions of our rail network, specifically a rail line to Perth Airport, when apparently there is money available for such a project?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In relation to submissions to Infrastructure Australia —

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** And the Building Australia Fund.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The Building Australia Fund is part of the Infrastructure Australia program, I think, and that is coordinated through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, understandably.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** That is not what the second dot point says, though. It says that the Department of Planning is the lead agency.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** In relation to identifying infrastructure needs across the state for major road extensions and other transport needs, waste water treatment infrastructure and so on, the Department of Planning is taking the lead in identifying and coordinating the needs. Obviously the department does not go out there and second-guess what organisations, such as Western Power and the Water Corporation, are doing. The Department of Planning relies on those agencies for advice, but the department and also the infrastructure coordinating committee of the WA Planning Commission are taking a much stronger role now. It is the aim of the chairman of the commission to identify those needs and to try to ensure that there is a coordinated approach across government for facilitating growth in the state.

A rail line to the airport is certainly something that is being considered currently, but it is probably a long-term project. I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment more in a moment. Another aspect that needs to be dealt with is the road infrastructure network around the airport. There is a large amount of congestion currently. In fact, that was contained in one of the state’s submissions to the Infrastructure Australia fund soon after we came into government. I think it was number four or five on the list. I think the top three were funded at the time, from memory.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** I think it was on the list before the Liberal and National Parties came to government.

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**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** One project that was funded was the Perth City Link project; also the Oakajee and Ord projects. However, the airport project was certainly on the list, but I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment more on the project for a rail link to the airport.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Certainly. A rail link to the airport is being examined as part of the public transport plan that is being developed, as I said earlier, by the Department of Transport in conjunction with the Public Transport Authority. That has been recognised as a major need. We have certainly been, again in terms of our broader strategic planning, reflecting that in our documents. But the specific planning of the route and its prioritisation will be reflected, as I understand it, in the public transport plan being developed by the Department of Transport.

[9.50 am]

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I know that a list was sent to Infrastructure Australia, and from that the Oakajee, Northbridge Link and Ord projects were funded. Why were public transport projects actually deleted from that list when previously they had been identified as essential infrastructure and the federal government was willing to fund them as well? Why were those public transport projects deleted?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I think the Perth CityLink project could be considered a major public transport project. That was very much on there —

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Sorry, the Northbridge Link?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Perth CityLink.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** That is not public transport; that is a road infrastructure project.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No; it is undergrounding a rail line and a bus station, and also expanding the capacity of the central Perth rail station. That is a major public transport project as well as an urban renewal project. It will provide substantial above-ground improvements in amenity and vitality in the centre of Perth and a much better connection between the Perth central business district and Northbridge; but a major part of it is a public transport project. That was very much in this.

In relation to the other projects on the list, the state had to make a judgement about what was considered to be the highest priorities at the time. That does not mean to say we are not interested in public transport—we certainly are. The rail extension to Brighton is now being funded in the budget. I think I am right in saying that. It is not part of this portfolio of course. That is very much on the agenda. As I just mentioned, the public transport plan is being developed within the transport portfolio. That will come to the government as a whole fairly soon.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Can I have supplementary information on the actual content of the list as it originally stood, with those public transport options, and then a copy of the latest version of that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** When the member says the list as it “originally stood”, when does he mean?

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** When the minister came to government.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** When we came to government, as a government we determined what the list would be as we saw it. If the previous government had a list, then it is a matter of asking that government, or those members who were in it.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** There was a submission with the people in Canberra. When this government took office it deleted things from that list. The deletions included important public transport options.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** If something had been submitted by the previous government, then that is obviously not the responsibility of this government.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** I refer to the second dot point on page 554 of the *Budget Statements* under “East Perth Redevelopment Authority”, which is a little-known group within the minister’s portfolio. I refer to the very small \$3.5 million to continue activation of the cultural centre. Can the minister tell me who is choosing the public art for the cultural centre redevelopment? Has the minister, or any other ministers or officials, purchased any works from Sculptures by the Sea or made commitments to groups that the government will purchase their public art for the cultural centre?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I think the member is getting a bit away from the planning portfolio.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** EPRA is paying for it. It has to come out of that very small amount of \$3.5 million. If the minister has made commitments that he will spend some of that on public art, it is a valid question.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Who is choosing it? Not me. I presume EPRA has artistic advisers and so on. There are certainly architects, planners and other well qualified professional people involved in the design of the cultural

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centre's redevelopment. I think they are having a very good effect. I hope members would agree with that if they walked around the redevelopment and saw the work that has been done. There is a long way to go. With a lot more funding available in the future, I am sure we can make much better changes. The nature of the area, both from a public amenity and a safety point of view, has been improved substantially even in the past six to eight months.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** The last time a Premier made an artistic decision, the belltower was chosen! Is the minister saying that he is not choosing the public art —

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Of course I am not.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** No other minister or official will choose the public art; it is going through the —

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Obviously somebody has got to make decisions but it is certainly not me or any other ministers, I can assure the member. I am very supportive of the process and very interested in what is being done, and get briefed from time to time, but I can assure the member that I rely on professional people to make judgements about choice of art, whether it be acquiring works for the art gallery or other decisions about public art in our central business district. For example, the sculpture project that is going into Forrest Place, which is being funded by the state of course —

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** We committed to half the funding.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** No, it is not half the funding at all. There was funding for two projects previously. From memory, that was \$1.5 million in total for two projects. It was considered that a better and more substantial result would be obtained from one project at a higher value. From memory, the total cost of that project is of the order of \$1.3 million. It is certainly not half the amount of funding.

I want to conclude by saying, in relation to the choice of sculpture that will go there, a five-member panel was appointed. All members have very strong credentials from the visual arts sector, including architects. That is the sort of process.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Given that the minister and his officials do not know the answer, can the minister undertake to provide, by supplementary information, the answer to what public art is being chosen and who has chosen it?

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Mr Chairman, I have a point of order. We are going into the arts portfolio; we are on planning at the moment. I ask that the hearing be brought back to the planning portfolio.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** It is being funded through the \$3.5 million EPRA budget allocation.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am happy to provide supplementary information about the processes involved in relation to selection of public art for the Perth cultural centre redevelopment.

**Mr J.N. HYDE:** Including decisions and commitments made.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will provide information about the processes that have been used and will be used. Amongst others, the director of the art gallery is involved where appropriate.

[*Supplementary Information No B12.*]

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** My question relates to the metropolitan region improvement fund. Where do we see that fund brought to account and see the allocation of moneys that are being spent under that fund?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is on a page of the budget papers. Unfortunately this year we do not seem to be provided with a hard copy of the budget papers.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** This is a major fund in the planning portfolio.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes; certainly.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** It does not seem to be obvious that there is any reference to it.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** If we go to page 557 of the *Budget Statements*, members will see the heading "Western Australian Planning Commission", division 44. It can be seen there that the budget estimate for 2010–11 is \$78.9 million.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The moneys that that has been allocated to—where do we see that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** On about the following five pages of the budget papers including —

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Perhaps I could ask a more general question before the planning commission division comes on. There is a major problem with the growth councils, particularly those on the fringe of the metropolitan area. Has any provision been made to assist those councils—Serpentine–Jarrahdale being the most

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obvious one—that do not have the resources to effectively plan? I know when we were in government we provided assistance to them by way of additional personnel to help them undertake various district structure plans. What assistance is being provided by the department? Is the minister, the department or the Planning Commission aware of the huge problems that are being experienced out there, and the inability of the shire even to have the resources to develop a contribution scheme so it can actually get some developers to contribute to alleviating this burden?

[10.00 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I was going to say that if the member wants to discuss the planning commission, she should wait until we get to that division, but the member has now come back to the role of the Department of Planning. I am aware that assistance has been provided, but I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment on the current status of that in relation to the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale. There has been a planning assistance program in place for a number of local governments around the state. I will ask Mr Lumsden to elaborate.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** I thank the minister and the member. The assistance to the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale has been at the high officer level in assisting and guiding it in the work it is doing within its own local government. The Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, to my knowledge, has put on extra resources in recent times and has been using consultants to resolve, particularly, issues relating to water management. In terms of the structure plan development, there has been extensive liaison and support by the relevant division of the department, through director level down, to assist it in forwarding its planning aspects. We have not given it direct money, to my knowledge, but we have given it like support through our officers of the department; quite extensive support.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Of course, departments and agencies are always helpful—we take that for granted. But this shire has an actual financial incapacity to do the job required. The shire has come to the decision that it needs a minimum of four extra people. It is already in the red because of decisions made about royalties for regions. It simply does not have the financial capacity to, in any way, shape or form, prepare the plans that need to be prepared to allow the massive growth occurring down there to take place. Is the department prepared to look at some strategic intervention to assist this council? It is saying that it cannot do it and that it, physically, does not have the personnel. I know it got some money from the federal government for a particular task, but its assessment is that it needs a minimum of four extra people for the next two to three years, but there is simply no money. It is already in the red and there is no money to do that.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I cannot understand why it is in the red as a result of royalties for regions.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Because promises were made last year. The minister may remember that funding was withdrawn in the *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement*—that is what happened! The council had committed to a project on the basis of an allocation that was made, but it was withdrawn at the midyear review. That is why it is in the red.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The member for Darling Range is shaking his head at that, but, anyway, the member may know something I do not. In relation to the planning requirements of the shire, Mr Lumsden has told me that he has not had any recent approach or information in relation to shortages that it is facing. We are prepared to listen to it if it wants to raise an issue with us. I will ask Mr Lumsden to comment a bit more.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Certainly I have had a number of meetings with the mayor and executive of the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale this calendar year. They certainly did not raise with me the need for funding assistance from the department. They certainly sought, as I indicated earlier, support from staff, which I have provided to them. If they need more funding support, I am happy to listen to their concerns and see what they require, and I can perhaps give them guidance on where they may be able to get that funding. But I cannot say that, at the moment, my department has funding for four staff just for Serpentine–Jarrahdale.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** The department has a grants scheme under the metropolitan region improvement fund; are there any unallocated moneys available in that fund?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Mr Evans will answer the question.

**Mr T. Evans:** I am not sure—it depends what the intent is. As the member may be aware, MRIF is restricted in its use. It is normally intended for the management of the metropolitan region scheme.

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** This is part of it; this is part of dealing with zoned urban land under the metropolitan region scheme.

**Mr T. Evans:** If it is to do with the maintenance and amendment to the MRS or supporting acquisition of property —

**Mr P.T. MILES** interjected.

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**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN:** Sorry, no! We provided grants—let us clarify that. I am asking the question because when I was planning minister I was aware that certain grants were made every year. Grants would be made to, say, Bassendean and Maylands to help them develop strategic planning for their town centre. We had all sorts of grants. My question is: has the department got any unallocated moneys in MRIF yet, because I know that moneys are set aside for grants, and this growth council, which tells me that it is in crisis, could be considered for a grant.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Through the minister to the member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes, Mr Lumsden.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Sorry, Madam Chair. My understanding is that there are no unallocated moneys in MRIF. We will certainly be heavily prioritising MRIF funding over the next few years. If the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale wishes to make a submission to the department and/or to the commission, we would consider it. But if we allocate funds to the Shire of Serpentine–Jarrahdale, it will require the re-priorisation of funding to other projects.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I have a further question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am sorry; we cannot take further questions from anyone except the proposer of the question. The member for Wanneroo has a question.

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Page 547 of the *Budget Statements* has a line item under “Major Spending Changes” about the Oakajee infrastructure project. Can the minister highlight to the house what that item is for, please?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Did the member say page 547?

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Page 541, sorry. It is right down at the bottom, under “Major Spending Changes”.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That will be for planning activities for the necessary connections into Oakajee. The line item states that it is for the “Oakajee Infrastructure Service Corridor”, which is under consideration. That will provide for the road, rail and other services links between the Narngulu industrial estate further inland, and the proposed Oakajee industrial estate and port. The planning and implementation of that project will be done in three stages over three years. Stage 1 will finalise all the social, environmental and engineering studies and recommend the alignment of the corridor; stage 2 will create the corridor under the Land Administration Act as a reserve, with a particular purpose—for example, as an infrastructure corridor reserve—and a vesting authority will also be identified; and stage 3 will involve a strategy for the acquisition of land being prepared, and then land actually being purchased and managed. It is to enable, essentially, the road and rail link between the Oakajee industrial estate and port to be linked by road and rail to the inland and to provide the corridor for that to occur.

**Mr P.T. MILES:** I have a further question. Can the minister go into a bit more detail about the corridor, because I do not know what sort of size or length the minister is talking about?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It will obviously be of a sufficient width to accommodate a rail line and a road—if indeed a new road needs to be created; I am not sure whether that will be the case. It may, in part, use an existing road reserve that may need to be expanded, but I am not familiar with the exact details of what is likely to be the outcome.

[10.10 am]

**Mr E. Lumsden:** We are supporting the Department of State Development, which is the lead agency for the Oakajee port. It is basically an infrastructure corridor between Oakajee port and Narngulu that then links into the existing rail system. I cannot off the top of my head think of the actual distance, but it is quite a significant link involving not only a new corridor to get the link to Oakajee, but also an upgrade, as I understand it, of some of the existing rail corridor which may only be narrow gauge and which requires some adjustments to the existing corridor. The corridor itself is very strategic for both rail, road and the servicing link, as the minister touched on, between Narngulu industrial estate and the proposed industrial estate at Oakajee in the port itself. It is a very key link and, as the minister said, we are facilitating it in three stages. We are carrying out that work through the Department of State Development as a whole-of-government-agencies approach.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to page 544 of budget paper No 2, “Outcomes and Key Effectiveness Indicators”, which contains information on the R codes and proximity to train stations or transport systems. The cut-off point seems to be the R20 value. Why are we using R20, when that is standard suburbia? Why is information not presented on the R30, R40 and R60 codes and their proximity to transport systems?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I presume that that is how it has been done historically, and maybe it needs to be updated. The whole issue of key performance indicators and key effective indicators is something that we can debate for a

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long time and exactly which one can be identified and used and so on is always problematic. I would say that this is for historical reasons and maybe they should be updated somewhat.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** The member has touched upon an issue that is of concern to me. These indicators have been around for some time. I do not think they are effective indicators. I think they need to be reviewed. In fact, the department has commenced a process review and it is my understanding that we have a window of opportunity to review these and to get them agreed to by the Office of the Auditor General. Is that correct, Mr D'souza?

**Mr D'souza:** Yes.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Going back to the member's previous question on activity centres and emphasising these key transport hubs that I would like to see totally revised to reflect what we are trying to do, certainly in terms of development of state policy for the Western Australian Planning Commission, that will reinforce the need to review these indicators, because I do not think they are effective or meaningful in achieving the planning targets that we now wish to achieve.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Would it be possible by supplementary information to extend that information for R30, R40 and R60 codes?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Subject to being corrected, I can probably show the member that information in mapping form around the various stations, which would be far more effective than just giving the member numbers.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Are they GIS presented?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Something like that.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Then we could generate the statistics from the GIS?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** That is where these are generated from, but it would be more meaningful if I gave the member the GIS map.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** Can that be submitted as supplementary information?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** I believe it can, subject to confirmation, but I am quite happy to make it available.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I agree to provide that as supplementary information to the extent it is possible.

**The CHAIRMAN:** What is the correct title of the information you will provide, minister?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is additional information about the proximity of various R codes, namely, R30, R40 and R60, to transport systems and facilities through integrated land and tracking systems.

*[Supplementary Information No B13.]*

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remind members to please address the minister and the minister can defer.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** I refer to the fifth dot point on page 543, which refers to revised bushfire guidelines. Could the minister explain what the guidelines do and their focus?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Obviously, in some parts of the state, including parts of the metropolitan area, there is a high fire risk, particularly where there is proximity to residential and other developments. It is essential that we do what we can to minimise that risk. Certainly, as a representative of a hills electorate and somebody who has lived in the hills for a long time, I do not think we should be unduly frightened about bushfire risk; it is simply a matter of managing properly and ensuring that adequate responses are available when fires occur. Of course, from the planning point of view, we must ensure that we take into account the particular topography and vegetation, and that road design, road width and other requirements are in place in relation to building approvals that will provide a sufficient degree of assurance that if a major fire occurs, it is more likely to be controlled and that people are able to escape if necessary or are able to protect themselves. That is really the essential point of the bushfire planning guidelines that have been put in place. They have recently been updated and a revised edition of the guidelines published. That is an interim document and will be reviewed once the report of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission is published. If there are additional changes to be made taking into account the experience in Victoria, they will be incorporated. That outlines the overall purpose of it. The guidelines are available on the internet or in hard copy and they are expected to be taken into account by local governments and the other decision-making authorities in relation to approving subdivisions and other approvals in high fire risk areas.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Will it restrict the development of residences in areas that are highly prone to fire or does it also affect the building code, which is an issue that came out of the Victorian inquiry today?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I will defer to Mr Lumsden in a moment. I cannot recall whether it directly affects the building code; it probably has some impact on that. Certainly, it is intended to ensure that where housing is going to be

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approved in an area that is excessively high risk, it will be less likely to be rezoned for urban development; but, where it is rezoned or where a subdivision is being considered under an existing zoning, it is intended to ensure that adequate protections are put in place. I ask Mr Lumsden to respond on the other details, partly based on his experience as a CEO of the City of Swan and previously in the Shire of Mundaring, where obviously these issues are faced.

**Mr E. Lumsden:** Thank you, minister and through you, Madam Chair, to the honourable member. The guidelines have been developed in conjunction and liaison with the Fire and Emergency Services Authority and the Department of Environment and Conservation because a number of these issues relate to national parks as well as to what I call generally bushfire risk zoned areas.

[10.20 am]

The guidelines basically are picking up and proposing a risk management policy, which is then reflected in the consideration of subdivisions, whether they are rezoning to urban or to small rural holdings. The guidelines will restrict, where appropriate in high risk areas, the formation of small rural holdings in terms of their intensity and the nature of whether subdivision will occur. Where development can occur, the guidelines also ensure that the interface between, for instance, a national park and future residential development is taken into consideration through the guideline framework. The issues relating to the buildings themselves, as the minister has outlined, fall under the Building Code of Australia. Those aspects are administered by local governments through their building control policies. Obviously, that is an issue we have also raised with the Department of Local Government, which is responsible for the administration of the Local Government Act. That aspect still needs to be developed further in conjunction with local government to recognise that although areas for subdivisions can be planned, it is critical to ensure an integrated approach that takes into account the development on the land itself. That needs to be addressed through the Building Code of Australia. I have expectations that significant aspects will come out of the royal commission in Victoria that will result in amendments to the Building Code of Australia. Until we see that, we cannot really do much more than what we are doing as a planning agency.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Do you think it will significantly reduce the potential, particularly in the south, for building holiday homes in enclosed woodland areas adjacent to a national park?

**Mr E. Lumsden:** I do not think one can say that it would reduce significantly. I think what it would generate is more judicious consideration of where a home would go on the site and what preventive measures would need to be taken from a risk management perspective. I think the application would give far stronger guidance to the general allocation of rural smallholdings, which may be very vulnerable. I would quote the event in the Shire of Toodyay, which occurred in this state not so long ago.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Just for the minister's information, we are now nearly halfway through. Our plan hopefully was to spend the last hour or so on culture and the arts. We would be keen to get through the remainder of WAPC by 11.00 am. I have only a couple more questions on this division. Then hopefully we can get on to the planning commission.

Page 541 shows the net amount to deliver services. I know that the Premier has made much play of the fact that the government will be reducing the number of committees, inquiries and so forth as a way of saving money. Has the minister saved money through doing that? Can the minister confirm that, in accordance with what the Premier said a few weeks ago, the minister has abolished the environment and natural resources management committee, the sustainability committee, the school sites planning committee, the western Victoria Quay advisory committee, the Ningaloo sustainable development committee, the Western Australian Planning Commission and Western Australian Local Government Association committee, the priorities committee, the Parliament House precinct committee, the greater Bunbury regional planning committee, the Goldfields–Esperance regional planning and coordinating committee, the Cottesloe inquiry by design core project group, the Maddington–Kenwick sustainable communities partnership steering committee, the Maddington–Kenwick funding agreement steering committee, the Mirrabooka bus station design reference group and the metropolitan region planning committee, and also that the minister plans to abolish the Board of Valuers? That was the information provided by the Premier. I just want to confirm that it is correct.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I am sure it was correct. Some of them have not been right at the forefront of my mind, I must say, particularly some of the more esoteric committees. In February I put out a statement advising that a number of committees had been discharged or wound up. They included the Araluen Park board of management; the environment and natural resources management committee, which is one that the member referred to, I think; the Goldfields–Esperance regional planning and infrastructure coordinating committee; the greater Bunbury regional planning committee; the metropolitan regional planning committee; the Parliament House precinct committee; the priorities committee; the public utility services committee; the school sites planning committee, which is one that was mentioned; the sustainability committee; the WAPC-WALGA committee; the western Victoria Quay

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advisory committee; and the Whiteman Park board of management. There are some committees that are established through legislation, but they will only be convened as necessary. Those include the Coastal Planning and Coordination Council, the sustainable transport committee and the five metropolitan district planning committees. The commission has quite consciously retained some committees, albeit the total number has been reduced substantially, and they are the infrastructure coordinating committee, the statutory planning committee, the executive finance property committee, the central Perth planning committee and six regional planning committees—that is, the South West, the Peel, and the more recently established Kimberley, Pilbara and Mid West planning committees—and there is a Gascoyne regional planning committee, which is in the process of being established. In other words, there has been a strong effort to ensure that where committees exist, albeit at a much lower number, they do serve a useful and contemporary role.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I missed something on that point. Can the minister confirm that the Cottesloe inquiry by design core project group has been abolished?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Obviously Cottesloe is an area of important planning interest, but I am not aware of any committee still existing in relation to that. I am told that is finished.

**Mr G. Prattley:** A number of those committees, such as that one, were short-term committees set up to deal with a specific issue that is specific at a point in time. They are not, as it were, permanent committees that are commissioned or in any sense statutory committees that are commissioned. They are functional committees set up to do a task. When the task is completed, the committee disbands.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Does that include the Ningaloo Sustainable Development Committee?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Yes, that would come under the Gascoyne committee, is it?

**Mr G. Prattley:** That will be embraced within the Gascoyne regional planning committee, which we are in the process of establishing.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Can the minister confirm that he is going to abolish by legislation the Board of Valuers?

**Mr T. Evans:** The intention is that the Board of Valuers will be dealt with as part of the State Administrative Tribunal, but at this stage it currently is a legislative requirement, and that board will remain.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Is the minister going to abolish it by a legislative change?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** That obviously would need approval of cabinet and then Parliament to occur, but the suggestion is that it would be better for that to occur and for the role to be taken over by the State Administrative Tribunal. That is the general thinking.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I have just one more question on this division. We were hoping to move on to the Planning Commission after that. I refer to page 546 and to the electronic land development program, for which \$4.286 million is allocated. The minister will recall that last year we had some discussion about it because there was formerly \$20 million or thereabouts allocated to the electronic land development system, which is designed to put online a number of subdivision approval processes. The minister indicated that he has withdrawn all that money because he did not think that the project stacked up or whatever, but it was still something that the minister was going to do. Only \$4 million has been allocated, which is about a fifth of what is needed to establish this project. What has happened to the electronic land development program?

[10.30 am]

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is still very much on the agenda. The advice of the department is correct, having gone through the process. I am advised that not long after we came into government, the process of seeking tenders was not successful because there was too much uncertainty about the outcomes. It was not seen as value for money. That is why a decision was made to go back to the drawing board, to some extent. The process of an assessment of what is really needed and how it is to be provided has continued over the past 12 months. My understanding is that it has been determined that a number of commercial off-the-shelf packages would provide a viable solution for implementation of the ELDP. The next stage is to select one of those and, obviously, to seek the funding for that to occur once we are certain that that is likely to result in a successful outcome.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Is there no money for that?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** We will need to make the case for the additional funding that is necessary. But it would have been premature to allocate an amount before we knew what is really necessary. It will probably not be necessary to spend \$20 million or whatever was allocated previously; it can be done for less than that.

**Mr D'souza:** The member is correct about the previous allocation of \$25 million in 2008–09, which was subsequently taken off in the midyear review. We advised Treasury that we would first do a scoping document to

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find out exactly what systems have been out in the market. As the minister rightly said, the objective is to not develop a self-tailored system, which would cost a significant amount, but look at off-the-shelf systems. The scoping project commenced in July 2009. That will cost \$2.054 million. That should be completed by August 2010. Based on that, we should come up with some recommendations and a business case to ascertain exactly what we will need. Our estimation is that it will not be more than \$15 million at the most. But we cannot confirm any numbers until we have the exact report finalised by August 2010. Then we will have to make a business case and submission to the ERC.

**The appropriation was recommended.**

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. Would members like a five-minute morning tea break now?

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I would prefer to finish planning and do arts at 11.00 am.

**Mr P.T. MILES:** Do the departmental staff need to have a comfort break? I think we need a comfort break for staff.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** It is up to the minister.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** Let us do that—five minutes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will see you all back in five minutes, then. Thank you.

*Meeting suspended from 10.33 to 10.41 am*