

**Division 6: Western Australian Electoral Commission —**

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr J.R. Quigley, Minister for Electoral Affairs.

Mr R. Kennedy, Electoral Commissioner.

Ms C. Barron, Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

Mr G. Meyers, Director, Business Services.

Mr J. Lee, Principal Policy Adviser.

Ms K. McDougall, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof Hansard will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. The chair will allow as many questions as possible. Questions and answers should be short and to the point. Consideration is restricted to items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must relate to a page number, item or amount related to the current division, and members should preface their questions with these details. Some divisions are the responsibility of more than one minister. Ministers shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The Attorney General may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the Attorney General to clearly indicate what information he agrees to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by noon, Friday 31 May 2024. If the Attorney General suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system to submit their questions.

I give the call to the member for Central Wheatbelt.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to page 90 and paragraph 4 under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, which reads —

Implementation of the *Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Act 2023*, effective 1 July 2024, requires major changes including new services designed to make voting easier and additional regulatory functions concerning how-to-vote cards, election campaign workers and the funding and disclosure of election costs. The Commission will dedicate existing and new resources towards implementing these changes by March 2025.

[4.50 pm]

Given the delays in providing adequate advice and guidance, as was outlined last week in Parliament and by way of a letter from the state directors of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party, the Nationals WA and the Greens, on the introduction of the new online financial donation disclosure system, was it the government or the Western Australian Electoral Commission that underestimated the task and the resources required to deliver on this agenda?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It is not a yes or no question, minister. Did the government or the Electoral Commission get it wrong?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No one has got it wrong.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the minister then explain why the state directors of all four political parties, which would be the major stakeholders in the implementation of the new act about financial disclosure, have written to the Electoral Commission? It has been made public that they have had very little engagement and are very fearful that they are not going to have adequate time to do the work they need to do because there has not been any adequate advice provided at this point.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Guideline 1 has gone to all parties, which sets out in detail how they will comply with the legislation requiring them to give notice to the commission of donations. I think it is about a page and a half or two pages that sets out in detail exactly how the parties will do it, both by online disclosure or through emailing a template. Guideline 1 has informed that paper templates will be ready prior to June 14.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** When was guideline 1 provided to the stakeholders?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I think there were further meetings earlier this week. Then the commission, together with the State Solicitor’s Office, settled the guideline. It is all in hand.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That guideline, that one to two pages of detail —

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** It is guideline 1. A number of guidelines will be issued.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes. It is 23 May and it comes into effect on 1 July. We have two pages of guidelines provided this week. Is that what the minister is saying?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I am saying that it is more than a page.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** God forbid we have detail on the most complex thing that the parties do!

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No! It shows where to send the information on how to transmit it. All the act requires is for notice to be given to the commission. If a party member wants to walk in with a bit of signed paper and hand it over the counter, that is giving notice to the commission. The guideline sets out four pathways by which a notice can be given. It says that it can be emailed to an address in the form of the template. The template is just a simple form with a name, address and all of that. The commission will enter it all. It is not a problem. It will be all on time, all on budget.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** When was that guideline provided?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** As I said, it was provided earlier this week —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Was it this week?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Hang on. Yes. It was provided earlier this week after the parties had the opportunity to meet with the commission not once, but twice, on Friday and then again on Monday. There was consultation about how the notice would be delivered to the commission. It is not rocket science.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Why has it taken until now, when the implementation of this disclosure system and all the other elements of the legislation need to be in place before the election? In particular, the disclosure needs to be in place for 1 July. There are other issues. The point is that the Electoral Commission might have its ducks in a line—I am not sure whether it does—but that information cannot just be given out —

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** It has a nice little line of quackers, beautiful!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Why was this not started earlier? Why were these discussions, forms and disclosure advice not provided earlier? There is not much cross-party collaboration between the four organisations, but all four state directors wrote to the Electoral Commission to complain and raise their concerns about the fact that they were unclear on what their responsibilities would be. That cannot be considered acceptable by the minister.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I do not follow that. The responsibility of the parties is to provide notice of donation. It is not like filing a tax return or an application for legal aid or anything like that. Let us go through it. The name, address and the amount of donation is to be provided to the commission. What is the member's problem?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** If it is so simple, why was it not done earlier and why did it require a \$44 000 consultant to hold a workshop to engage with the stakeholders? If it was so simple, why was it not done at the beginning of the year and why was a \$44 000 consultant used to engage with the group? The minister is simplifying something that is actually complex.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Hang on —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** There is a \$44 000 consultant.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I reject the premise of the member's question. I do not see any complexity at all in advising the commission by forwarding an email recording a donation. The parties have been provided with the commission's email address. I do not follow the complexity.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the minister confirm that a consultant was employed by the Electoral Commission and can he confirm that \$44 000 was paid for the consultancy?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Yes.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Was that for a simple engagement to create a form? Does that sound like a good use of taxpayers' dollars?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the minister refer the question? Can the minister explain what the \$44 000 was for?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Sure. Over time, there is an aspiration for integrated programs between parties and the commission so that there will not be the template form. They may be able to issue their receipt only and have that go straight to the commission. We have not got to that point yet. The commission wanted to find out what the optimum way is for the parties and what they see as entailing the least burden. That nuanced and sophisticated program to be enhanced is not provided for in the legislation. The requirement of the legislation is to just notify the commission of donations. It can be notified in bulk. I do not like this generic term, but some people have used a "data dump." That means sending an email that has a lot of attached donation forms.

The recording of those under individual names, as the parties have been told, is because Billy Brown might make a number of donations that have to be accumulated. Instead of putting that burden on the parties, the commission

has said that all they have to do is to notify it and it will carry the weight and enter it. I understand that the parties were querying that at the time, so a guideline was issued—this is the simple way. Over time, something more nuanced that will still meet the requirements of the legislation will perhaps enable it to be done in a slicker way. I take the member to taxation, by way of analogy. A person can fill in their tax form and post it off. Their tax agent could probably just fill in some boxes online. The requirement is that people must report their income by a certain date. Here, the requirement is that the commission must be notified within seven days of a donation being received.

[5.00 pm]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Outside the electoral term.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Before the writs are issued.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Then it is every day.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Then it will be on a daily basis, because we do not want someone like an eastern states miner coming in and doing a big dump seven days out from the election and neither the media nor the public knowing. When I said that, I was not talking about BHP or any of the respectables in Western Australia; I was talking about Mr Palmer.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am aware. I have a further question.

**The CHAIR:** For the purposes of *Hansard*, the member for Central Wheatbelt cited a letter. Did you give a date for that, member?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Do you need the reference?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Was this the letter to the commission?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It was 10 May.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** It was written on 10 May. Just let me check for a moment. Within, say, 10 or 11 days, a complete guideline was sent. That was pretty slick! I bet you do not get that out of the other agencies—a total response in 10 days!

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Nice try, minister. The fact is that they had been trying to extract information from the Electoral Commission and that caused it to put it in writing. The turnaround time is not something to be getting gold stars on, in my view.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** But you knew.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** This does not relate to the budget.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It absolutely does; it is about the resourcing.

**The CHAIR:** It comes under the significant issues impacting the agency on page 90, member.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I have a further question. The Attorney General spoke about the parties being able to just submit a piece of paper or an email or whatever has been issued. How long will we have that system? Will we see the introduction, in the middle of an election period, of the online portal that was discussed or is that something that is in the never-never and we will have a hybrid system while we are trying to manage a new electoral redistribution? There are a lot of things going on here, Attorney General. There are parties with limited resources.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Certainly. We understand that a new system is coming in. Parties have statutory obligations under the new system and they are concerned that they properly discharge their obligations. If we go to the legislation and see what their obligation is, it is to provide a notice to the commission within seven days of receiving a donation. They can acquit that if, on one sheet of toilet paper, they write out the name and address of the donor and the amount, sign it and provide it to the commission.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Be careful what you wish for.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I do not wish for it; I expect some incompetents might try it. Parties will discharge their obligation as soon as they give notice to the commission within seven days of receiving a donation. The commission wants to help parties. As the member knows, the commission is not biased towards the government or any other party participating in an election—it is not. The commission has forecast that, over time, it wants to make it even easier for parties so that they do not have to get out their sheets of paper or print anything. That is not a requirement of the legislation; that is a requirement of a good agency—a top agency—that is trying to facilitate this process and ease the burden on all candidates in an election so that they can get on and concentrate on the contest of ideas going into an election and not be too burdened. The legislative obligation is merely to give notice, and that is on time, on track and on budget.

**The CHAIR:** Member, I will give someone else the call. I will give you the latitude to come back, but, given that we are getting the same answer repeated time and again, I wonder about the utility of that.

**Ms C.M. TONKIN:** What is the commission doing to improve engagement with groups that experience low enrolment, such as culturally and linguistically diverse people, Aboriginal people and people in regional areas?

**The CHAIR:** What is the page reference?

**Ms C.M. TONKIN:** It is page 90, sorry.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That is a very important question. I refer to paragraph 3 under the significant issues impacting the agency on page 90. The commission is working closely with the Australian Electoral Commission, which is undertaking an Aboriginal engagement program to help inspire members of communities and towns to enrol ahead of the next state election. That work by the Australian Electoral Commission uplifted the number of regional, and especially Indigenous, people enrolled in the run-up to the referendum on constitutional reform. The commission hopes to employ local Aboriginal people to assist with its enrolment campaign. There was an increase in the number of Aboriginal people enrolled to vote as a result of the Western Australian Electoral Commission's own work, noting that it appointed two additional full-time employees, which means there is a team of four travelling around the state to try to uplift enrolment. The commission is developing a refreshed democracy ambassador program that will aim to employ culturally and linguistically diverse people to help with the engagement of this target audience. We will have people from that community going out and encouraging community members to participate in our democracy.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am still on paragraph 4 under the significant issues impacting the agency in relation to the implementation of the Electoral Amendment (Finance and Other Matters) Act 2023. Is the Electoral Commission working through a program of works in terms of the major issues that need to be finalised and in place prior to March 2025? There will be new how-to-vote cards and systems for approval, and financial disclosure—a whole raft of things came in as a result of that legislation. Is that timelined and are there dates by when they need to be completed, and has that been shared with the state directors of the parties?

[5.10 pm]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No, we do not have stepped-out dates for each of those tasks, we have priorities that have to be attended to in order. The first one is to get the disclosure system instructions to all parties. Not only is the Western Australian Electoral Commission working on this, but there are two—not one—assigned solicitors at the State Solicitor's Office dedicated to advising the commission on any issues of interpretation of the statutes and requirements that will produce the further guidelines as we roll them out.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Is there not a Gantt chart with that program of works so there are timeframes, resources allocated and appropriate time for consultation built into the process? Is it just a list of priorities indicating that X must be done before March 2025?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Each step has to be consulted on along the way, as was done with the disclosure procedures. We consulted with the parties and assured them that if they just transmitted the name, address and amount of the donation within seven days of receiving it, or daily during the campaign period, the commission would undertake the work of entering it. The commission may in due course develop a program that lightens its load by allowing the parties to enter information electronically. That is all a work in progress. In this climate, it is difficult because in IT people resign and then new IT people get hired. It will all be done on budget and on time.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the Attorney General clarify something? My recollection from the debate was that this would be an online portal and that it would be seamless, efficient and ready.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Yes, that is what we will get to.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am not sure that there was any discussion about a hybrid system. I am fairly sure that this package of work was sold by saying there would be an online system for the parties. That was discussed in the context that they have smaller funding administrations and significant administrative burdens and that there is no administrative funding under the legislation. It was elected not to provide additional support to political parties to transition, and now we are talking about a paper-based system.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** No, we do not have to go there.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The Attorney General is.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That is the baseline. If Billy Bloggs, an independent candidate, is standing and does not even own a computer or an iPhone, he can, by a piece of paper, notify the commission and discharge the obligation under the legislation. In due course, other systems are always on the improve. It does not have to be done by a piece of paper. The party has to put in an annual return of donors, so it has to have a list of them; it has to have an annual return. We are not asking parties to do any more work. That annual return can be done on an Excel spreadsheet. Just

by hitting the send button on that spreadsheet and sending it to the given email address, a party will have discharged its obligations under the act. There is nothing in the legislation that says, “You will, or you must, by online portal —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is not what was said, Attorney General. In the discussion during the debate, it was very clear that there would be an online portal.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** There will be an online portal.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It was not going to happen sometime in the never–never. I have a new question.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** We were talking about what would be required under the legislation, and what is required is that the party or candidates notify the commission within seven days of receiving the donation or gift, and that can be done in any of the ways in guideline 1.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to the first service and key efficiency indicator on page 91 of the *Budget statements*, “Provision of Independent, Impartial and Efficient Electoral Services to Electors for Parliament and Other Electoral Clients”. That would cover the provision of services to local government. I am just clarifying that the Electoral Commission ran local government elections.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Not all of them, but the overwhelming majority.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That is my first question. How many local governments requested the Electoral Commission to run their ordinary elections in 2023?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** For those numbers, I defer to the commissioner.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** There were 124.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Can the Attorney General provide a breakdown of the cost per council to run those elections?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** We can provide that by way of supplementary information.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** By way of supplementary information, we will provide the cost for each of the 124 local government authorities for which the vote was run by the Electoral Commission. That refers to the ordinary council elections held last October. It will be in relation to the local government elections held in October 2023.

[*Supplementary Information No A33.*]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** How many local governments elected to purchase the software system that was made available at a cost of \$10 000, as was indicated in last year’s estimates?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** It was \$2 000, not \$10 000.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** It was late when I was doing my notes last night, and I might have had a dyslexic moment. It looked to me like \$10 000.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** It was not done on a cost-recovery basis; it was \$2 000 per council.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** How many councils elected to purchase the software system?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I will have to provide that by way of further supplementary information, and the further supplementary information will be the number of local authorities that applied for the use of the software and paid for it for the 2023 local government elections.

**The CHAIR:** Does the member want names and the number of local authorities?

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes, I would like the names of the councils that did purchase it.

**The CHAIR:** Yes. Can the Attorney General just clarify that it is not just the number but also the identification of the particular councils?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** By council name?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Certainly.

[*Supplementary Information No A34.*]

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I understand that was the first time that the Electoral Commission ran local government elections en masse. Is the Attorney General aware, and I am sure he is, that a number of councils with a very small voter turnout held their elections on the Saturday, as they all did, and did not get the result until the Monday morning? I am a member of state Parliament. I have 22 000 or however many thousand electors in my electorate and I find out the result on the night, usually half an hour after the close of the writs. I am interested in the Attorney General’s views about whether it is appropriate that volunteers have to wait a day and a half to find out whether they have been elected when sometimes only 150 to 200 votes have been counted.

[5.20 pm]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Not a long wait, is it? For the Legislative Council, it takes ages. This new system with optional preferential voting was introduced in about 124 local government authorities. It was a new system. Everything had to be checked and double-checked to make sure there was no error. I realise when I have had local government people come along and say, “Oh, it was a squib of an election because we didn’t have a celebration on the night. We had to wait until the Monday —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am not worried about the celebration. A volunteer has put up their hand to be a public servant.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** People who stand for Parliament put up their hand and they wait.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** We get paid, Attorney General.

**The CHAIR:** Order! Just one at a time.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Often they have to wait. This is optional preferential voting. I am not concerned that someone had a wait a day and a half for a correct vote.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Setting aside the Attorney General’s views about the appropriateness of an individual having to wait —

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** A day.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** — the vote happened on a Saturday and most of my councils did not know the result until the Monday. Most of my councils cast between 100 and 200 votes. Please tell me if the system cannot cope with managing to run and hit a button and deal with 120 votes. What went wrong?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The member is saying that her council has to take preference over all the other councils.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I have 28 councils and we can replicate that across regional Western Australia where we have multiple councils. Attorney General, it was not acceptable. Can the Attorney General give us an undertaking that when we get to the next election, the people who put their hands up for local government—it is already difficult to get them to put their hands up in voluntary roles—will at least have a system that will deliver them a result on the night? It is the only role that the Electoral Commission has.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Like the member, at the next local government election I will be sitting in front of the television, eating popcorn and watching the count. I cannot give an undertaking on what will happen in 2027.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Has a review of the election been undertaken because it was a new system?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I have not undertaken it. Obviously, after any election, the commission reviews how it went. Obviously, after every election, people look at how it could be improved. But I cannot sit here as the minister and give the member an undertaking that in 2027 we will get the vote on the night. There are 124 of these. It is not just a matter of pushing a button and 124 spit out on Saturday night. It is not possible in an optional preferential system.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** As part of that review, was there a discussion around resourcing and whether there were adequate resources?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Yes.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** My hearing is better than yours, Attorney General.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I am sorry, it is my rock ‘n’ roll ear. It is going a bit deaf.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** There was a review. What were the considerations of the Electoral Commission in relation to resourcing for when we get to the next election? Will additional resources be needed to make sure it is efficient?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Yes.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Is that something that the government has considered?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That election has happened. The commission has looked at its capacity and said, “Yes, we will need to put in some extra resources at the next local government election.” The commission has not come to government yet and told us what that is because we have to get busy planning the new voting system for the WA Parliament. It will be done on time and on budget.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to page 89. In the “Spending Changes” table, the first line under “Other” is “2024–25 Streamlined Budget Process Incentive Funding”. Can the Attorney General just explain to me what that is?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Sure. The streamlined budget process is incentive funding. It represents the incentive funding provided to the department for not submitting new budget submissions during the 2024–25 budget process.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** That begs the question: given the conversation we have just had around resources for local government elections and the upcoming state election, I wonder why the Electoral Commission would have elected to go for the incentive funding instead of asking for appropriate resources to get the new act in place and manage the changes that we will have with the upper house reform and the other matters that have been outlined under significant issues. It elected to take \$241 000. Why would it have done that?

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Because when it runs an election, if the election costs more than the budgeted provision, the difference generally gets made up, so it can do that all within its resources. It did not have to go down that path. It could come back and say it needs it. It does not need it at the moment. Say it is given a million dollars and then the election costs a million and a half dollars, the government—the previous government used to do the same—goes back and makes up the difference. It is very hard to predict in advance. We have made it so there is sufficient funding within the commission to deliver all that is required to run a good election, and the lead-up to a good election, for March 2025.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** With all the challenges that are outlined in these budget papers and what we have discussed today—I am not talking about the actual physical running of an election, because those factors, as the Attorney General says, are unknown—the preparation for an election and for the new upper house, the management —

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** Sorry, the new upper house —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I refer to the new upper house arrangements. We will have reform in the upper house and all the new requirements to manage the political parties, the candidates and the changes in that system. A whole raft of challenges are listed on page 90, where it states —

... increased pressures in 2025 in an electoral environment characterised by ...

However, we have the same funding going forward without any requests for increased funding.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That is not exactly right.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am happy to be dissuaded.

[5.30 pm]

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** I will give the member time to read her note in case she has another —

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** No, it is a different one. I can do two things at the same time, Attorney General. Keep going.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The member is female. I can do only one at a time, so I will go to one item at a time.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** I am listening.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** If I go to page 89, the third line is “Implementation and Ongoing Costs”. The implementation and ongoing costs represents funding to implement recent changes to the Electoral Act, primarily additional recurrent funding for five staff to implement and administer changes to the disclosure and transparency system of funding elections. It includes one finite FTE for 18 months to June 2025 to develop—listen to this one—and implement online disclosure systems. That person will be there until June 2025, after the election. Our enhanced disclosure, not required by the act—I emphasise not required by the act, which only requires a piece of paper, a signature, name and address, and donation amount—makes it easier and easier for the parties and candidates. The fulltime FTE will be there until June 2025 to develop and implement that system, which will be improved over time—and we will do that with the opposition. Not with the member, specifically, and I will not be there to do it, but with the parties. Also, if I go the line “Other” and the second item down from there, which we were just talking about.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** Yes. The \$7.3 million.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That \$7.3 million is additional funding to the department to conduct the 2025 state election because of the things that the member was talking about. All in all, without putting in an extra bid, the government is providing about \$8.572 million. That is not bad. That is very good, in fact.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** No, I am pleased to see it. I do not understand how that does not disqualify the Attorney General from getting the streamlined budget incentive funding.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** That is because they are not coming to us asking for money. We are looking at our act and saying this is what they will need. We will give them another \$8.5 million.

**Ms M.J. DAVIES:** The Attorney General has some very funny Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee processes. I am glad he is defending it and not me. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Any questions? The member for Bassendean.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** My question is about an issue that will be very important at the next election, and very important for volunteers who might get involved in elections. I refer the Attorney General to page 89, the total appropriations, and the amount authorised by other statutes. Has there been implementation of the program to make toilets available

to campaign workers? I note the new provisions under the act require the Australian Electoral Commission to ensure that campaigners have access to toilet facilities at places to vote to the extent practicable. Volunteers do not like to wait to use the toilet when they get involved in elections.

**Mr J.R. QUIGLEY:** The answer is yes. Toilets shall be provided wherever it is reasonably practicable. In some places out in the communities or somewhere, it is pretty hard to cart a toilet out there, actually. However, wherever it is reasonably practicable, we will get access to a toilet. The government has always said it is not right that the staff of the Electoral Commission at a polling place have access to toilet, but people handing out how-to-vote cards all day do not.

**The CHAIR:** Terrific sentiments. Minister, I think we can now leave that division.

**The appropriation was recommended.**