

**Division 36: Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries — Service 4, Racing and Gaming; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests, \$23 297 000 —**

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Dr A.D. Buti, Minister for Racing and Gaming; Citizenship and Multicultural Interests.

Ms L. Chopping, Director General.

Mr L. Carren, Chief Finance Officer.

Ms J. Shelton, Executive Director, Racing, Gaming and Liquor.

Mr J. Jegasothy, Executive Director, Office of Multicultural Interests.

Ms A. Cheetham, Director, Strategic Regulation.

Ms A. Kidson, Senior Policy Adviser.

Mr S. Padshah, Senior Policy Adviser.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committees will be reported by Hansard and the daily proof will be available online as soon as possible within two business days. 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 only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

A minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee. I will ask the minister to clearly indicate what information they agree to provide and will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by close of business Friday, 3 June 2022. If a minister suggests that a matter be put on notice, members should use the online questions on notice system.

I give the call to the member for Roe.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Thank you. I refer to page 547 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, regulation and reform, and the eighth paragraph, which refers to the department's response to the Perth Casino Royal Commission. Firstly, can the minister detail how many staff are employed in racing and gaming within the department?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Racing and gaming does not just involve the Perth Casino Royal Commission. What is the member's question?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am sorry?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** What is the actual question? The Perth Casino Royal Commission is not the totality of racing and gaming.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** No. I understand that. The department covers five areas. Does the minister know the total number of staff that deal with racing and gaming, as such?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I think that the member is actually referring to page 554.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Is the answer 117 FTE?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I will ask Ms Chopping if she is able to verify that that is the number of people working in racing and gaming.

[6.10 pm]

**Ms L. Chopping:** Thanks, minister. Thanks, member. The racing, gaming and liquor area within the department has a range of different functions. The total FTE are listed here. Within that area, the division splits into different branches. One branch deals with the regulatory services, so the legislation and policy matters. Other branches deal with inspections. There is now a specific area that deals with the Gaming and Wagering Commission, so gives support to the secretariat.

As an example, the inspectors in casinos had also been doing liquor inspections. Since I commenced last year, we have reprioritised within that area to focus predominantly on casino inspections. That is not to say that we are not still dealing with liquor matters. Generally speaking, they have their specific areas that they work in, but that 117 FTE is spread across all those areas.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Okay; I appreciate that clarity. Going back to the response to the royal commission, does the minister have a figure for what it will cost the government in its response to the commission?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Does the member mean the response to the royal commission report? Is that the question?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** That is right; the report and implementing any responses within the department.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I should let the member know that that part of this is not actually in this agency. It is the Department of the Premier and Cabinet that has set up a unit to deal with the response to the royal commission. It is actually not in this department and it is really not in this budget division. But in regard to the response to the royal commission itself, as I outlined when the report was handed down, we are working through that process. When we have finalised our response, that will determine issues of financial expenditure from the state.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** How will the minister, firstly, set about responding to the commission? Within the department, what are the first things? The department is obviously starting to respond to the recommendations. What process will the department go through to implement those recommendations from the royal commission?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** As I indicated in Parliament, we will be introducing legislation in regard to the Gaming and Wagering Commission. I have also written to the Gaming and Wagering Commission. That legislation will provide certain changes to the way the Gaming and Wagering Commission operates and its powers and so forth. But a full response to the 59 recommendations, if I remember rightly, will be forthcoming when it is ready.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Can the minister tell me how many staff within the department have demonstrated experience in regulation of casinos either in Australia or internationally?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Is the member talking about the Gaming and Wagering Commission or the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Yes.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Which one?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** It is the racing and gaming within the department, as outlined.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The Gaming and Wagering Commission is not —

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** That is right—gaming and wagering.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** It is supported by the department, but they are not employees of the department. That is different from the wagering and gaming employees in the department. Anyone who is in the department that works in gaming and wagering are not the regulators. The regulator is the Gaming and Wagering Commission.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I understand that. My question is: how many people within the department are employed to support the Gaming and Wagering Commission?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** All right, so the member wants to know who provides the secretariat support. I will ask Ms Shelton if she would like to elaborate on that.

**Ms J. Shelton:** Thank you, minister.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** If you would just take the mask off, thanks.

**Ms J. Shelton:** In relation to the support for the Gaming and Wagering Commission, there are currently four FTE who support the Gaming and Wagering Commission as a secretariat function.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Has there been any turnover in those staff since the royal commission began and the royal commission report came out?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Since the royal commission was established, yes, there has been.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Would the minister be able to provide that detail?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I will ask Ms Chopping whether she would like to.

**Ms L. Chopping:** Thanks, minister. I can give a highly detailed, very, very long answer. I will start with a shorter answer, perhaps.

I arrived at the department on 31 May last year. As media reports would suggest, significant issues had been identified through the public hearings of the royal commission. We set about making a significant number of changes in terms of senior personnel within the area to ensure that we had stability and regulatory experience from a range of different organisations, so we employed some people from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and some people from the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety to bolster the services that were being provided by the team. It was a period of significant disruption because of the information that was coming to light through the royal commission.

Over the duration of the last 12 months, we have made significant improvements in areas such as conflict of interest; policies and procedures; delegated decision-making; gifts, benefits and hospitality; integrity generally; and training

more specifically around regulation within that area and within the Gaming and Wagering Commission. New members have been appointed to the Gaming and Wagering Commission with regulatory experience. There have been some changes. Many of those changes involving staff leaving have resulted from retirement, usually for people aged over 60 years, some over 65. Some of those people have been with the department for a very long time; in fact, some of those inspectors had never worked anywhere else other than within the department and its predecessor agencies. That is my short answer. We can go through line-by-line in terms of some people have been promoted, some people have resigned, some people have retired. New people have arrived within the agency. Maybe I will say with departures from the agency, in 2019–20, we had eight people leave from that area; in 2020–21, we had seven; and in 2021–22, we have had 24. Now, that is an increase, but in my opinion, that was required to be able to do a refresh and reset, and we are on a stable footing now to continue and to implement the government’s response to the royal commission.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Thanks for that answer.

Did the people who replaced those —

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Can I just butt in there? What line item in the budget is the member referring to?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Paragraph 8 under “Regulation and Reform”, which states —

... The outcomes and recommendations of the Royal Commission are likely to have a significant impact on the Department and Gaming and Wagering in relation to governance arrangements and legislative framework.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I think we have given the member the answer he needs on that.

[6.20 pm]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I have just one further question on that. Do the extra people that have been employed have equivalent, more or less experience than those people they have replaced?

**The CHAIR:** I do not know whether the minister is in a position to answer that.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** We are not going to go into a human resource analysis of individual qualification of the mindset. Ms Chopping has given the member a thorough answer of how she has brought in new staff, how people have been moved and that people have regulations in other areas. The Gaming and Wagering Commission has also made new appointments. As the members knows, this year, we appointed Mr Colin Murphy, Dr Michael Schaper, Mr Michael Sarquis and Ms Deirdre O’Donnell; therefore, changes have been made. I am not really sure what else we can say.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to page 546 and the banned drinkers register trial about two-thirds of the way down the table. I note that there is only one year’s worth funding, of \$1.96 million. Is there any funding to potentially expand this to other regions such as, say, the midwest or goldfields? I know there has been a bit of activity, but will there be future funding?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** At this stage, there are no plans to expand the banned drinkers register to other regions prior to the conclusion of the current trials. Those trials and their evaluation by the University of Western Australia will form the future of the program.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Will the minister evaluate the Kimberley and Pilbara trials?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Currently, the Pilbara trial is being evaluated by the University of Western Australia as that was the first trial.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Can the minister enlighten me about the evaluation method and how he would see that maybe expanding to other parts of the state?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** The University of Western Australia has engaged the evaluation process and has undertaken consultation with key stakeholders in the relevant localities and state government agencies. The Department of Health, the Mental Health Commission and the Commissioner of Police have contributed to that evaluation and have provided relevant data on the trial.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** How many FTE within the department are dedicated to the banned drinkers register?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There are three.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** My question refers back to, once, again, the regulation and reform on page 547, paragraph 8, and the significant impact it will have on the department. There has been a lot of turnover in the department, as has been pointed out. How many staff have commenced and ceased over the last financial year?

**The CHAIR:** Member, I think that is a little vague for the minister.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Yes. I do not consider that relevant to this budget process.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** From the human resources issues or the FTE numbers that we were given to us earlier, I understand there has been quite some turnover.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, member, there were some figures given. But the extent to which you are asking now, I do not think that is something that is in the minister's capacity to be able to give you.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I am happy to turn back to page 554.

**The CHAIR:** No.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** If the member wants to put a detailed question on notice, he can, and it may be able to be answered. I can give the member the commencement figures. This year, 28 FTE have started and 21 have left.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** Did that take the number back up to around 117 FTE?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** There are some vacancies, but they have been allocated around the 117 FTEs.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 546 under spending changes and new initiative, and the line item "Critical Maintenance issues". That line has \$1.6 million as an isolated item for this budget year. What is that funding for?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I do not think any of that is related to this portfolio; I am not sure. What is the member referring to?

**Ms L. METTAM:** Critical maintenance issues.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** No; that is culture and arts.

**The CHAIR:** We still have multicultural interest to come under this division. Are there questions on that? I am sure the member for Mirrabooka might have one; we should have a cameo appearance by the government!

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I can ask one under multicultural.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent. What page?

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** I refer to page 565 and the line item "Multicultural Community Grants Program". How is this allocation of \$1.06 million to this sector divided up, and how many agencies support this important sector?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** This program is an annual half a million-dollar commitment from the Office of Multicultural Interests. Funding has been increased by \$500 000, doubling the budget to allow an annual \$1 million grant to now be provided for groups to apply for. This funding is provided to empower culturally and linguistically diverse communities throughout Western Australia to design, deliver and partner on projects that address their needs. An increase in funding will enable us to support activities that allow CALD communities to celebrate and promote WA's diversity, build the capacity of individuals and communities, contribute to the civic and economic life of the state and improve the accessibility and effectiveness of services. There are a number of organisations, but the member can put a question on notice and I can give him the organisations that have received funding. Otherwise, does the member want me to read them all out, like last year? I could start doing it!

[6.30 pm]

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** No. I do not think that it is necessary to read them all out; thanks, minister.

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Okay. But a number of organisations in the cities and regions have received funding, including the Shire of Katanning for the Katanning Harmony Festival. Unfortunately, COVID upset the arrangements this year. It is an outstanding festival that I hope to get to next year, member for Roe.

**Mr P.J. RUNDLE:** It has an outstanding local member, too, and we are looking forward to the minister's attendance next year!

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** I will be there, and I know that the member is going to be a great host.

**Ms L. METTAM:** I refer to page 548 under multicultural interests and paragraph 14, in which there is reference to the department overseeing a cross-agency collaborative response to ensure the necessary services and social infrastructure supports. What agencies are involved in this cross-agency collaboration, and what funding is associated with, and attached to, this objective?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** From my understanding, it is actually across all agencies, particularly health, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and the Department of Communities. But I can ask for some elaboration from Mr Jegasothy.

**Mr J. Jegasothy:** Thank you, member. Thank you, minister. This is a collaboration with many state government agencies, primarily including those that support people in their settlement period. Those agencies include health, which provides vital services, the Department of Communities, which supports people who are vulnerable, and the Mental Health Commission. It also includes collaboration with federal government agencies, including those that provide social services and the Department of Home Affairs.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Are there any attached specific projects that shape this collaboration or funding?

**Dr A.D. BUTI:** Mr Jegasothy.

**Mr J. Jegasothy:** There is no funding attached from the Department of Local Government, Sport, and Cultural Industries. However, it does involve a number of recent collaborations with the Department of Health in regard to access to critical health services for people coming from Ukraine and Afghanistan who would be on temporary visas prior to being transitioned to visas whereby they would be eligible for federal government services, and similarly with the Department of Communities.

**The appropriation was recommended.**