

“CABINET HANDBOOK” — MATTERS REQUIRING CABINET APPROVAL

587. Hon TJORN SIBMA to the Leader of the House representing the Premier:

I refer to guidance provided in the most recent version of the “Cabinet Handbook” concerning issues that “usually require Cabinet approval”.

- (1) Has it always been the practice of the McGowan government to refer “politically sensitive and policy issues with significant financial implications, particularly new policy themes and variations to existing policies” to cabinet for noting or approval?
- (2) If no to (1), what exceptions to this rule have there been and for what reasons?
- (3) Furthermore, at what monetary threshold is a matter determined as triggering “significant financial implications” necessitating referral to cabinet?
- (4) Regarding question (3), have there been any exceptions to the application of this threshold, and for what reason or reasons?

Hon SUE ELLERY replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(4) The guidelines in this section of the “Cabinet Handbook” are the same as those that applied under the former Liberal–National government. Matters with a financial impact are first considered by the Expenditure Review Committee. In addition, cabinet has delegated authority to the Treasurer to make decisions on genuine parameter adjustments defined as routine, non-discretionary changes to an agency’s budget parameters that are outside the agency’s control but within existing policy settings. These adjustments must be agreed between Treasury and the agency, and considered by the Treasurer to be both unavoidable and non-contentious.

When it is determined that approval under the Treasurer’s delegated authority is appropriate, and with the concurrence of the Premier, the relevant minister will receive a letter signed by the Treasurer outlining the extent and content of his approval. This approval is immediate, and does not require Expenditure Review Committee or cabinet endorsement. The Treasurer may determine that a request is contentious, and refer the matter to the Expenditure Review Committee for consideration.