

**Division 10: Registrar, Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, \$13 087 000 —**

Mr S.J. Price, Chair.

Mr W.J. Johnston, Minister for Industrial Relations.

Ms S. Bastian, Chief Executive Officer and Registrar.

Mr M. Hadfield, Executive Director, Finance, Data and Technology.

Mr R. Sao, Chief of Staff, Minister for Industrial Relations.

Mr J. Welch, Principal 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 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 he agrees 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 North West Central.

[5.10 pm]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 121, division 10, “Spending Changes” and the last line item on that page, “2022–23 Streamlined Budget Process Incentive Funding” with \$190 000. Can the minister explain what that \$190 000 is for?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** When agencies do not make budget bids, they get a percentage increase in their budget. This has been around for quite some time. If an agency does not want anything special, it just gets an uplift in its budget.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** By \$190 000?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** No, by a percentage. It is a small agency, so the relevant percentage amount is only \$190 000. Originally, the streamlined budget process, as it is called, was available only to small agencies; now it is available to everybody. About two years ago, the Department of Mines, Industry Regulation and Safety did it as a large agency and the figure was millions, but in a small agency like this, it is \$190 000.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** That is interesting, minister. I refer to page 122 under “Service Summary”. What impact has COVID-19 had on the services of the commission?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** COVID did not have a significant impact on the agency. It continued all its functions for the whole period. Some of the time it went to virtual activity, but all its activity was continued.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Have there been any industrial relations disputes relating to COVID-19 mandates since the last budget?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** That is not a matter that can be raised here. This is for the operations.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 123 under “Service and Key Efficiency Indicators”. About a quarter of the way down the page is the line item “Employees (Full-Time Equivalent Positions)”. For 2020–21 there are 27, for 2021–22 there are 30, and in 2022–23 they go up by two. The funding for extra staff is for two more for supporting the commission and the Industrial Magistrates Court and two for the conciliation and arbitration team. Is it anticipated that those roles will be filled by the end of the 2022–23 financial year?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** I am advised that they were previously funded and have now been filled.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** They have been filled now?

**Mr W.J. JOHNSTON:** That is what I just got told.

**The appropriation was recommended.**