

**Division 37: Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries — Services 1 to 15, Culture and the Arts, \$498 822 000 —**

Mrs L.A. Munday, Chair.

Mr D.A. Templeman, Minister for Culture and the Arts.

Ms J.J. Shaw, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Culture and the Arts.

Ms L. Chopping, Director General.

Ms E. Gauntlett, Deputy Director General, Portfolio Management and Coordination.

Mr C. Dykstra, Deputy Director General, Portfolio Capability and Performance.

Ms S. Sherdiwala, Executive Director, Finance and Procurement.

Mr M. Cunningham, Executive Director, Culture and the Arts.

Ms L. Fanciulli, Executive Director, Infrastructure.

Mr C. Klymovich, Director, Infrastructure Planning and Investment.

Mr G. Hamley, Chief of Staff, Minister for Culture and the Arts.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** The estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. It is the intention of the chair 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 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. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

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. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what 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 principal clerk by close of business Friday, 1 October 2021. 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 through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Cottesloe.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** I will kick off with a question on the Sunset Heritage Precinct, and I refer to page 540 of budget paper No 2, volume 2, although there is no specific line item relating to this in the total appropriations. Minister, the site was originally going to be developed in May 2019. Perusing the budget, I could not see any reference to it. I wonder whether there are any plans for that site, and whether the minister can illuminate me about what is intended for the time line for redevelopment of that site?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I thank the member for Cottesloe for his question. The Sunset Heritage Precinct is a very important site, in the electorate of the member for Nedlands. It has a unique history in terms of its heritage values, both architectural and social. In early 2019 the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries released a two-stage request for proposals for the development of the site. Minderoo Foundation was identified as the preferred proponent. Negotiations with the preferred proponent are ongoing. The conceptual aspiration for that site remains for it to be developed as an arts and cultural precinct, and for community access to be a particular priority. Negotiations have gone on for some time. Most of the buildings at the precinct are not usable in their current condition, and that has resulted in the community having ongoing limited access to the site. The nature of the buildings has prevented them from being activated in any significant way. The reality now is that significant investment will be required to upgrade the buildings so that they can be occupied and activation can commence.

[5.30 pm]

As I said, in May 2019 three respondents were invited to submit a proposal, with Mindaroo being the preferred proponent. A Sunset negotiation panel, with representatives from various agencies, was set up to work with the preferred proponent. In December 2020, cabinet ultimately decided that the Mindaroo Foundation's revised proposal and term sheet should not be accepted because it was not within the original scope, so further negotiations with Mindaroo would need to ensure the outcome is in line with the original proposal. There will be a meeting of that panel and the proponent in October 2021. It has been a slow process but the aim for that precinct to be developed as an arts and cultural precinct remains, as is the aspiration for community access a priority. We will work with the preferred proponent to, hopefully, reach an outcome so we can see some action on that site in the near future.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Tuesday, 21 September 2021]

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Chair; Dr David Honey; Mr David Templeman; Mr Vincent Catania; Ms Libby Mettam; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Jessica Shaw

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**Dr D.J. HONEY:** No pun intended—perhaps a little bit—but is there a sunset clause on that preferred proponent status?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Good pun; you will get your spot in one of those comedy stores down in Northbridge!

No, but I will be honest with the member. I think we need to move this along as soon as possible. It is a great asset and it has huge potential. I want to see it moved on. The director general knows that that is an aspiration we have for this site. Hopefully, with the preferred proponent, through the next meeting, we can land on an appropriate outcome to see that activated.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** Thank you very much.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** My history is that I worked for Hon Nick Griffiths, who was the Minister for Housing when he was trying to work a way forward. I know he has a sunset clause on it, but is there a time frame to resolve it because it is a fantastic parcel of land that should be utilised to its full potential? It has a lot of history—some good, some bad—but there needs to be a time when we can move forward and redevelop it or do something with it.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Yes. That is why I think the aspiration for there to be an arts and cultural precinct with community access as the priority is a good aspiration for that site. I am hoping that we will be able to settle with the proponent imminently so that some action can commence as soon as possible and, hopefully, early next year we will see progress. We have to remember that part of the buildings are already activated and are being used for a variety of things. I think we have a film-making entity, Minderoo has some footprint and a couple of other enterprises are there. In my view, it has to be a place that is highly activated and attractive for people to visit. The grounds around those heritage buildings are spectacular and the access to the river has huge potential. There used to be a boat contact with that site in the early days. It is on a prime site on the river and it avails itself to high-value community use that is highly interactive and of a cultural and arts nature—as soon as we can.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** If my memory serves me correctly, there are some parcels of land that can be sold on there—I do not know whether they have been sold—that can be developed into housing to offset some of those costs that the government may have.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is an A-class reserve. A portion of it was excised some time ago and subsequently, I think a sultan built a substantial home on it. The value of the site is in keeping it intact, maximising the heritage outcomes and adapting those heritage buildings for engaging cultural and arts activity. That is the aspiration and I think that will be good for the residential neighbours in the area. It lends itself to tourism outcomes as well, of course, given its strategic site.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 541 of volume 2, budget paper No 2. Under “Election Commitments” and “Arts Funding” is the line item “2021 Regional Exhibition Touring Boost” with \$2 million each in 2023–24 and 2024–25. What is this fund all about? Can the minister please explain the fund and the regional arts fund of \$4.9 million, which I think was an election commitment.

In terms of arts funding for 2020–21, can the minister explain what this election commitment is all about and why it is in the later years of this government?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** It is already in the budget because it is, essentially, an ongoing election commitment. We originally delivered this in 2017 as an election commitment, so it is a continuation. It is focused on a fund that supports the engagement of regional communities for visual arts in particular. It is a program delivered in partnership by Art on the Move and the Art Gallery of Western Australia. One of the fundamental principles is that we want regional Western Australia to experience both our state art collection, which, of course, is housed in the Art Gallery of Western Australia and other places. We want the state art collection in its various forms to be shared and for people in regional communities to see it. It needs to be in an A-class gallery but some of it can be exhibited in B and C-class galleries. Thankfully, there are a number of those in regional WA. There are some spectacular galleries. I was in Collie only last Wednesday where there is a magnificent gallery. The boost will enable aspects of our state collection to travel on tour to various galleries and collection exhibition places in regional WA.

A program that I think is really good, is when a number of those programs have an opportunity to engage local communities and local artists in those touring exhibitions. It is a wonderful value-adding experience and opportunity for local regional artists. That commitment means that more people in the regions will see high-quality touring exhibition pieces, much of it from Western Australia or from Western Australian artists. If there is an Art on the Move exhibition in the local gallery, it adds to the visitation experience for people who might be visiting that gallery or that town. It also adds to the opportunity for a local community to celebrate artists more broadly. I have to say that regional Western Australia has a remarkable scope of very talented existing and emerging visual artists and other artists of the various genres that those communities should be very proud of. This boost program assists in instilling in people of all ages and experiences the beauty of the arts more broadly in their community. It is a great program.

[5.40 pm]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I have a further question, and I hope to ask a further question under the “Election Commitment” banner. The forward estimate for the Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program is \$4.9 million. Why is that election commitment only budgeted for in 2024–25? Why has it not been budgeted for sooner?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This is a funded program. It is valued at approximately \$5 million per annum. It follows the current Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program that runs from 2019 to 2023 and is funded through royalties for regions and administered by the department. It will be delivered through a combination of strategic partnerships and initiatives, and includes competitive grant funding rounds. The expenditure of \$6.3 million includes support to CircuitWest. It includes \$1.6 million for the Playing WA Multi-year program. That, of course, allowed some of our high-quality performing institutions to tour regional WA, including the West Australian Ballet, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, Barking Gecko and the West Australian Opera, to name a few. Part of the program included money for Playing WA to support 13 individual performing arts groups to tour regional WA, including Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, tours for new music and Theatre 180’s very successful production of A.B. Facey’s *A Fortunate Life*. It included \$1.6 million for the In the House program to support regional performing arts centres, including the Goldfields Art Centre; the Shire of Merredin’s Cummins Theatre; Broome Civic Centre; Ravensthorpe Regional Arts Centre; Harvey Recreation Cultural Centre, which is doing some great stuff; and Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. As part of that program, a range of initiatives will be funded. It is a funded program so it is finite. The intention of it is captured on page 561, which extends it by another year.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I have a further question under “Election Commitments”. The estimated actual for “Small Commitments” is \$18.958 million. Perhaps by way of supplementary, could the minister provide how many projects have been funded and whether all the projects are complete? Can the minister also provide a list of all those projects.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Member, most of those projects are listed on page 541 as line items. No; I am misleading the member. I do not want to do that. It is late in the day.

There are a range of projects. By way of supplementary information, I will provide a list of projects and amounts of those projects for that fund.

**The CHAIR:** Does the minister agree to provide the supplementary information; and, if so, state exactly what information will be provided?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am going to provide a list and the amount of funding for the “Small Grants” item.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** And whether they are complete.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** We will provide the current status.

[*Supplementary Information No B5.*]

**Ms L. METTAM:** I have a further question on arts funding for performing arts centres. I appreciate and understand that the minister will have met with the City of Busselton on its approach to fund the Busselton Entertainment Arts Culture Hub project. I seek the minister’s feedback on that project. Does the minister anticipate that the city will be successful in attaining funding for the BEACH project?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I must admit I am a little disappointed that the member does not support the proposal.

**Ms L. METTAM:** It has been surveyed.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** That is what the community told me.

**Ms L. METTAM:** Fifty-three per cent of the public do not support it.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I held a community meeting not long ago and they expressed disappointment that their local member does not support the project. That aside, the state government and I, as minister who is strongly supportive of the cultural industries, welcome the decision of the City of Busselton to make a commitment, as it did a week or so ago, in its deliberations. I know that there has been an interesting debate locally with regard to the proposal, but let me say this: there is a strong story to be told with regard to a proposal of this type in Busselton. It has elements that are not the same as those provided through the Margaret River HEART project. It is not the same as that provided currently through the Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre. I like what the City of Busselton has proposed because it talks about utilising a cultural facility for a broad range of opportunity, including, of course, convention and an economic capacity and capability. I like the fact that it is co-located with the Busselton Repertory Club at the Weld Theatre, which has a lot of history and which I think will celebrate its fiftieth year this year. Community theatre is an important and integral part of the cultural landscape of any community, but particularly regional communities. It is those things that we and the local member should embrace.

Of course, issues around costing and funding are going to be a consideration, but the proposed entity that has now been endorsed by the City of Bunbury in my view ticks a whole range of boxes that will have very important economic

benefits for the broader community—the member’s community. It will complement the CinefestOZ Film Festival, which I strongly support, endorse and love participating in each year. It will have strong outcomes and benefits for the local tourism economy. It will have strong local benefits for the young people in Busselton and surrounds. We should be saying to them that if they aspire to a career or indeed derive benefit from engaging in culture and artistic endeavours, that that will be good for them in terms their mental and physical health and their health and wellbeing more broadly.

The project ticks all the boxes for me. Obviously, the state government supports it. The state government and the agency that I am proudly a part of will be able to provide a lot of content through our touring support and funded programs that work within the community. I reckon the member is in a unique situation to deliver this in Busselton. I hope she gets on board and supports the local council, which has said, yes, because it has been a pretty bold thing to do when a few people were very vocal against it. I admire what they have done. I think it is very bold. I support their endeavour. If this project is delivered, the agency will certainly look forward to adding it to its network of cultural infrastructure and assist to fill it with product.

[5.50 pm]

**Ms L. METTAM:** I hope the government provides more than \$3 million towards the project, minister. The issue with the project has been around the scope, which has changed.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Why does the member not support it?

**Ms L. METTAM:** I provided a letter of support for the Lotterywest funding. I understand it may get \$3 million, which is just a small proportion of the \$50 million cost for the overall project. There has been concern about the project scope creep, which happened after the provision of federal funding. We certainly support the capacity to expand Weld Theatre and the arts programs. The issue has not been about investing in arts in Busselton; rather, it has been the way the city has managed the project. I have certainly provided a letter of support, which has gone in with the application, which the minister should have.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** This is an opportunity for the member for Vasse to lead. It is about leadership and it is about saying, “I think this is good” because the member’s constituency will look to her for her view and sitting on the fence will not engender strong support for a program. Anyway, I am not going to argue because I would love to see it happen.

**Ms L. METTAM:** When surveyed, 53 per cent of the population said that they did not support the project.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I say the member should work with the community and highlight exactly what it will deliver. There is a growing population down there of young families and young people, and there is a very creative community. The member has one of the most creative communities in terms of musicians, performers and writers. The area has all the ingredients that say, “Why wouldn’t you have a place to assist them in sharing the beauty of the region and their creative talent?”

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I refer to page 557 of the budget papers and the Perth Cultural Centre rejuvenation.

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** Put it on notice; we have only a couple of minutes left.

**Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE:** I am happy for a brief explanation of the asset investment program.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** There is a \$20 million allocation to the redevelopment of the Perth Cultural Centre. As the member knows, we delivered Western Australian Museum Boola Bardip, which opened last year on my birthday. It was a special day for me and a very special day for the state. We want that cultural precinct to hum. It has to deliver to a broad cross-section of the community; it has to deliver for all ages and it has to deliver for families. The institutions have to work together to showcase the artistic performance, history and heritage of our state. It is well placed to do that with this \$20 million fund. I have with me the chair of the task force, the parliamentary secretary, and I am sure she wants to make some quick comments.

**Ms J.J. SHAW:** Thank you, minister. I will comment briefly. It has been a great privilege to work on the Perth Cultural Centre task force. I want quickly acknowledge in *Hansard*, the member for Perth’s original chairing of the task force and his remarkable contribution to the project. On Friday, the task force is due to meet and hopefully we will adopt a final report that will provide a series of recommendations to the minister about the rejuvenation of the Perth Cultural Centre. We welcome also the commitment of both the state and federal governments of \$20 million for the project as part of the \$1.5 billion Perth City Deal. We look forward to the revitalisation of that centre coming together as part of the project.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** The first service and key efficiency indicator on page 548 is cultural and arts industry support. The table shows the target for 2021–22 is \$37 million above the budget for 2020–21, but it is also substantially above the 2020–21 estimated actual. Note 3 states that the estimated actual is mainly due to an increase in overheads. I am fascinated to learn how overheads can increase so much.

**Extract from Hansard**

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B — Tuesday, 21 September 2021]

p139a-143a

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**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** You have got me! I will search for someone to provide a response to that question, which I think is a very good question.

**Dr D.J. HONEY:** I am happy to take that information by way of supplementary information.

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I am happy to provide a response by way of supplementary information.

**The CHAIR:** Does the minister agree to provide the supplementary information and, if so, can he state exactly what information will be provided?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** Further detail will be provided with regard to page 548 under explanation of significant movements, note 3.

[*Supplementary Information No B6.*]

**Mr V.A. CATANIA:** I refer to page 542 and new initiatives, specifically the line item “Culture and Arts Revealed”. What was the \$160 000 spent on in 2020–21 and what is the allocation of \$90 000 per annum for over the forward estimates?

**Mr D.A. TEMPLEMAN:** I do not know whether the member has had an opportunity to look at the revealed program, which was initiated in 2017 and auspiced through Fremantle Arts Centre. It is essentially a showcase opportunity for emerging Aboriginal artists and art centres across the state. Artworks are selected and exhibited at Fremantle Arts Centre as part of the revealed program. Importantly, a lot of those artists are able to—even during COVID, particularly this year—travel around and be present. A market is held as part of a weekend, from memory. It is very successful because the income from the sales goes to the emerging artists whose works are for sale. The revealed program supports growth and vitality and the state funds \$160 000 a year with the commonwealth providing \$90 000 per year. The allocation of \$90 000 in 2021–22 to 2024–25 represents the forward estimates of the commonwealth’s funding contribution through the Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support program. We basically co-invest in the delivery of that event. I will ask Mr Cunningham to conclude with some remarks before we vote.

**Mr M. Cunningham:** Thank you, minister. That is correct. It is funded and delivered under contract by Fremantle Arts Centre. The listing within the budget papers refers to the investment from the federal government. It is delivered as part of an ongoing contract from Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries to Fremantle Arts Centre.

**The appropriation was recommended.**