

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Division 45: Culture and the Arts, \$144 858 000 —

Ms L.L. Baker, Chairman.

Mr J.H.D. Day, Minister for Culture and the Arts.

Ms A. Lucas, Director General.

Mr T. Loiacono, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr R. Arnold, Acting Deputy Director General.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the minister to introduce his advisers, please.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Perth

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to two sections. The first dot point on page 568 under the service summary regarding the arts industry support is related to the development and strategy line item in the box at the bottom of page 567 under the effective allocation. What is the reason for the huge reductions from \$44.8 million in the years subsequent to 2010–11? I am assuming that the \$44 million is inflated by the community cultural facilities fund and other one-off announcements.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Which line is the member referring to on page 567?

Mr J.N. HYDE: That is in the second part of my question. I refer on page 567 to development and strategy under effective allocation.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: That shows a cut in 2010–11 from \$35 948 000 down to \$29 931 000 in 2012–13. However, my first question relates to the reference on page 568. Is this subsequent cut in the budget out years due to running out of commitments under Labor’s Ignite package and, more importantly, the commitments to indexing with the major organisation board of companies—MOB—which expires, I believe, in 2011–12?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The reason for the reduction between 2010–11 and 2011–12 from approximately \$36 million to approximately \$33 million is that some programs were funded for only four years and come to an end at some stage, but others in that fund that were announced in December 2007 will continue. Is the minister able to provide a list of those programs? I can provide some information now. There is a decrease in 2010–11 through the major production fund WA commission series. That comes to an end. That figure is \$750 000. The Situate international sculpture competition, which is the sculpture project that will go into Forrest Place, will have been expended—about \$750 000 was allocated for that. There is also the arts capital fund of \$500 000 and the community cultural arts and facilities fund of \$1.5 million. That has also come to an end.

[11.10 am]

Mr J.N. HYDE: Which one was the arts capital fund; was that with the art gallery?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No; it does not relate to the art gallery. I will ask Ms Lucas to comment.

Ms A. Lucas: That was the arts capital fund for refurbishments of a number of buildings in which our arts organisations reside, such as the Spare Parts Puppet Theatre and Customs House.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Can I get the exact information by way of supplementary information?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: What is it the member is seeking specifically?

Mr J.N. HYDE: All. There is a \$14 million difference. Somebody in the department must know exactly —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Hang on—did the member say \$14 million?

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes. Page 568, the first item under “Service Summary”, “Arts Industry Support”. The question is in two parts. We can see \$44 million down to \$30 million. The minister’s previous answer was that there was a cut to the MOB. Does that imply that the government is not committed to renegotiate the MOB agreements as they expire?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No, it does not mean that at all, as I understand it.

Mr J.N. HYDE: There is no money for them.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: For the major performing arts companies?

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr J.N. HYDE: Yes; when the four-year commitment has run out.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A lot of funding is going into the major performing arts companies. That is certainly not the case.

In relation to the 2010–11 estimate, there is an increase, going up to nearly \$45 million compared with 2009–10. That includes funding of \$7.91 million for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra relocation. That has all been included in that amount. The member will recall my explanation that about \$4.4 million was taken from that fund when the previous government was in office to boost library materials funding, rather artificially I think, two years ago. Those funds have been returned as a result of this budget. The total amount available of \$7.91 million is included in the 2010-11 allocation. There is also \$1.53 million for the community cultural arts and facilities fund; \$750 000 for the Situate competition, which is the sculpture project in Forrest Place; \$500 000 for the arts capital fund; there is increased Lotterywest funding of \$500 000 expected; and there is also indexation for key funded organisations of \$450 000. That explains the fairly substantial increase that, to a large extent, is one-off in 2010–11. I think any change in 2011–12 needs to be seen in that context.

Mr J.N. HYDE: But the minister has acknowledged that the MOB funding is a CPI commitment. That is an ongoing commitment.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Can the member explain what he means by MOB funding?

Mr J.N. HYDE: Major organisations' boards—the theatre companies —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Major performing arts boards.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The funding is there, as the minister has acknowledged, to put in the increases for this year but the forward estimates go down from \$44 million to \$30 million in the future years —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: One-off, as I said.

Mr J.N. HYDE: But the CPI is not a one-off.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The WASO relocation, for example, makes quite a difference to the 2011 budget. That is nearly \$8 million of one-off effect. Ms Lucas will make a comment.

Ms A. Lucas: In terms of major performing arts companies, the funding is still there with indexation according to the business cases that have been agreed. They are actually still in there, along with any triennially funded organisations. They have still got their funding.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The minister is committed to honouring ongoing MOB and CPI increases, yet if we have no increase in the total pool, that means that other projects and other arts industry support will be cut. Can the minister please detail those that will be cut?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There are some particular allocations that are accounted for, as I said, by one-off expenditure. For example, \$7.91 million for the WA Symphony Orchestra relocation —

Mr J.N. HYDE: But it is not \$14 million, minister.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No; okay. There is a funding carryover of \$2.97 million in 2010–11. That is obviously a one-off thing. The major production fund WA commission series amount of \$750 000 is also a one-off. We also have an amount of \$750 000 for the Situate international sculpture competition; \$500 000 for the arts capital fund; \$300 000 for the West Australian Ballet Co and WASO —I am not sure what that was for specifically but I gather that was a one-off allocation previously—\$200 000 for the Perth Fashion Festival; and \$1.5 million for the community cultural arts and facilities fund. They are the decreases in 2011–12. They are offset by increased Lotterywest funding of \$471 000 and indexation for key funded organisations of \$470 000. That explains the decrease in total of \$14.218 million in 2011–12. I have just explained it all. If the member goes through *Hansard*, he will see that I have just explained it.

Mr J.N. HYDE: But the minister is totally missing the point—Lotterywest will be in the budget every year. In effect this cut is even bigger because the minister must have factored in, in the out years, the Lotterywest increase; yet it is hovering at \$30 million every year. WA Ballet is going to miss out on its commitments, Black Swan on its commitments; all the MOB companies —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No; it does not mean that at all. I have just outlined the one-off funding in 2010–11 which does not continue in 2011–12, and therefore provides an explanation for that decrease—one-off funding.

Mr J.N. HYDE: So in four years there is just \$30 million?

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I think the member does not understand. There is all of the indexation and the ongoing commitments for organisations like WA Ballet, WASO, WA Opera, Black Swan Theatre and so on. There is no threat to their funding on an ongoing basis at all.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Only \$30 million is budgeted for next year and \$30 million for the next three years, yet there are CPI commitments; in other words, increased commitments. It does not make sense. One cannot tip a cup of water out and suddenly say one is going to meet the commitments without cutting elsewhere.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is explained by one-off expenditure commitments in the previous year to 2011–12 that do not continue in 2011–12, which I have just listed.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: My question relates to a sum of \$6.8 million detailed on page 111 of budget paper No 3 for the Better Beginnings program. Mention is made of Rio Tinto's contribution. Could the minister detail what that contribution is; and how much of a contribution is made by resource companies on a philanthropic basis to other aspects of the portfolio, if any?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I do not have the specific information about how much Rio Tinto is contributing to the Better Beginnings program. It is certainly very interested to ensure that it can be extended on a much more statewide basis —

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Even though it is tax deductible.

[11.20 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: — particularly in regional and remote areas. Their interest and financial commitment is very much welcomed. The details of exactly how the program will be expanded are still being worked on. In answer to the question about philanthropic contributions to the arts, I am advised that Rio Tinto is providing \$241 000 in 2010-11 for a 12-month pilot expansion of Better Beginnings, which is a literacy program aimed at children aged four to five years who are beginning school. That provides some specific information about that.

Corporate and philanthropic support for the arts generally is very important. We simply could not have the amount of activity that we do across the whole arts sector without a strong degree of corporate support particularly from the major companies, but also from some of the smaller companies. Companies such as Rio Tinto, BHP, Woodside, Wesfarmers, Alcoa, and others, provide a lot of very necessary support. It is desirable to have a wider base of support, and organisations such as the Australian Business Arts Foundation have a role to try to encourage additional corporate support.

As far as philanthropic support is concerned outside the corporate sector, Western Australia does not have as strong a base as Sydney and Melbourne have, unfortunately. We need to try to do more to encourage that. Perth has some strong leaders in that respect, but we really need there to be more involvement. I do not have a figure for the amount of corporate support but, in very rough terms, I think for the arts in Australia generally—including Western Australia—something like half the support is provided by the public sector and half by the private sector. The corporate role is very important.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: The only amount listed in this budget is \$241 000 from Rio Tinto.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: That is in addition to the public funding being allocated. I need to check whether it will be making other contributions in some other way. Rio Tinto is a strong supporter of the arts. Sam Walsh, who is head of Rio Tinto Iron Ore, is chairman of the Black Swan Theatre Company board and the local chapter of the Australian Business Arts Foundation. He has a strong personal interest and makes a strong personal commitment. Rio Tinto, as a company, provides a lot of funding support in many other ways as well.

Mr C.J. TALLENTIRE: But the only amount we can put our finger on in this budget is \$241 000. Out of all the wealth of the resources sector in Western Australia —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: If the member wants to have a go at them in that way, I think that is entirely inappropriate. A strong personal commitment has been shown not only by Sam Walsh but by others in the company—particularly led by him—to the arts sector in Western Australia. We would always like more corporate support to be provided across the whole corporate arena, but if the member wants to try to single out Rio Tinto, he is very much on the wrong track.

Mr P.T. MILES: I have a question for the minister about the second dot point on page 570 of the *Budget Statements*. Can the minister give us an update on the restoration work on the facade of His Majesty's Theatre?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: His Majesty's Theatre is an iconic public building in Perth. It is over 100 years old, and the problem is that the façade has been determined to be deteriorating and, to some extent, it has become dangerous. Although public safety has been protected by some short-term works being undertaken over the past couple of years, there needs to be a proper restoration. That project is now underway and will cost around \$1.6 million.

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

The scaffolding and the gantry were erected, I think, about three or four weeks ago, and I am pleased to say that the work is underway. The restoration work will be undertaken over the next six months or so and the project is due to be completed by November of this year, unless additional works are identified that will need to be undertaken. It is a very complex project, of course, and it may have some unknown quantities that will need to be taken into account, so I think it will be understandable if the project takes longer. It is worth noting that the need for this work to be undertaken was not identified in just the past 18 months or so, although it was an issue I was made aware of soon after we came into government. The previous government was provided with three reports on the deteriorating condition of the façade while it was in government, but funds were not allocated for the restoration of His Majesty's Theatre during its time. I am pleased that a decision has been made and that we are taking action to ensure that His Majesty's Theatre will be properly restored and have the appropriate appearance, and necessary long-term safety, of a wonderful performing arts venue.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer the minister to the line item "Arts Industry Support" on page 568 of the *Budget Statements*, and also to the second dot point on page 570. Does the minister agree with the Premier that forward estimates are "never-never land"; and, has the West Australia Ballet Co been given a guarantee that the \$1.2 million funding for additional dancers will be retained in the forward estimates?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Yes; I agree that forward estimates are estimates, and decisions can obviously be made in the future to change what is in them. Having said that, the intention is—WA Ballet has been informed of this—to retain, for the foreseeable future, the \$1.2 million additional annual funding it has been allocated. It has always been its expectation and intention that, as the company is expanded and built up and made more financially sustainable, it will not need the continuation of that \$1.2 million annual additional funding in the long term. However, for the time being at least, the funding will continue and we will not make any changes without discussing them with the WA Ballet. This government has given very strong support to the WA Ballet, as shown by the allocation of \$2 million in this budget to assist with its relocation to Maylands. That is in addition to what is likely to be a substantial degree of assistance provided—albeit indirectly—through the City of Bayswater by Lotterywest. In short, a large amount of public funding will be provided to assist the WA Ballet to establish its home, its rehearsal studios and offices and so on, at Maylands. It is a very good outcome for the WA Ballet and the state.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I have a further question. The minister said "for the time being"; does that cover the forward estimates period, and is there any firmer guarantee of the commitment of \$1.2 million, such as has it been given the endorsement of cabinet or Treasury or whatever?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: If the member is referring to the \$1.2 million, the funding is in the forward estimates. We will not make any changes without discussing them with the WA Ballet. We have had a very strong degree of engagement in all the time I have been minister, particularly in the last few months. This is, I think, a very good outcome for the WA Ballet, and there is no intention of changing the \$1.2 million allocation. By way of background, I inform the member that when the WA Ballet originally put forward its business case, it did not expect that it would not need or require all of the \$1.2 million in the long term, but we are not proposing to make any changes.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Is that \$1.2 million coming out of the \$30 million listed as "Arts Industry Support" in the forward estimates?

Mr P.T. MILES: Is that a further question?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: Yes, it is a further question, member for Wanneroo—the member is not the Chair.

Mr P.T. MILES: So the member threw her voice across the chamber, did she?

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Wanneroo, settle down, please.

[11.30 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I am happy to answer that, as cooperative as I am. What is the line item for that \$1.2 million?

Mr T. Loiacono: It is in the forward estimates as part of the arts industry support funding.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 575, "Works in Progress", "Museum – Welcome Wall – Stage 3". Minister, what is the expected finishing date and the opening date of stage 3? In last year's estimates the minister said—over a year ago now—that it would be "very soon". How many of the initial applicants for a plaque remain? How many have pulled out? The minister provided answers on notice that there had been 3 893 registrations; therefore, people have paid \$256 938. How many have pulled out? More importantly, despite the minister telling us that it would begin by the end of last year, and would be finished "very soon", tenders, under tender BMW1108310, closed on only 19 May. Can the minister tell us the results of those tenders that closed on 19 May—two weeks ago?

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr J.H.D. DAY: As the member said, it was only two weeks ago and the tenders are probably still being assessed, and obviously I cannot provide details of the outcome. This project has taken longer than I would have liked, but I remind the member for Perth that it was the previous government that was provided with a report by the WA Museum in March 2008 —

Mr J.N. HYDE: The minister told us that last year and he promised he would get it finished last year.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I need to remind the member again, because it is pertinent to the delays that have occurred with this project, that a report was provided to the previous government and Premier—to the Premier's office—in March 2008, and nothing then happened prior to the change of government.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Not for the two years you have been minister!

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Perth!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Nothing happened prior to the change of government —

Mr J.N. HYDE: We built two walls! Two Labor walls!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: — between March 2008 and September 2008

Mr J.N. HYDE: Where is this government's?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: Since we have been in government this issue has been raised with me, and my staff and I have sought to get it finalised as earnestly as we can. As I said, it has taken longer than I would have liked. The project is on track now and on budget, and I am advised it will be delivered by the end of this year.

Mr J.N. HYDE: How can the minister say it is on track if he does not know what the tender is?

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Perth!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It will be delivered by the end of 2010, pending confirmation of costs and certain specific planning consents that need to be obtained. Unfortunately, the project is a lot more complex and involved than it may appear.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The first two were easy under the previous government!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There was lots of money to throw around under the previous government. The reality is that sufficient funding was never allocated by the previous government to complete the project in the way that was intended. From memory, Fremantle Ports was cooperative in providing the land at no cost, which has enabled the funds that were available to be able to be used for construction of the third stage of the welcome walls at Fremantle. The original intention was that Fremantle Ports would be compensated for the value of that land, as I recall. They have come to the party and agreed not to be compensated in that way, which has enabled all the funds to be put towards construction. There is an issue of substantial weight from the third stage of the welcome walls, which will have an impact on the pilings under the wharf, and all that needs to be dealt with. I will ask Ms Lucas to provide more information.

Ms A. Lucas: In the assessment over the last year, before going to tender we needed to look at the actual support system under the walls; besides, there were issues about what was on museum land and what was on port authority land. Because of the extension of stage 3, those complications needed to be sorted through.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Can the minister provide by supplementary information the number of pull-outs from the registrations and the successful tender?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: To the extent possible, by way of supplementary information, if the tender process is in fact completed by the necessary time.

The CHAIRMAN: The information I understand the minister will give is the number of people who have withdrawn from being part of the welcome walls. And if the tenders have closed by the relevant times, the minister will provide a copy of the winning tender; is that correct?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I will provide information about the outcome of the tender process. I doubt many people have withdrawn their names. It would not be very many.

[*Supplementary Information No B16.*]

Dr M.D. NAHAN: At the bottom of page 577 under "Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies" is an allocation in 2010-11 of \$7.912 million for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra relocation. Can the minister explain what that is for, and whether it includes a replacement of the funds that the previous government secretly took from the —

Mr P.T. MILES: Stole!

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Dr M.D. NAHAN: — stole from the symphony orchestra right before the last election?

Ms M.M. QUIRK: You call it “re-cashflowing”, I believe!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I thank the member for the question. It is the case, as I mentioned earlier, that \$4.4 million was reallocated by the previous government. It might have intended that it be on a short-term basis, but the reality is that when we came to government, the problem had to be fixed and the funds that were “borrowed”—or whatever the case may be—from the WASO relocation fund to put into boosting the library materials acquisition fund had to be replaced. Those funds have been replaced by a decision of this government, and an allocation of funds is in this budget. Effectively, it is this government that has funded additional library materials purchases that the previous government and Labor opposition has been taking credit for in 2008 and 2009. Not all of that was apparent, and until fairly recently it was not publicly known. The Labor Party was out there doing a lot of grandstanding, I think it is fair to say, on a supposed 40 per cent reduction in library materials funding. The reality is it was on basis of funds taken out of the WASO relocation fund. I think that the opposition and the Labor Party need to be comprehensive when they present this information to the public. The \$7.9 million is the total amount of the original \$8 million that has not been expended so far on the WASO relocation project. WASO needs new offices and a rehearsal studio and so on, and the site it is currently looking at is the plaza area on the northern side of the Concert Hall between St Georges Terrace and the Concert Hall itself, which will need major modifications to accommodate the facilities they need. Obviously WASO has taken responsibility for that. It is its project. There is \$7.9 million available from the state. There are also some funds available from the City of Perth, and presumably WASO will need to raise additional amounts, and I expect it will achieve some of that from the federal government. I look forward to WASO coming back with more details of its proposal in due course.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer the minister to the second dot point on page 574 relating to the Albany entertainment centre. Has there been any consideration of the impact of the conduct of performances at the entertainment centre on the ongoing viability of the Albany Town Hall as an entertainment venue?

[11.40 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is expected that the Perth Theatre Trust will take responsibility for the Albany entertainment centre for the next two years. A report is being prepared at the moment on an assessment of the viability of the centre, other operational needs of it and what funding requirements there are. I would not expect that the current report that is being prepared would consider the potential impact on Albany Town Hall. That is something that, if it was not considered, should have been considered several years ago when the previous government was in office and when the decisions were being made about where that particular project was going to be located. There is a big question mark, I think, about whether it has been located in the best place. The reality is that it is near the waterfront. I know there are plenty of people who have the view that it should have been located adjacent to Albany Town Hall and made much better use of the facilities at the town hall. The co-location would probably have cost a lot less than it has, but the time for that thinking and analysis was several years ago, I would have thought. I will ask Ms Lucas just to add a bit more information.

Ms A. Lucas: The City of Albany is looking at the future use of the town hall after the entertainment centre gets running. I think they have been looking at it for some time. We are not exactly sure what the plans are, but at the moment it is still being used and will probably continue to be used as an arts facility, whatever the arts practised in it might be.

Mr J.N. HYDE: I refer to page 568 and under “Service Summary” to “Screen Production Industry Support”. It drops from \$10.89 million in 2009–10 actual to just \$8.6 million in 2010–11. What has happened to the matched prime time TV production fund with the ABC, which was a \$3.2 million Ignite commitment? I understand that the ABC is raring to go to spend its matched funding here in Western Australia but that the minister has not signed on. As my questions on notice have revealed, the minister is still paying an awful lot of people to attend board meetings in the film industry until the Premier abolishes all those boards. If I relate this to page 118 of the 2009-10 *Government Mid-year Financial Projections Statement* under “Grant Savings” it lists “WA Commission Series (cessation)” cut by \$800 000 in 2011–12. Does that refer to film support; and, if not, where —

Mr J.H.D. DAY: What is the \$800 000 that the member is referring to?

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is in the midyear review under the grant savings lists.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: So that was for grants across all the arts, was it?

Mr J.N. HYDE: That is what I am asking. In the WA Commission Series there were previous commitments under films. What has happened to the ABC \$3.2 million commitment? What is the \$800 000 going to?

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The matched prime time fund was a specific two-year initiative, which is about to come to an end, so that was always funded by the previous government for only a finite period. Would it be desirable for it to continue? Yes, I think it would. I think it has been a good partnership and a good arrangement and one that I am personally supportive of, but obviously one cannot do everything across the budget that would be desired. It has certainly been a good partnership. If it can be reinstated in the future, it is certainly something I would like to see. Obviously, we need to operate within the funds that are available. We have only ever funded for a two-year finite period. The \$800 000 grant savings for the WA Commission Series does not refer to ScreenWest. I understand it refers to Department of Culture and the Arts grants as a whole.

Ms A. Lucas: If we are talking about the same thing, WA Commission Series was one of the special projects that were set up for commissioning international work. That is the title that was used for that. From my understanding, that was the \$800 000 that has not been continued, so it is not ScreenWest funds.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: I refer to page 569 of the budget papers and, under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, to the first dot point on the State Theatre Centre of Western Australia. Can the minister detail when the venue will be open to the public and how the venue will be utilised by sectors of our community?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is very much taking shape at the moment. Anybody who drives past there or walks around there can see that. It is expected to be completed and available for performances in the early part of 2011, particularly for the Perth International Arts Festival, which is when it is expected to be used primarily for major productions, and that is in February next year. In relation to the formal opening and a series of opening events, we do plan to have something prior to that, whether it be before the end of this calendar year or in the early part of 2011 remains to be seen. We need to ensure that the building is adequately finished, that all of the state-of-the-art equipment in it is properly commissioned and that we have some degree of confidence that it will work and so on. It takes several months for that process to be gone through. The completion and handover of the building is expected to be in September of this year, and then the fit-out of the equipment and the commissioning of it. Ms Lucas will comment further.

Ms A. Lucas: The normal commissioning time for any theatre of this size would be in excess of 16 weeks before it would then be open to the public.

Mr J.N. HYDE: On page 569, the fourth point refers to the lack of adequate storage space at the State Records Office plus the lack of storage space for the State Art Collection. I commend the minister on being admirably transparent about those problems. I note that page 14 the State Records Commission annual report for 2008–09 shows a shortfall in the provision of physical storage supplied by the State Records Office for Western Australian government archives. What are the costings for providing combined storage facilities to alleviate these and other problems and where will they be located? Probably linked to that is page 569 and the eleventh dot point that refers to the opportunities of digitalisation and the scoping of a comprehensive management system. What are the eventual costs of this much-needed modernising likely to be? If the Minister for Agriculture and Food can jag \$39 million in his budget to upgrade his information management system because it is a shambles, and in his words “a maze of different systems and different platforms”, why can the minister not, as the head honcho of the State Records Office, get a wriggle on and commit to the digital records initiative before we have all these well-funded National Party ministers creating different iconic systems all over the state?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: So the member is going to join us in coalition, is he?

Mr J.N. HYDE: If the offer is there, we are there!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member wants to leave the Labor Party, does he?

Mr J.N. HYDE: If the minister is ditching the Nationals, forgetting the plastic cows and is coming on with some Labor initiatives, we can talk after estimates.

Mr A.J. SIMPSON: They are artistic.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: No, they are not.

[11.50 am]

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A business case is being prepared at the moment so that we can be clear about the need for new facilities at the State Records Office of Western Australia. I entirely agree that expanded facilities are necessary. It is a long way from an ideal situation at the moment because all the storage capacity at both the main centre and the secondary site is completely full and departments need to store their archival material in other facilities, for which they are paying rental costs, or are using other space. It is not a satisfactory situation; a business case is being put together, which I expect to receive later this year. Obviously, like any funding proposal, it needs to be considered in the context of the whole budget. A case needs to be made in light of all the

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

other needs across government. I think the opposition has been out calling for plenty of expenditure on a range of areas, whether it be health services, schools or whatever.

Ms M.M. QUIRK: I refer to “Development and Strategy” on page 567 in relation to WA’s Per Cent for Art scheme. Does the minister have concerns that other agencies and departments are not meeting their responsibility for Per Cent for Art? I had to remind the Minister for Education recently about this. Is the minister impressing on other agencies the need to comply with that?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: There is no funding as such in the budget of the Department of Culture and the Arts, of course, although the department does provide some input in monitoring the implementation of the policy. It is one I strongly support, as I presume the member does. It is an important policy in providing much more attractive and interesting public buildings and public spaces when projects are undertaken by the state for over, I think, a \$2 million capital cost. There is always the potential for some slippage by departments but the role of Building Management and Works, with support from the Department of Culture and the Arts, is to monitor the implementation of the policy and to try to ensure that there is not slippage, albeit there are always pressures to spend money on other things. Generally speaking, I think the policy is working effectively and producing good outputs.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The Northbridge police complex is proposed to cost \$113 million. The minister has revealed that he is spending only \$500 000 on public art. That is less than half a per cent.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The policy provides for up to one per cent to be expended on public art. That should always be the target. However, when specialised facilities are being constructed, such as prisons, hospitals or police lockups—which will be part of the new police building the member referred to in Northbridge—I think it is quite reasonable for the expenditure to be somewhat less than one per cent. A lot of additional funding is required to build specialised facilities such as secure lockups and so on. I think an allocation of approximately \$500 000 for that building in Northbridge is probably pretty significant and will produce —

Mr J.N. HYDE: It is tiny. Is the minister not committed to the department’s recommendations on the Per Cent for Art scheme that we should be enforcing the one per cent, if not more?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: No; on the contrary, I am completely committed to it. Part of the policy is to recognise that one per cent of the cost of specialised buildings such as Fiona Stanley Hospital, being constructed at the moment at around \$1.8 billion, would be about \$18 million. It is totally understandable that something less than \$18 million would be spent on public art in that one, albeit large, location.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Your own department shows the benefits of public art.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A lot of money is being spent on very specialised facilities such as operating theatres, intensive care units, prison cells and police lockups. The existing policy recognises that it may be appropriate to have less than one per cent expended in those cases. That is the policy that operated when the member for Perth was in government. There is no change. Something in excess of \$500 000 for public art, if that is what is being spent on the new Northbridge police complex, is still significant. I am sure it will be very impressive public art in that one location as a result of this policy being implemented.

Mr P.T. MILES: I refer to the first dot point under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency” on page 570 of the budget papers, which outlines financial investment in the Better Beginnings family literacy program. Can the minister provide the details of the program and the nature of the funds, please?

Mr J.N. HYDE: That has been asked already; the member missed it!

Mr J.H.D. DAY: A more specific aspect was sought earlier. Additional funding for the Better Beginnings family literacy program will allow for expansion of the project statewide. It involves providing reading material to every household in which there is a newborn child to ensure that children have a greater opportunity of being read to and of developing literacy and speech skills than would otherwise be the case. I think most of us who are parents very much understand the very high desirability of reading to children as early as possible—about six months of age from my recollection.

Mr P.T. MILES: I still do it, minister.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: How old are the member’s children?

Mr P.T. MILES: Six years old.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: It is still very important at that age, I agree. It is important to provide the opportunity, the environment and the material for that to occur. The Better Beginnings project has been operated by the State Library of Western Australia over the past, I think, two or three years. An evaluation was undertaken by Edith Cowan University about a year or so ago, which resulted in a very positive assessment of the value of the

Chairman; Mr John Hyde; Mr John Day; Mr Chris Tallentire; Ms Margaret Quirk; Mr Paul Miles; Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Tony Simpson

program. The additional funding will allow the program to be further expanded over and above how it has been operating so far. The support of Rio Tinto for this is very much appreciated. Additional funds will also be allocated through the culture and the arts budget, and some is coming from the royalties for regions program. I hope the member for Perth will be satisfied that at least a degree of funding from the culture and arts budget for the Better Beginnings program is coming from royalties for regions.

Mr J.N. HYDE: Well done. I refer to “Delivery of Services” on page 567. What is the expected loss in 2009–10 and in the forward estimates for the cost of running the belltower?

Mr J.H.D. DAY: The member seems to have a fascination with the belltower for some reason. There are much bigger issues in the culture and arts portfolio that I thought he might ask about. Given that the belltower is in his electorate, I guess it is understandable that he is pursuing that interest with great vigour. From my recollection, the additional allocation for the belltower is \$400 000. As I have expressed recently and, I think, previously, the belltower is essentially a cultural facility and cultural facilities do not generally operate at a surplus.

Mr J.N. HYDE: The minister set it up saying that it would make a profit. That is the difference between that and a library.

Mr J.H.D. DAY: I did not personally set it up, but obviously, I was in the government of the day when it was established. The reality is that historical and significant bells from the church of St Martin in the Fields in London were accepted when a previous Labor government was in office. They needed to be housed, shown off and used somewhere and some funding of, I think, about \$5.5 million was allocated for that to occur, and we now have the belltower.

The CHAIRMAN: This is for whom the bell tolls, member for Perth!

[12 noon]

Mr J.N. HYDE: I have a final question, which I ask perhaps by way of asking for supplementary information. I refer to the heading “Effective Allocation by Service Agency” and the line item “Library Board of Western Australia” on page 567. I have attended some wonderful free public speeches at the library. Who makes decisions on what groups are accepted and their written guidelines? Can the minister list all groups that have made bookings where concessions or waiving of fees are applied? Do listed commercial businesses such as the Australian Stock Exchange pay the same rate as not-for-profit community groups such as the Thai Australian Association of Western Australia? Can we take that as a supplementary?

The CHAIRMAN: No, the time is up. The member can put the question on notice. It is for whom the bell tolls, member for Perth.

The appropriation was recommended.