Division 1: Parliament, $68 783 000 —

Ms L.L. Baker, Chair.

Mr P.B. Watson, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Ms K.M. Robinson, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr R. Hunter, Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services Department.

Ms P. Traegde, Deputy Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services Department.

Ms B. Corey, Director, Parliamentary Information and Education, Parliamentary Services Department.

Ms E. Ozich, Chief Finance Officer, Parliamentary Services Department.

The CHAIR: Good morning, members, and welcome to committee A, division 1, part 1, "Parliament".

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: The estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. The Chair will ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered, and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. Estimates committee's consideration of the estimates is restricted to the discussion of items for which there is a vote of money 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 only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that question be put on notice for the next sitting day. I ask the Speaker to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide, and I will allocate a reference number if the supplementary information is to be provided. I seek the Speaker's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 30 October 2020. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to that member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

The Leader of the Opposition has the first question.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: In relation to division 1, page 46, and spending changes relating to the parliamentary precinct project, could Mr Speaker please outline the time lines for this project's commencement?

The SPEAKER: I will get Mr Hunter to answer that.

Mr R. Hunter: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In terms of clarification, the question was in regard to the parliamentary precinct?

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: On page 46, under "Spending Changes", the estimate for the "Parliamentary Precinct Project" is $169 000.

Mr R. Hunter: The parliamentary precinct project is a government-initiated project to deal with a purpose-built building across the road, to knock down 1 Harvest Terrace, amalgamate between 1 and 3 Harvest Terrace and provide a new building. Our understanding from our involvement is it would include five electorate offices for local members accommodated in West Perth. It would also include the Leader of the Opposition's office and the opposition's second party office staff as well, and our IT area, our library staff, and both committee offices of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council. The funding is for us to establish a project manager to run the project on behalf of the three parliamentary departments. That funding contribution was put into our budget for that purpose.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Through you, Mr Speaker, what is the estimated total cost of that project and when is it anticipated that the funding might flow for the project to substantially commence?

The SPEAKER: Mr Hunter.

Mr R. Hunter: Bearing in mind that we are not running the project, and we are just one of the stakeholders in the project—a little like the Leader of the Opposition's office—we understand that the project funding is a $13.8 million fit-out to accommodate all those places I just referred to. The project is a long-term ground lease, so it is a 49-year program. I understand that the Pivot Construction Group owns the property at 3 Harvest Terrace—the two properties on either side, 1 and 5 Harvest Terrace, are government owned. Part of the arrangement would be that that parcel of land would be given back to government, and the build would be done by the private developer, the Pivot Construction Group, and in 49 years, the whole property would revert to government.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I understood there was a $13 million fit-out. What is the total construction cost?

Mr R. Hunter: The construction cost —

The CHAIR: That should be directed through the Speaker—just to put that on record.

Mr R. Hunter: I would not know the construction cost. That is something that the government is running. As I said, we are just a stakeholder. Essentially, for us, and for the Parliament in particular, there is no gain, because at the moment we have offices in West Perth. As you know, we have 18–32 Parliament Place for the Council, 11 Harvest Terrace for the Assembly and our IT department, and 1 Harvest Terrace for the library. Essentially, we are just moving to a new location. There is no net gain for us. We are just a stakeholder.

The SPEAKER: Following on, there is no benefit to the Parliament going across there. There will be no extra rooms available in Parliament House.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: More generally, Mr Speaker, on page 46, under "Delivery of Services", can you outline what has been done to ensure documentation and data of members of Parliament are being kept in a secure and safe location, and whether there have been any cyberattacks on Parliament this year?

The SPEAKER: Mr Hunter.

Mr R. Hunter: We do a number of things. First of all, we have quite a few protections in place in terms of our IT security. We have some fire walls. We have two layers, if you like, of security in our network. We have a public-facing layer, which is our internet activity, then the second layer looks after the parliamentary network. Obviously, that is not members' information; it is just staff information at Parliament House.

The question was whether we had a cyberattack. Yes, we did. We had a cyberattack in 2018. It was a particularly sophisticated one. It hit both us and the federal Parliament almost simultaneously. We have a relationship with the Australian Signals Directorate cybersecurity unit under which we have monitoring and now a response capability so that it can detect and respond to any cyberattack and then alert us to that. We are also working closely with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to have an understanding of shared information in case there is an equivalent breach within government.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Further to that, Mr Speaker, what was the nature of the attack and were there any breaches with respect to information being gathered by the proponent of the attack?

The SPEAKER: Mr Hunter.

Mr R. Hunter: No, there were no breaches—nothing was compromised. My understanding—a layperson's understanding—is that a "Trojan", or a sleeper, was sitting inside between our outward-facing servers and our network. Some code had been planted in there, which sat there waiting to do something. It did not harvest any information. During that time, we made some changes to our public-facing server so that we could still monitor what the Trojan was proposing to do, but it could not continue to do what it intended to do. Nothing was compromised, and that was confirmed by the Australian Signals Directorate. We take a parcel of data, we give it to the Australian Signals Directorate to analyse and it tells us whether it has or has not been compromised.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, who was the author of the attack? Does the Speaker know where it came from, which entity or any information like that?

The SPEAKER: We do not really know.

Mr R. Hunter: Unfortunately, no.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: The annual report shows an allocation to add some improvements to the website. Could we get an outline of what those improvements might be and whether they result from the attack or are part of continual improvement of the website?

The SPEAKER: Always, when there is an attack, you try to upgrade your system, but I will get Rob to answer that more forensically.

Mr R. Hunter: I will answer it generally and then defer to Belinda Corey because that is her area of specialty. In terms of our website, we are currently running some fairly old databases and concerns are raised about database searches—*Hansard*, the Parliamentary Library et cetera. Some of those things need to be reviewed. We also have concerns about making sure the website is accessible and that it meets all compliance requirements. We need to do a numbers of things, which we have not been able to progress through lack of funding. As you know, the website was redeveloped only two years ago. I refer to Belinda Corey about what the focus for our website will be.

[9.10 am]

Ms B. Corey: Our website was redeveloped to go live last April, 2019, and that is for the presentation of the data. The ongoing project that our cross-parliamentary website steering committee is looking at is how the database is presented and how that is searchable for our users and members, and also improving accessibility to the website for users with disabilities.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker, are the ongoing improvements dedicated towards the website resultant of any complaints about current usability? Secondly, as an avid POWAnet user, I am hoping there will not be any changes to the POWAnet interface until we iron out issues with the public website. Could you enlighten us about the process of when or if POWAnet will be altered during the redevelopment of the website?

The SPEAKER: Belinda.

Ms B. Corey: We do not intend to make any changes to the POWAnet in terms of navigation and usability. We have had some feedback. We have member and staff surveys and general-use feedback regarding navigation of the website, and that is what our committee is actively looking to improve.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Mr Speaker, on page 41, under "Service Summary" is an allocation to "Support the Operations of the Legislative Assembly". Could you provide a breakdown of the allocation for the overall support to the operations thus far?

The SPEAKER: I am just finding who I can handball it to—the Clerk.

Ms K.M. Robinson: The items under "Support the Operations of the Legislative Assembly" include such things as services and contracts, including committee travel and projects, accommodation and employee benefits. It covers those costs.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you, Chair; thank you, Speaker. Does that also include an allocation for hospitality provided by Parliament and the Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is there a list or any sort of record of the hospitality that is provided by the Parliament? I assume that allocation is shared between Mr Speaker and the President, in the case of a joint event, and then obviously any official hospitality that is provided by the Speaker in the suite is provided by the Speaker directly. Is that a fair assertion?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Does the Speaker have a breakdown for the last financial year of the hospitality that has been provided by the Parliament and then by the Speaker?

The SPEAKER: Yes, sure. We can answer that as a supplementary question.

The CHAIR: Mr Speaker, could you confirm, for the new system this year, exactly what you are going to provide?

The SPEAKER: Was it the cost of the Speaker's dining room and the President's dining room?

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Effectively, for hospitality across the Parliament generally, and then confined to official functions that Mr Speaker hosts.

The SPEAKER: Not as many as there could be!

The CHAIR: So it is providing a breakdown of costs for official functions by the Speaker and Parliament.

[*Supplementary Information No A1*.]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: There have been discussions over many years about the potential establishment of a parliamentary budget office. Has the Legislative Assembly done any work on what that cost might be with respect to the establishment of such an office?

The SPEAKER: No.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Thank you.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: On page 42, under "Cost of Services: Expenses", a number of line items are listed, including accommodation and the like. I am curious whether the allocation for "Accommodation" includes any money toward the establishment of a family room about which members have been surveyed. If so, what plans have been put together by the Parliament to establish such a facility?

The SPEAKER: No official money has been put aside. We recently sent out a survey to members. It is something that a lot of members want, but space is always a big issue in Parliament House. At the moment we are looking at a site in Parliament. As I said, we sent out a survey asking people what they wanted and we are pretty sure that it will happen in the next term of Parliament.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate that, but, at the moment, there is no allocation toward refurbishing or refitting that space for that?

The SPEAKER: No. We think the space we have will be okay, with some minor changes. We are pretty confident we will have something for the start of the next Parliament. It is a bit hard to get anything done now. There is a lot of demand for something like this, but we have to be very careful how we do it because the facility has to be safe and also close to the members. We think we have a spot, but we are still working out the size and what we have to

do. We are waiting to get feedback from members to finalise what we will actually do and then we will allocate money when the time is right.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I assume the requirement is that it is within the confines of the building and close to members, rather than a separate facility on the grounds?

The SPEAKER: There is no room for something like that at the moment. It has to be in the building, close to security and to the members. The member probably realises the building has very limited space, but we think we have found a spot. It will be safe, it will be inside the building and will be accessible to members.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: In relation to accommodation, has any money been spent thus far in the last financial year, or is forecast in the coming financial year, on a refurbishment of members' offices or for the Parliamentary Services team and the like?

The SPEAKER: It is very hard to get money from the government to refurbish the building. That has been a worry for me ever since I have been in this job. At some stage down the track it will cost a government a lot of money to refurbish the building. I will get Rob to follow up.

Mr R. Hunter: In response to the question about accommodation, particularly around office spaces: yes, we have a plan. We have a 10-year strategic asset management plan, which includes upgrading all the members' offices. There are 81 members' offices or thereabouts that need to be upgraded. The staff offices are not included in that. The last time they were upgraded was in 1999, other than little pieces of furniture being put in from time to time. To give an example of the quantum cost, because we need to route IT and power et cetera, it would be $800 000.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is that per office or in total?

Mr R. Hunter: No, in total for those 81 offices, so about $10 000 per office. That would really be for new furnishings, carpets, well finishes, and data and power routing—that is it. It would be the same location and no expansion.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Thank you very much, Mr Hunter. Could you confirm the expenditure thus far on accommodation has not included refurbishing or refitting members' offices or the offices of the Parliamentary Services team?

Mr R. Hunter: We have had some changes to the staff offices, particularly around the Parliamentary Services centre. There has been a basic reconfiguration there, but nothing major.

The SPEAKER: Hansard was transferred downstairs and the space down there was reconfigured.

[9.20 am]

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Mr Speaker, the income statement table on page 42 shows "Other revenue" of $21 000.

Ms E. Ozich: The $21 000 income in each year is mainly a contribution from the Parliamentary Services Department and the Legislative Council to the Legislative Assembly for their portion of the contribution to the purchase of artworks. It also includes about $4 000 for conference fees, some insurance recoveries and motor vehicle contributions.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have a different question on the same page under "Expenses". On the same table, under "Finance and interest costs", there is an allocation of $49 000 in 2019–20 versus $1 000 to $2 000 budgeted for out years. What is that variance about?

Ms E. Ozich: In the budget, the financing cost relates to a new accounting standard for leases, Australian Accounting Standards Board 16. That particular charge was for the interest on what is called right-of-use leases, so it is an accounting treatment. Most of that belonged to the lease of accommodation. During the last financial year, it was determined by government that the accounting treatment would not continue, so that was reversed out of our books and explains why that $49 000 is shown there but not in our actuals or forward forecast.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: On page 42, looking at the cost of services and expenses, there are a couple of interesting variations between the 2019–20 budget and the 2019–20 actual expenditure. For example, depreciation was $402 000, but ultimately expenditure will be $22 000. There was a budget for "Other expenses" of $1.4 million, but only $88 000 in actual expenditure; and "Supplies and services" of $1.9 million, but $1.6 million in actual expenditure. I assume much of that is a result of the impact of COVID-19 and the change in operations of the Parliament. Would it be a fair assertion that that is for things like supplies and services?

The SPEAKER: Yes. The reason for the underspend is obviously because there has been no travel this year, including the cancellation of the Speaker's delegation to India. I will get Elma to respond but, because of the year we have had, obviously the budget will be all over the place.

Ms E. Ozich: As I just mentioned, we did not end up with a charge for interest with the ROU leases for accommodation. It is the same thing for depreciation, with right-of-use depreciation for accommodation, which was also reversed out. As Mr Speaker said, there was some underspend during the year as well because we had much less travel. Also, we have had a slight change in treatment in where we put what we call our free-of-charge cost, which

previously was shown under "Other expenses" in the budget but which has now been moved under "Supplies and services" for actuals. That is why there is a little bit of a flip.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Further to that, is that why, for example, in 2018–19, "Supplies and services" were effectively $1.449 million and for 2020–21 are $2.79 million?

Ms E. Ozich: Yes. That is the right-of-use charge moving from "Other expenses" into that line item.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: For those of us who are not familiar with what that technology might mean, Mr Speaker, is there an example of what that would entail?

The SPEAKER: Mrs Ozich?

Ms E. Ozich: The resources received free-of-charge by the Legislative Assembly is a charge from PSD and is basically a portion of our IT, finance and HR expenses that we re-charge. We do not actually get money for this; it is a nominal entry that we do in the books.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Can we get answers to questions with respect to the Legislative Council as well?

The CHAIR: No.

The SPEAKER: Please, no.

The CHAIR: That is their problem.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: I have just a quick question. Going back to page 40, under "Delivery of Services", the estimated actual is $5.907 million for 2019–20, going up next year to $5.996 million. I am curious about the increase for next year. My understanding is that because it is an election year we will be sitting fewer days. This year, I think we sat in the order of 69 days and next year we will be sitting far fewer days. I would have expected a cost saving, given we have fewer sitting days as there would be less overtime and related costs. I am curious to know what the increase is for.

Ms E. Ozich: We still have staff here for the full year, so $52 000 of that increase of $89 000 would be for salaries and wages. That is the $1 000 per year per employee increase. We also have non-salary cost escalations of about $20 000, which is about a one per cent increase on our normal charges. Most of it relates to everyday running costs and small items such as that.

The SPEAKER: Also, retiring members are in there too.

Ms E. Ozich: Yes, but that would be under the salaries and allowances line.

Mr R. Hunter: In relation to sitting days—I understand that we are talking about the Legislative Assembly—when we look at the Parliamentary Services Department and the Assembly, the total number of days this year is 82. That is because the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly do not sit congruently, so the costs for the organisation such as power, air conditioning, utilities et cetera exist even if one house is not sitting. That is why we start to see escalations, as well as the $1 000 per year per person for wages.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: This probably requires more detail than is contained in the budget papers, but do we have an estimate of the actual cost of running the Parliament on an hourly basis on each sitting day versus a non-sitting day?

Ms E. Ozich: The average cost for PSD of a sitting day is $50 000.

Mrs L.M. HARVEY: Further to that, what is the average cost on a non-sitting day?

Ms E. Ozich: It is $42 750.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to the parliamentary precinct project that we have spoken about, which is on page 46. Mr Speaker, given the statements that both you and Mr Hunter have made that effectively there will be no net benefit to the Parliament itself because there will not be an increase in the overall accommodation in this building and the services contained within it, who initiated the parliamentary precinct project, if it was not the Parliament?

[9.30 am]

The SPEAKER: I will ask Mr Hunter to answer.

Mr R. Hunter: We have been concerned about accommodation, or lack of accommodation, at Parliament House for some time. Those matters have been raised with successive governments over many years. The project to amalgamate the electorate offices and the LOOP offices in the building was initiated by government; it approached us. We had hoped that that would realise some vacancy in Parliament House so that we could then reprioritise our existing accommodation. Our ideal, what we had asked for, was a new building on the reserve. I guess that became untenable in terms of cost so we ended up with accommodation across the road. The net result is that we hoped we would have realised some offices but it is really about the LOOP offices. At the moment, both LOOP offices have staff in the building, whereas previously, as you know, some were in offices on Hay Street. A long time ago, the Nationals WA were in off-premises leased accommodation as well. When those staff are relocated, they will keep the same space,

because all they have done—both opposition leaders understand—is just cram their staff into an existing allocation. When they relocate across the road, it will not free up space to reallocate to us, so there is no net gain for us.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: To clarify, was it the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or the Department of Finance that initiated this precinct project?

Mr R. Hunter: It was the former. It is run by the Treasury government accommodation office.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I refer to page 47 and the provision of infrastructure and facilities under the service summary. I note that we have revised forecourt security arrangements at the moment, with sliding gates and the like and that the septic tanks that were out the front have gone.

The SPEAKER: Withdraw!

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Is there an ongoing plan for the provision of security services to the forecourt and what will that look like?

The SPEAKER: I will get Mr Hunter to answer. We put up those bollards in the first place because of a threat. We had to do something really quickly. It had to be cost effective because we were given no money. We did that and obviously people are unhappy. We then found out that school buses and seniors could not get through. We were looking at using the area at the top where the tennis courts were and changing things around so that buses could come in, but then Mr Hunter found a way to do it with the facilities that we have at the moment. We have security gates there because we want to make the forecourt an area where people can come to protest. Schoolchildren come through there all the time. We want the forecourt to have no parking so it is a space just for people to protest, which everyone has a right to do. A certain person was driving around Parliament House at speed and we had to do something, so that is what was done. I will get Mr Hunter, who has done a tremendous job on this, to answer.

Mr R. Hunter: The bigger picture is that the parliamentary precinct—the reserve—needs considerable work to make it accessible for a start. It needs to be safe in terms of security, and also for people to alight from buses and for people with disabilities to be dropped off without having to make their way down stairs. As members know, a restaurant owner was killed in the Bourke Street tragedy in Melbourne. The intended target was the Parliament of Victoria. We had that information fairly early, we also had a threat against the protective security officers, and we established on our CCTV that a particular person of interest had been driving to Parliament House in the early hours of the morning and doing turning circles. Until now, this information has not been publicly available. We had a serious threat and, with the Presiding Officers' support, I hastened to put in the bollards—the soak wells—which of course became a bit of a joke for most people.

If we look at today as an example, we expect to see 200 people from the embassy protesting, and they will walk across the front. No vehicles will be travelling through that area so it will be safe. The 17 parking bays out the front will be removed eventually; they have been duplicated already, just outside the barrier. We put in 14 bays and three universal access bays. We have duplicated those parking bays and will move them out. At the moment, people say that it is very sparse on a sitting day with no cars out there. That is the intention so that the people behind those barriers, if you like, will have a card credentialed by us—that is, members and staff. That means that the chances of a hostile vehicle attack have been minimised, and that is the purpose. In terms of security and what we intend to do, we are pretty much at the end of the process now. I feel less concerned about security than I did when I sat here last year. Ultimately, we still need to do a few things. We need to get a platform lift at the southern entrance so people can get down to the forecourt. We are getting parking for buses and doing some work on bus drop-offs now. It is a longer term plan.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: I appreciate that is the end of the security arrangements for the forecourt area, if I read Mr Hunter correctly. First, are ongoing security improvements needed throughout the rest of the building? Second, on car parking, I understand that, for example, ministerial staff are not able to use the forecourt parking and in some cases, particularly when Parliament sits quite late, ministerial staff have to walk from Dumas House to Parliament House, and although I realise protective services officers patrol the area between here and Dumas House, no parking is provided for ministerial staff on the precinct. Will that be looked at by the Parliament? First, are there ongoing security arrangements that are being looked at for the rest of the precinct; and, if so, what are they? Second, what are the parking arrangements for ministerial staff?

The SPEAKER: There are ongoing issues. We do not want to let people know about some of the security things that we do. But we are looking at increasing security. It is very hard to get everyone onto the precinct. I will let Rob finish that one.

Mr R. Hunter: In terms of security, most of the visible stuff has been done. We are now talking about intelligence sharing between the various parts of the police force. We are very grateful to the government for giving us the protective security officers free of charge. That is a bonus for us. To keep it in context, there were 91 incidents this calendar year.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Were they security incidents?

Mr R. Hunter: Yes, there were 91. Several involved police interventions and 24 were with a weapon of some description. These things are mostly invisible to people inside Parliament House. Obviously, some of those incidents escalate to arrests or whatever else. Some were personal threats by people who want to self-harm and others were by people disaffected with particular portfolios or who had mental health issues. It is real, but we think we have the controls in place to deal with them. In terms of what will happen now with security, we will perhaps install some security gates at the north and south gallery entrances like the ones we have on the south, north, lower and front entrances. It is a good way to have pedestrian traffic control.

The second part of the question was about parking. Again, putting that in context, we have increased the number of parking bays available in the members' car park by 16 bays. There was always a bit of a crunch point, particularly in the car park. There is enough parking for members of Parliament now. We also introduced another 21 bays on the tennis court less than three years ago, so there is parking there. As I said, we replicated the parking bays at the front of Parliament House on the southern side. We have done that as well. If we have a dedicated parking bay, it costs us somewhere between $1 956 and $2 400 per person per bay. The fringe benefit tax cost for the Parliamentary Services Department was about $260 000. I do not employ ministerial staff and I certainly do not want to be paying FBT for their parking.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Can I have clarification of the statement made by Mr Hunter that there were 24 incidents with a weapon? Was it that Western Australia Police Force protective service officers had to use a weapon or was it individuals who came to the precinct armed?

The SPEAKER: Most of those incidences were people coming into Parliament with a knife in their bag or something like that and probably not realising they had it there. There were none against the protective service guys at all. Mr Hunter will answer further.

[9.40 am]

Mr R. Hunter: The majority of them were knives. There were a few things like mace and pepper spray. We thought one person in particular had fuel to self-harm. One person claimed to have a knife, but, when his bag was searched, we found he did not have a knife. He then came back and said that police had taken his knife. There were a few incidences like that, but mostly it is to do with people who have come in through screening and who might have something for their own personal protection that they were endeavouring to bring into Parliament House, which obviously we can grab when we screen them.

The SPEAKER: On that, a lot were people who have mental health issues. We have a system in place by which we can get people down to Parliament very quickly. We had a gentleman at the front of Parliament House recently who would not go away. The mental health unit came and calmed him down.

Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP: Has there been an increase in the number of threats to members of Parliament?

The SPEAKER: There has been. We had one with a member just recently. One of their constituents threatened to come to Parliament House and cause harm. We have a very good system now with the police parliamentary protection officers. We are trying to get members to find out about threats early on. We have had some courses on fixated threats. If members are not sure about someone attending their electorate office, which is where threats come from mainly, they can report it to the dignitary protection unit, and it will keep a record. The unit can also tell the member whether the threat is escalating, because they and their staff might not know. I have had violence restraining orders on one particular person who has stopped me in the street and threatened me. I just thought that was okay, but I was told it could escalate very quickly, so that person is on the unit's files now if anything happens. Mr Hunter will answer.

Mr R. Hunter: This is a really important issue. I think the first answer is yes, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of threats against members of Parliament, not that we would get all those reports, because some would be dealt with in electorate offices. I will outline some of the work that we are doing. We had a meeting with a group of people who are working with police and forensic and clinical psychiatrists to look at the antecedents of the behaviour. If we look at that tragedy of Jo Cox in the United Kingdom, we see that if we start detecting the behaviours early before they escalate, potentially we can prevent something very sad or very bad from happening. We are now working with the police to have both a mental health and a police intervention—a triage of an incident—early to start to detect some of those cues. The training, which some electorate office and office staff may already have had, is to identify what might seem like an aggravated person so that they can report that and feed the information into a database so we can collect the data. In the forty-first Parliament, we will be looking at making sure that all members are aware of the things to look for and do some dedicated training. However, more importantly, the police made an observation—which I thought was very good—that if a member of Parliament ceases to be a member and vacates their electorate office, any of those disaffected people in their constituency will not be known to the next member, because there is no handover in which they can say, "Watch out for this person." We are looking to try to capture that information so that when the next member comes in, they are not relying on the leaving member to tell them about those people. The police will say, "Mr Smith and Sally are really big problems. They are here, and

this is what they are going to do." Electorate offices are experiencing this, but it is not being captured. There is lots of work to be done in that space, but, yes, there is an escalation of it.

The SPEAKER: I suggest all members get their staff to do the training, because it flows on. That person is still around after a member leaves office, and they do not target just the member; they target the job.

The appropriation was recommended.