

**Division 1: Parliament, \$51 353 000 —**

Mr M.W. Sutherland, Chairman.

Mr G.A. Woodhams, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr P.J. McHugh, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr R.M. Bremner, Executive Manager, Parliamentary Services.

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

Ms D.G. Timmerman, Chief Finance Officer, Parliamentary Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good morning and welcome. This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be published at 9.00 am tomorrow.

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. This is the prime focus of the committee. Although there is scope for members to examine many matters, questions need to be clearly related to a page number, item, program, or amount within the volumes. For example, members are free to pursue performance indicators that are included in the *Budget Statements* while there remains a clear link between the questions and the estimates.

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 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 or she 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 committee clerk by Friday, 10 June 2011, so that members may read it before the report and third reading stages. If the supplementary information cannot be provided within that time, written advice is required of the day by which the information will be made available. Details in relation to supplementary information have been provided to both members and advisers, and accordingly I ask the minister to cooperate with those requirements. 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 with the Clerk's office. Only supplementary information that the minister agrees to provide will be sought by Friday, 10 June 2011.

It will greatly assist Hansard if, when referring to the program statements volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, items, program and amount in preface to their question.

I now ask the Speaker to introduce his advisers to the committee. In this case it is the Speaker, substituted for minister!

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIRMAN:** Members, Leader of the Opposition, are there any questions?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Mr Speaker, in this budget, what amount has been allocated —

**The CHAIRMAN:** Sorry—can the Leader of the Opposition take us to the page?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Yes; page 55, "Service Summary", "1. Support the Operations of the Legislative Assembly". In this budget, what application is provided for committee travel in the forthcoming financial year, and how does that compare with the amount spent on committee travel in each of the last three years?

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition. I take it that the member is referring to the bottom of page 55. With respect to committee travel and the money that might be allocated, in this past financial year we spent about \$530 000. I expect that a similar amount will be requested by committees in the coming financial year, but that is not a given; the request could be for more. As the Leader of the Opposition is aware, committee travel is not always approved. In fact, I will not be surprised if less money for travel is requested by committees next year. I might indicate by way of comparison over the past four years. In the 2007–08 financial year, the total spent was \$167 500; in 2008–09, it was \$265 000; in the following year, 2009–10, \$381 876—a very precise amount; and in the 2010–11 year, \$532 751, as I have indicated. If I might provide some further information, Leader of the Opposition, several substantial financial requests were made by some committees this year and I sought, on several occasions, to have those committees resubmit their applications because I believed they were looking perhaps a little generously at the money being requested for travel. To absolutely summarise, it is a

global budget. I believe the amount requested in the coming year will be less than the \$532 000-plus requested in the past financial year; however, I cannot give that guarantee.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** With regard to Mr Speaker's travel, how much was spent on trips taken in the capacity as the Speaker, and how much does the Speaker intend to spend in the next financial year?

**The SPEAKER:** While the Clerk locates that particular detail, the Speaker's office in the last financial year spent less than was spent in the preceding year. I do not have a huge travel plan in the coming year that is under scrutiny.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** The previous Speaker broke all the records.

**The SPEAKER:** There is a lot of detail that I could provide to the Leader of the Opposition and I am quite happy to provide that detail, but, if I may put it this way, the Speaker's costs are included in the cost of all parliamentary delegations. As the Leader of the Opposition knows, there are parliamentary delegations both into and out of Western Australia. From August of last year to May of this year, there have been nine parliamentary delegations, only two of which were overseas delegations from the Speaker's office—one was to China and one was to Indonesia. Leader of the Opposition, it is also not always the case that I am a part of the delegation. For example, the delegation to Indonesia was led, from memory, by John Hyde, member for Perth. I should say that the Deputy Speaker led that delegation and that the member for Perth, John Hyde, was a part of that delegation. The all-up cost for those nine delegations was just shy of \$90 000. I do not know whether that provides the sort of information the Leader of the Opposition is looking for. I might also indicate that the additional amount of just over \$15 000 is included for me to attend the National Conference of State Legislatures Summit in the United States.

[9.10 am]

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Can I just clarify to improve my understanding? In addition to the amounts we talked about for committee travel, there is \$90 000 for delegation costs, including incoming delegations, and \$15 000 for the Speaker to attend the National Conference of State Legislatures Summit. Does that exhaust the amounts in the Legislative Assembly budget spent on travel? Is there any other pocket or jar that we should be inquiring about?

**The SPEAKER:** I only wish that some of that money was kept in a jar; I would feel far more comfortable if it was in a jar that I could access! However, it is not in a jar. I do not mean to be facetious; there is certainly money available for travel for members of the Legislative Assembly staff. For example, I indicate to the Leader of the Opposition also that because of the twinning arrangements this Parliament has with the Cook Islands, some moneys are allocated to enable this Parliament to assist the Parliament of the Cook Islands in developing its processes. Earlier this year, Hon John Kobelke travelled to the Cook Islands to facilitate some of that staff development for the Cook Islands Parliament. I also indicate that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly travelled with the member for Balcatta on that occasion.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** When we talk about all these travel costs, do they include the travel costs of the staff of the Legislative Assembly that are covered in the committee budgets and so on?

**The SPEAKER:** In a global sense, yes they do; committee costs include staff as well. It is quite often the case that two staff members of a committee might travel; on some occasions, only one committee might travel. It depends on the nature of the quest or the program being undertaken, and the ambition of the committee. Sometimes the committee will need both committee staff members and sometimes it will not.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** I have one further question. With regard to the Speaker's own travel costs, including delegation costs, does he expect to spend a similar amount of money this financial year as he spent last financial year?

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, my own travel costs would be roughly the same. The difficulty I have, and these are not my own travel intentions, is that we as the Legislative Assembly do not know how many delegations we might have to accommodate. We budget for those coming delegations, but we cannot give an absolute guarantee that there will be 10 delegations and that will be the end of it; there may be two or there may be 15.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** I refer to page 55 of the *Budget Statements* and ask a question for clarification. When a joint standing committee travels, how are the travel costs allocated? Are the costs apportioned to the budgets of both houses or do they come out of one budget? I ask a secondary question: can the Speaker advise us which of the Legislative Assembly standing committees spent the most money on travel?

**The SPEAKER:** That is a good question, member for South Perth. There is no overall pool of money allocated to joint standing committee travel from which both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council draw. Two joint standing committees are funded by the Legislative Assembly and the remainder are funded by the

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Legislative Council. I ask the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly to indicate the two joint standing committees supported by the Legislative Assembly.

**Mr P.J. McHugh:** The Legislative Assembly supports the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission and the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People. This financial year it also supported the Joint Standing Committee on the Review of the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Acts, which has since been disbanded. The committee that drew the greatest expenditure was the Joint Standing Committee on the Corruption and Crime Commission, on which \$123 000 was spent. Expenditure on the Joint Standing Committee on the Commissioner for Children and Young People was a little over \$61 000. Expenditure on the Joint Standing Committee on the Review of the Racing and Wagering Western Australia Acts was a total of \$62 000.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I refer to page 60 of the *Budget Statements* under the heading “Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information”, and item 2 of the service summary table, “Provision of Information and Services”. What will Parliament’s role be during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting? Will access to Parliament House be available, or indeed compromised, as a result of any commitment? Noting that there appears to be a decrease for this financial year in the line item amount referred to above, what amount of money is allocated to CHOGM?

**The SPEAKER:** What is the line item again, member for Warnbro?

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** In item 2 of the service summary table entitled “Provision of Information and Services”, the budget estimates are lower than last year’s actual expenditure. I wonder what the cost implications of CHOGM will be and whether any costs are anticipated.

**The SPEAKER:** As we get closer to the date of CHOGM, this issue also taxes my mind. There is no financial allocation to CHOGM because, as we all appreciate, it is a federal event. Therefore, all arrangements are organised at a federal level. CHOGM will not be held in a parliamentary sitting week, and, quite simply, I cannot give an indication about whether that will have an impact on any planning undertaken in the federal sphere. I hope that further information will come from our federal counterparts or an agency at that level, but there is no money in this budget allocated to CHOGM.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** Does that indicate that state Parliament has no direct role, nor any input, into the planning of CHOGM? I understand that it is a federal event; nevertheless, state representatives are integrally involved in the planning. If Parliament, at shorter than desired notice, is required to provide some sort of facility or event that will be ultimately funded by it, which may later be required to be recompensed by the federal government, should we not know whether that will be the case at this stage; and, should there not be some input from Parliament to ensure that we are not left holding the baby?

[9.20 am]

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, it is an issue that we talk about. The Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Executive Manager of Parliamentary Services, the President of the Legislative Council and I have had discussions about CHOGM and what the implications might be for us. All I can say at this point—it is a genuine question and it is a genuine answer—is that no funds have been allocated, and there has been no indication to us yet, to the Parliament of Western Australia, that we will need to be involved in any official capacity or in fact to conduct any official function or that the services of the Parliament will be involved in any way—for argument’s sake, the provision of the Centenary Room for a function. None of those requests has come through. Certainly, if they were to come through, we would all know about it very quickly.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** At the very least, I hope CHOGM extends an invitation to the Speaker to the formal events to represent all of us.

**The SPEAKER:** Thank you, member for Warnbro.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** I refer to page 60 and to the capital appropriation. There was significant money in past years. That declines into the future. I am just wondering what the capital appropriation would be spent on and whether there is a need for any allocation to cover some of the costs associated with the new government buildings across the road from here. Is there a requirement for additional funds from the Parliament to be spent on things like cabling, local area networks and some of the work to be done at Dumas House? I am wondering whether any significant work is required by the Parliament to cater for that and whether there is any requirement for the Parliament to pick up the cost of walkways or anything of that sort.

**The SPEAKER:** I cannot answer about what might be planned across the road from this place. With respect to the line item that the member draws our attention to, there is really no final decision about the allocation of those funds. But in keeping with the tradition and history of this place, I am sure that Parliamentary Services would be

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very sincere in its intention to continue with things like LANs. One of the areas in which these funds are used is IT, in servicing and maintenance—issues that, from our perspective as members of this place, are very important. They have been for quite a while.

Just reflecting back on CHOGM, there is no money, obviously, for CHOGM, but one of the other areas is security. The member may have noticed in recent times that there has been some increased security. We would hope that some of that money would also go towards security and towards what happens here on a daily basis in the chamber—for instance, the chamber broadcast. In effect, I am saying that the money is more than probably going to be allocated to those traditional areas to which it has always found its way—catering and replacement of equipment. Certainly, none of those funds is determined to be put into a pathway across the road or whatever.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Speaker, you do not envisage that the Parliament might have to pick up any expenses associated with what is going on across the road in order to connect with it or to be a part of it.

**The SPEAKER:** Exclusive to the question that the member asks, I am sure that funds will have to be found. It would be my impression that they are not going to be found out of the LA or the ongoing operations that, in effect, I have some responsibility for through Parliamentary Services.

**Mr A.J. SIMPSON:** With the developments that are happening in the parliamentary precinct, is there a master plan for the parliamentary precinct that we are working on? If the Department of the Premier and Cabinet is doing some work up on the hill, it impacts on Parliament House, but is there an actual overall master plan for the whole parliamentary precinct and how that will evolve in the out years?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Give us a full account of the palace grounds.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** It is called the “palace precinct”.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Has the Premier gone to London to talk to the Queen about the palace?

**The SPEAKER:** I was thinking that the Queen might be coming here, member for Rockingham. An invitation might be extended to the Speaker!

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** I hope the Premier does not come back with a blueprint.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** A change to the façade—new gates!

**The SPEAKER:** Can you not call them to order, Mr Chairman? The Executive Manager of Parliamentary Services, the President of the Legislative Council and I were on a planning committee that was looking at a range of issues that surround the parliamentary precinct. One of those issues was in fact how the Parliament might be grown—the additional requirements for buildings. To answer the question that originally came from the member for Darling Range, that project is run by executive government; that whole project is run through the Premier’s office. It involves people such as the Government Architect and the Lord Mayor of Perth. Certainly, there are broader plans in which to fit some of the processes of refurbishment of Dumas House and the refurbishment of Hale House. To be very sincere, member for Darling Range, it would be a question far better put to the Premier than to me.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Mr Speaker, I notice that there is a huge disparity in the budget outcomes for the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Where is that—on which page?

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** It is on page 47. At a time when people’s electricity bills are going up by 57 per cent, the Legislative Council has had a 25 per cent increase in its budget, whereas the Legislative Assembly has had about a 0.5 per cent increase in its budget. How can the budget of the Legislative Assembly, with 59 members, be justified against the budget of the Legislative Council—almost the same—with only 36 members?

**The SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I do not know what the process might be in budgetary estimates in the Legislative Council and how that process works; I have not observed that. Perhaps I should instruct myself and go and do that. Certainly, from my perspective, I do not comment on the budget of the Legislative Council. I leave it to the Council to make that sort of comment, if it wishes to. I do not see that as my domain. I do not think it would be a worthwhile exercise for me to get embroiled in whether their budget is larger, lesser, the same or whatever.

Can I just provide further information to the Leader of the Opposition in that the Legislative Assembly budget also accounts for the total operation of the education committee; that is funded entirely out of the Legislative

Assembly's budget. All the funds for the parliamentary history committee are found within the Legislative Assembly budget.

[9.30 am]

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** That information only adds to my concern. The budget for the Legislative Assembly, with 59 members, is \$5.37 million, and the budget for the Legislative Council is \$5.048 million. It seems disproportionate. I know the Speaker will not comment on the Legislative Council's budget, but I ask him to comment on whether, in light of the Legislative Council's budget, the Legislative Assembly's budget is sufficient. The Speaker might also reflect on whether the budget is sufficient for the Legislative Assembly, which has 59 members. We can draw our own conclusions about the Legislative Council budget.

**The SPEAKER:** I will leave all members to draw their own conclusions about the budget for the Legislative Council. At the same time I will allow members to think about the budget for the Legislative Assembly. With no reference at all to the Legislative Council in what I am about to say, I would like to see a larger budget for the Legislative Assembly. All members of this place know there are a range of things that we are unable to do that we would like to do to improve the abilities for all members of this place to more effectively represent their electorates and to more efficiently go about their business when they are in this place. Leader of the Opposition, I would certainly like to see a substantial increase in our budget to enable us to do some things we will need to do heading into the future.

**Mr E.S. RIPPER:** Something like 25 per cent; would that be about right?

**The SPEAKER:** That would be lovely! If the Leader of the Opposition could speak to the Treasurer about that, that might be very helpful. That is the only comment I make, Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr J.E. McGRATH:** It is no secret in this chamber that the Legislative Council has far more expensive tastes than we do!

I refer to page 55 of the *Budget Statements*. My question relates to appropriations for "Delivery of Services". The Speaker has touched on there being a need for more spending in the Assembly. I refer to the committee areas. Last year I raised problems about accommodation for the committee offices and the growing number of committees. How much rent does the Parliament pay for committee premises, and is there any plan to expand the precinct to house the committees?

**The SPEAKER:** If I can answer the last part of the question first, member for South Perth: "plan" is an interesting word. In the discussions that the Executive Manager of Parliamentary Services, the President of the Legislative Council and I have had during the planning process over the past 12 months, we have considered where the Parliament of Western Australia sits at the western end of Perth and whether there might be a larger construction across the freeway et cetera. One element of that broad discussion related to what we talked about earlier; that is, what might happen up on the hill—refurbishments of Dumas House and Hale House, further buildings et cetera. Yes, embedded in that discussion is absolutely a plan for committees to be far more substantially housed than they are at the moment. There is no significant detail to that other than to say that needs to happen in future planning.

I have been furnished with the figures relating to moneys currently spent on leasing arrangements, member for South Perth. I will refer to the buildings over the road on Harvest Terrace where we find our committee offices. At 1/11 Harvest Terrace, the number of staff housed there is 16. In 2010–11 the lease cost \$670 000. The Finance and IT departments are located at 2/11 Harvest Terrace—the all-up cost for 2010–11 is \$282 000. I do not know whether the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly wants to add any further detail to that.

**Mr P.J. McHugh:** Our lease costs have doubled in the past couple of years. The lease is up for negotiation later this year. There is no prospect that we will be able to move out of those premises in the near future. Although there might be some room for negotiation on the lease costs, those costs will not revert to their former level. That adds pressure to the budget. In terms of the room available for committees to meet, in the past few weeks we have converted one of our holding and waiting rooms into another meeting room. It is not particularly convenient but it adds an additional room for the pressure that occurs when committees are held on Wednesday morning sitting days, but the capacity of committees to meet in appropriate facilities, particularly to have the public and the press attend when they need to, is still quite limited.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I refer to note (a) on page 61 under the table headed "Services and Key Efficiency Indicators", which begins with the words, "The numbers of Members and Chamber Departments' employees". The note indicates we are working towards a target of 163 employees in the 2011–12 budget. How many of those 163 employees are Indigenous? Do we have a target for Indigenous employees? Is there some hope that we might actually represent the percentage of the Western Australian population that is Indigenous in the Parliament

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of Western Australia employee staff numbers? The last time I heard, that percentage was 3.2. Is there any plan to try to achieve that, if we do not already achieve it; or do we already achieve that?

**The SPEAKER:** If I can pull this back to the specific detail on the page for my own —

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** One hundred and sixty-three employees is the actual target.

**The SPEAKER:** Yes, the 2011–12 budget target.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** Mr Chairman, considering the time, we might try to move on to the Ombudsman.

**The SPEAKER:** I would like to answer the member for Warnbro's question, because it is something that I give consideration to.

I happen to come from an electorate that has a significant Indigenous population. It is an issue that we have had informal discussions around. I am not aware that we have any specific targets in this place to achieve a particular outcome, but we have had some discussions about creating opportunities not just for Indigenous people, but also—as the member for Warnbro might be aware, and certainly his heritage might suggest—people from a range of different countries who have come here in recent times. It is important to this place that we try to embrace and capture some of those people in our process. It is very important to me, member for Warnbro.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I note the Speaker's observation regarding minorities. I suspect we are ahead of the game in that regard.

**The SPEAKER:** We could be in some instances.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** With respect to Indigenous employees, I recall, as an interested backbench observer, the then opposition spokesperson for Indigenous affairs, Hon Kim Hames, roundly criticising the government for not employing Indigenous people, particularly in Parliament and, more widely, in the public service, in setting objectives. I seem to also recall him discussing setting targets for public servant numbers in the Parliament or urging department heads to try to achieve at least the representative percentage of the population in their employee numbers. Has Hon Kim Hames or anybody else in a position of authority, as representatives of the state and the people's house, suggested we should try to achieve a bare minimum of the representative percentage of employees being Indigenous?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, they are not discussions I have had specifically with the Minister for Health and for Tourism, who was, as the member indicated, the former Minister for Indigenous Affairs. They are not specific conversations I have had with him. I suggest it would be a worthwhile question to put to him in the estimates session, although he may refer the member to the current Minister for Indigenous Affairs. The member can follow my logic in that process. We continue to look at that from an employment perspective. It is not a stated agenda item every time we meet and talk, but it certainly is something we are aware of, we will continue to be aware of, and we will, at every opportunity, endeavour to promote. If we can bring some people from Indigenous communities into this place to work on some basis, we endeavour to do that.

**Mr P. PAPALIA:** I will be watching next year!

**The appropriation was recommended.**

[9.40 am]