

*Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations — Eighty-seventh Report —  
Consideration of the 2022–23 Budget Estimates — Motion*

Resumed from 15 February on the following motion moved by Hon Peter Collier —

That the report be noted.

**Hon NICK GOIRAN:** I am pleased that we now have the opportunity, once again, to reconsider the 2022–23 budget estimates. Members will be aware that we have recently had some budget estimates hearings and they will probably be anticipating a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations shortly. I can say that the pattern of behaviour from the government and its ministers has not changed from the previous budget estimates hearings that we had to the hearings that we most recently embarked upon.

Members will recall that in the final week of June this year we held sessions across four days. During that period, we saw a staggering number of matters taken on notice by ministers who were either ill prepared for those hearings or refused to allow public servants in attendance as witnesses to take the questions on their behalf. We saw this pattern of behaviour very clearly in the previous year's budget estimates in 2021–22. This is not an example of responsible government. Responsible government sees executive government held to account by Parliament, and one of the processes under which we do that is budget estimates hearings. That can work only if ministers and public servants attend the budget estimates hearings prepared. Having gigantic files and lever-arch files for no particular purpose makes a mockery of the accountability process. There have been times when members have, tongue-in-cheek, asked why the minister does not simply table those lever-arch files if they are of such importance? One wonders the cost to the taxpayer of Western Australia for the preparation of these files that are essentially never really used or referred to. It remains a concern of mine that we continue to see year in and year out this display of lack of accountability and lack of responsible government from the members opposite.

Members also will be aware that there is an opportunity immediately after the budget estimates process for a number of matters to be responded to in the sense of having been taken on notice or, alternatively, because members have lodged supplementary questions. As a result, we then receive responses from the government.

**Consideration of report postponed, pursuant to standing orders.**

**Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, pursuant to standing orders.**