

*Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations — Eighty-fifth report —  
Consideration of the 2021–22 budget estimates — Motion*

Resumed from 23 March on the following motion moved by Hon Peter Collier —

That the report be noted.

**Hon Dr STEVE THOMAS:** I have a full three minutes to recap where we were at with debate on this committee report. I spent some time a couple of weeks ago saying that the improvements in the operations of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations were excellent. The work it has done is fantastic. The more it moves along a model to a Senate-style estimates process, the better it is in my view. I would encourage it to continue down this path of true accountability. I have to say that it is probably the only serious accountability mechanism left in the Parliament, which is incredibly lopsided. Unfortunately, we do not have the level of scrutiny in the chamber that we used to have in the previous Parliament when the numbers were very even. It was up to each side, the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, to work with the crossbench to try to garner the numbers to get things through. I note the frequent times that members of the Greens WA—the one party that is left of the Labor Party—voted with the opposition because they were determined to hold the Labor Party to account. That occurred frequently. Hon Kyle McGinn knows well how often that occurred because he was sitting on the other side of the chamber. The Greens did that because they wanted to hold the government to account. Sadly, after the last election, that level of scrutiny and accountability was lost, to the detriment of the Parliament of Western Australia and to the detriment of the community and the people of Western Australia who no longer have that level of scrutiny—that gold standard that the Premier promised us all the way back in the lead-up to the 2017 election. We know that he recently qualified his position, sort of in the manner that I suspect the Attorney General will be doing in a couple of days. The Premier qualified his position in Sydney; there is a bit of a trend here. He said that sometimes there would be a gold standard of accountability; it would happen on occasions. I am very pleased that it would happen on occasions and I suspect that the only time I have seen those occasions in any serious way has been in the operations of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations of the Legislative Council. It is a magnificent outcome. That committee has done fantastic work and I would urge it, for the sake of Western Australia and its people, to continue its work.

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