



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

2018-19 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS – ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

Department of Water and Environmental Regulation

Hon Robin Chapple MLC asked:

1) I refer to the Budget Paper 2, Division 39, Part 10 and ask:

- a) with reference to the fourth dot point on page 553, what are the expected improved outcomes from offsets through the Pilbara Environment Offsets Fund;

Answer: The previous approach of delivering individual offsets projects in the Pilbara delivered small, disconnected projects, rather than large and connected projects that can deliver greater benefits and/or nested projects that address multiple values.

To date, proponents have only been able to undertake offset projects on land they can access – on their own pastoral leases or conservation lands. This has limited offset projects from being deployed in the most beneficial places. The Fund, administered by the Government, allows for projects to be delivered across tenure.

- b) with reference to the first table on page 561 under the headline 'Environmental Impact Assessment Service to the EPA', is it correct that there will be four fewer Full Time Employees (FTEs) to conduct environmental impact assessments for the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) in 2018-19 than there were in 2016-17;

Answer: Yes.

- c) if no to (b), why not;

Answer: Not applicable.

- d) if yes to (b), how will this affect the EPA's ability to assess proposals, given the first dot point on page 553 of the same Budget Paper states there will be an estimated 75% increase in proposals requiring assessment by the EPA in 2018-19 relative to 2016-17;

Answer: The reduction in FTEs will be partially offset by the additional support to the EPA from other Services within the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

- e) with reference to the second table on page 561 under the headline 'Environmental Management Services to the EPA', is it correct that there will be four fewer FTEs to develop statutory policies, guidelines and strategic advice for the EPA in 2018-19 than there were in 2016-17;

Answer: Yes

- f) if no to (e), why not; and

Answer: Not applicable.

- g) if yes to (e), how will this affect the EPA's ability to develop policies, guidelines and strategic advice?

Answer: The reduction in FTEs will be partially offset by the additional support to the EPA from other Services within the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C. L. R.', located in the lower right quadrant of the page.