



**THIRTY-NINTH PARLIAMENT**

**REPORT 57**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND  
FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

**BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS 2013-14**

Presented by Hon Ken Travers MLC (Chair)

December 2015

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

### Date first appointed:

30 June 2005

### Terms of Reference:

The following is an extract from Schedule 1 of the Legislative Council Standing Orders:

#### “3. Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations

3.1 An *Estimates and Financial Operations Committee* is established.

3.2 The Committee consists of 5 Members, 3 of whom shall be non-government Members.

3.3 The functions of the Committee are to –

(a) consider and report on –

(i) the estimates of expenditure laid before the Council each year;

(ii) any matter relating to the financial administration of the State; and

(iii) any bill or other matter relating to the foregoing functions referred by the Council;

and

(b) consult regularly with the Auditor General.”

### Members:

Hon Ken Travers MLC (Chair)

Hon Peter Katsambanis MLC (Deputy Chair)

Hon Rick Mazza MLC

Hon Alanna Clohesy MLC

Hon Liz Behjat MLC

Hon Martin Aldridge MLC

(appointed 9 September 2015)

(until 5 September 2015)

### Staff:

Michael Ryan (Advisory Officer)

Andrew Hawkes (Advisory Officer)

(since 24 November 2014)

Kate McConigley (Advisory Officer)

Mark Warner (Committee Clerk)

(until 27 February 2015)

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## REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

### IN RELATION TO THE BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS 2013-14

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#### **1 REFERENCE AND PROCEDURE**

##### **The Committee's function of expenditure review**

- 1.1 It is a function of the Estimates and Financial Operations Committee (Committee) to consider and report to the Legislative Council (Council) on the estimates of expenditure laid before the Council each year and any matter relating to the financial administration of the State.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 Government revenue goes into the Consolidated Account, which is the major source of funding for the State public sector.<sup>2</sup> The Government's estimates of expenditure for a financial year comprise the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Bills and the supporting documentation (Budget Papers). These are presented to Parliament on an annual basis to enable the Government to access or appropriate money from the Consolidated Account to fund expenditure by the Government over a given financial year.<sup>3</sup> Government agencies are required to table annual reports in the Parliament each year.
- 1.3 Under its terms of reference, the Committee conducts Budget Estimates Hearings and Agency Annual Report Hearings each year.
- 1.4 This report relates to the Annual Hearings held in relation to the Budget Estimates for 2013-14.<sup>4</sup>

##### **The Committee's approach**

- 1.5 The Committee adopted a Budget Estimates Hearings approach for its consideration of the estimates of expenditure laid before the Council each year over four consecutive days, 24 to 27 September 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> Term of reference 3.3(a).

<sup>2</sup> The major revenue sources for the Western Australian Government include taxes, imposts, fines, rates, duties, royalties and Commonwealth Government grants: *Constitution Act 1889*, section 64 and the *Financial Management Act 2006*, section 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Constitution Act 1889*, section 72.

<sup>4</sup> The 2013-14 Budget Statements were tabled in the Legislative Council on 8 August 2013. The Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Capital 2013-14 Bill 2013 and the Appropriation (Consolidated Account) Recurrent 2013-14 Bill 2013 were assented to on 21 October 2013.

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## **2 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS**

- 2.1 To assist the Committee in determining which agencies to examine, the Committee corresponded with all Members.
- 2.2 The Committee sought to give priority to the portfolios of the Ministers in the Council.
- 2.3 Details of the hearings were placed on the parliamentary website ([www.parliament.wa.gov.au](http://www.parliament.wa.gov.au)).
- 2.4 The Budget Estimates Hearings were held between 24 and 27 September 2013. The Committee held hearings with the following agencies:
- Department of Education
  - Horizon Power
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Health
  - Forrest Products Commission
  - Water Corporation
  - Potato Marketing Corporation
  - WA Police
  - Department of Fire and Emergency Services
  - Department of Parks and Wildlife and Swan River Trust
  - Insurance Commission of Western Australia.
- 2.5 The hearings were conducted in accordance with the Committee's Procedure Policy.
- 2.6 All Members were notified of the hearings and invited to participate.
- 2.7 All of the hearings were public and the proceedings were recorded by *Hansard*. Transcripts of the hearings are posted on the Committee's website.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> [Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations website](#) Viewed 30 October 2015.

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**Questions on notice**

- 2.8 In accordance with the Procedure Policy, the Committee invited Members to submit questions on notice prior to the hearings. A number of Members submitted questions on notice prior to the hearings and the answers were provided to the Members prior to the hearings.
- 2.9 During the Budget Estimates Hearings a number of questions were taken on notice.
- 2.10 Where a Member was unable to ask all their questions in the scheduled time, they were provided with the opportunity to submit un-asked questions in writing at the end of the hearing.
- 2.11 Copies of the questions and answers can be found on the Committee's web page.<sup>6</sup>

**3 FEEDBACK**

- 3.1 The Committee sought feedback on the Budget Estimates Hearings, distributing a questionnaire to all Members. The Committee received a limited number of completed questionnaires, which were positive in nature.

**Committee comment**

- 3.2 The Committee was pleased with the conduct of the hearings, the level of attendance at the hearings and Member participation. A good cross-section of questions were asked by both government and non-government Members and a large number of issues were canvassed in the course of the proceedings.
- 3.3 The Committee is committed to continually reviewing and refining its processes to ensure that effective and worthwhile estimates processes are conducted. To this end, the Committee will continue to consult with Members to improve the process.



**Hon Ken Travers MLC**  
**Chair**

**Date: 3 December 2015**

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.