

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

BUDGET STATEMENTS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
MONDAY, 27 JULY 2009**

SESSION TWO

Members

**Hon Giz Watson (Chair)
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Ken Travers
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich**

Hearing commenced at 11.53 am**MUNRO, MR EDWARD**

**Management Accountant, Heritage Council of Western Australia,
sworn and examined:**

GILMAN, MR JOEL

**Legal Officer, Heritage Council of Western Australia,
sworn and examined:**

CARRICK, MR STEPHEN

**Manager Conservation and Assessment, Heritage Council of Western Australia,
sworn and examined:**

ARNOLD, MRS ANNE

**Deputy Chair, Heritage Council of Western Australia,
6004, sworn and examined:**

SIEKIERKA, MRS SHERYL

**Acting Chief of Staff, Minister for Heritage,
sworn and examined:**

The CHAIR: Good morning and welcome to the committee hearing. Before we begin, I am required to ask you to undertake an oath or an affirmation. Renae will assist you with the words there.

[Witnesses took the oath or affirmation]

The CHAIR: You would have signed a document entitled "Information for Witnesses". Have you read and understood this document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: The proceedings are being reported by Hansard and a transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. To assist the committee and to assist Hansard, we request that you please quote the full title of any document you refer to during the course of this hearing for the record, and please be aware of the microphones and try to talk directly into them. I remind you that your transcript will become a matter for the public record. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request the evidence be taken in closed session. If the committee grants your request, any public or media in attendance will be excluded from the hearing. Please note that until such time as the transcript of your public evidence is finalised, it should not be made public. I advise you that premature publication or disclosure of an uncorrected transcript may constitute a contempt of Parliament and may mean that the material published or disclosed is not subject to parliamentary privilege.

It would assist if members could refer to the *Budget Statements* volumes, page numbers, items, programs and amounts in preface to their questions. We might start and I might ask whether members have questions they would like to lead off with.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes. I refer to the total cost of services on pages 838 and 839 of the *Budget Statements*. Given that page 839 states that demand for grant assistance as an effective

conservation incentive for significant places will grow, what is the likely impact of this cut, if you like, from last year to this year on the heritage budget? What is the likely impact in real terms on heritage in WA?

Mr Carrick: I will respond to that question. What seems like a budget cut is actually the Carnarvon jetty, One Mile Jetty, one-off grant that was in last year's budget; it is not in this year's budget.

The CHAIR: I have a question that relates to the controlled grants and subsidies on page 842. The budget for the heritage grants program is to be reduced from \$900 000 in 2008-09 to \$700 000 in 2009-10, and is projected to increase to \$1 million in 2010-11. Is the reduction being used by local government and tourism activities; and, if so, what is the justification for reducing the grants scheme?

Mrs Arnold: The way we look at these grants is that we actually have got \$1 million. Just after I arrived at the Heritage Council, council took a decision that we were very constrained during the year once grants had been allocated, by having no money and no flexibility if we had some kind of urgent requirement to allocate funds to a property owner who needed assistance. So we divided the grants into \$100 000 for conservation incentive grants so that we could have that flexibility during the year once the grants were allocated. Then the \$200 000—which is actually \$160 000 in the figures that you are looking at because \$40 000 has actually gone into programs—is in order for us to fulfil our obligations to local government. So the \$700 000 plus \$100 000 plus \$200 000 actually makes up the \$1 million, which was shown in previous years.

The CHAIR: So there is no reduction in the grants scheme then?

Mrs Arnold: No. We have just chosen to allocate it in a way that we believe gives us more opportunities to assist people in an appropriate time, and particularly to help local government fulfil and really be able to contribute to conservation and heritage in Western Australia.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I just have a follow-on question. How much was expended in total grants last year?

Mr Munro: The actual figure that was expended in 2008-09 was \$3 287 205.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Okay. Is it possible to get a schedule of where the grants were made and what the grants were for effectively?

Mr Carrick: Yes.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Is it okay for the committee to have that? It would give us a bit of an idea.

Mr Carrick: Yes, certainly.

[Supplementary Information No B1.]

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: In addition to that, could we perhaps get an outline of the ones that have been budgeted for in 2009-10—the grants programs? Is that possible as well?

Mr Carrick: I will answer that. We are just going through the evaluation stage of the grants at the moment; so they will be presented to our Heritage Council meeting on 14 August before being released to the minister and then being announced. So we are actually in that process at the moment for this current financial year.

Mrs Siekierka: So we expect an announcement to be made in September of the 2009-10 grants.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I will ask another question? I do not know where to find it in the budget, but it is on this issue of people just knocking down houses, whether they be small houses or big houses, that are deemed to be of heritage significance. One of the issues that arises is this question of penalty and whether in fact any increase in penalty may not act as a better deterrent. I am just wondering what the council's view in respect of that might be.

[12 noon]

Mrs Siekierka: That is a policy matter, therefore it is not appropriate that the agency answer, but the matter is under review.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Okay. If the matter is under review, are you representing the minister in this case?

Mrs Siekierka: To some extent, but I am not able to speak for the government.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Do you know when that review will be completed?

Mrs Siekierka: No.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I am not sure where I might find this, but how many properties are currently on the heritage register; and, of those, how many have been on the register for over 12 months?

Mr Carrick: I cannot give the exact figures in terms of those that have been on the register for over 12 months—we would need to research that—but there are approximately 1 290 places on the state register at the moment.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: How many of those are assessed in a year?

Mr Carrick: Currently our indicator is to look at 50 assessments in a year.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Could we please get that as a supplementary?

The CHAIR: Yes.

[*Supplementary Information No B2.*]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I guess that the definition of “heritage” goes to the heart of this, because we have local governments that have their own municipal registers. We also have the Heritage Council, which has a register, and we have a national heritage register. It seems to me that one of the issues in respect of heritage is that the heritage values and qualities can vary between those three tiers of government—that is, different levels of government may have different criteria for what they deem to be heritage. Has the Heritage Council done any work with the commonwealth or with the state government in trying to better define what we mean by heritage, and, in doing so, to limit the variances, which are such that we sometimes end up in colossal fights? If I can take The Cliffe, for example —

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: That is not on the heritage register.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That is a different point. The point that I would like to make is that with The Cliffe, the Triffids were there and a number of band members played there. It is deemed by some people to have heritage status in terms of not only building heritage but also cultural heritage. There are also residences that have been occupied by very important people in this state. One example is John Curtin house in Cottesloe. That is deemed to be important nationally because he was a national leader. However, it is also about a very important person to the state, so it is very important to a different group of individuals. There seems to be some inconsistency in terms of what some people think is important and other people think is not important. Has any work been done to try to better define and get agreement on what should be important right across the board between the three tiers of government?

Mr Carrick: If I could respond to that, there has been ongoing work with the commonwealth government. As you might remember, there is a register of the national estate, which was actually put in place by the commonwealth government quite a long time ago. That register actually had no jurisdiction; it could include a place of local significance as well as a place of state significance, and it could also include a place of national significance. So Fremantle Prison could sit on that register, as well as quite an attractive place within Fremantle that might be important just to Fremantle people. The commonwealth has actually worked with the states to create its national register, which

is about places that have national values. The state register is about places that have state values, and hopefully the local register is about places that have local values. The constant within all that is the criteria, which are endorsed by ICOMOS in the Burra Charter and which go across the aesthetic, scientific and other particular values that you would be aware of. So those criteria are applied, and then how they are actually important to each jurisdiction. That is followed through at the local level, at the state level and also at the national level. There are still overlaps, and I think that is what you are alluding to.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: This is really about limiting the overlaps.

Mr Carrick: That is where a lot of the debate actually occurs. Yes, there could be more discussion with the commonwealth about those sorts of things, but certainly documentation is provided so that it is aware of what is on the state register and what values that has and how that is applied, and the statements of significance. The commonwealth has addressed this matter through the national register, and the places that go on that are places that are of outstanding value to the nation.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: In some ways I would be more concerned about the overlap between local government and the state government. I think that would be the one that would be easier to deal with, because often what happens is something goes onto the municipal register and there is debate about whether it should be on that register or off that register, and it may well then be considered or not considered by the state register. So I think that perhaps it is at that level that the Heritage Council could consider doing some finetuning, under the authority of the minister, naturally.

Mr Carrick: The new unit within the Heritage Council—I call it a unit, but it is two people—is actually addressing that through a local government and ensuring that better resources are made available to local government. A lot of the time it is actually about getting accurate information so that there is consistency within the municipal inventory reviews that are occurring and so that people can understand the different levels that can occur and that you can have a municipal inventory and then you can have an actual heritage list attached to the town planning scheme. Those sorts of different levels really need to be appreciated. Of course local governments have lots of pressure on them, so we have tried to provide people in that particular area, and they are constantly meeting with local government and providing online resources now to address that issue so that they are getting good quality information about those differences and how they can approach their reviews.

The CHAIR: I have a question that relates to the annual report. The report states that the Heritage Council has been given funding to promote tourism. Why are these resources not better leveraged through existing programs within Tourism Western Australia rather than by the Heritage Council?

Mr Carrick: The Heritage Council has been part of a heritage tourism strategy, in association with tourism. Obviously heritage is one part of tourism, but it is a part that we feel strongly about. We have found that the best way is to divert some resources into this area to make sure that it remains a focus within the overall tourism industry.

The CHAIR: How much money has been allocated in the last two budgets for maintenance and preservation of heritage places in the Cossack town site?

Mr Carrick: An amount of \$120 000 has been previously provided and is also in the forward estimates for Cossack. That is for assisting the Shire of Roebourne with the maintenance of Cossack. It does not meet, according to the Shire of Roebourne, anywhere near the amount that gets put into it, but that is the commitment that has been made within the budget.

The CHAIR: How much of the money that has been allocated in the last two budgets for maintenance and preservation of the Cossack town site has been spent on maintenance and preservation of heritage places, and on what items has that money been spent within Cossack?

Mr Carrick: All the money is provided to the Shire of Roebourne. All that money is going towards that. It is paid on the receipt of the invoices that are directed towards maintenance costs.

The CHAIR: Perhaps it is too much to ask for that to be itemised now —

Mr Carrick: Thank you very much!

The CHAIR: However, could that be made available as a supplementary?

Mr Carrick: Yes.

[Supplementary Information No B3.]

The CHAIR: Why is the Heritage Council being funded to do conservation work and property management at the Cossack town site when that is not the role of the Heritage Council but rather the role of the Department of Treasury and Finance as building management works, or of the National Trust? In light of the answer to the previous question, are you saying that the works are undertaken by the shire?

Mr Carrick: Yes.

The CHAIR: So the shire is the only body that is doing that onsite work?

Mr Carrick: Yes. There is a lease agreement with the shire.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Can you then also confirm that the moneys that are set aside for that expenditure by the Shire of Roebourne are going only to the care and maintenance of those properties in Cossack and are not used for a commercial purpose? I know that a couple of businesses are run out of Cossack. I am wondering who pays for the maintenance of those places that they occupy. Is that part of what they have to do?

[12.15 pm]

Mr Carrick: It is a registered site, so the 120 000 that is referred to there in the estimates would go to all of the buildings.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I will just follow on from the question you asked. I am trying to work out how you determine those heritage projects that get funded through the Heritage Council and those that do not. For instance, there is a range of other heritage projects and other jetties which have heritage value across regional Western Australia. The Carnarvon jetty gets funding from you but the others do not. How is that determined?

Mr Carrick: The Carnarvon jetty was a one-off state government grant that was provided. The other one, for private owners, is through the Heritage Council grants program. Other projects of heritage value for the community are funded through Lotterywest.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: But there are things like the Busselton jetty. I think just about every town has a heritage jetty listed. I am just intrigued to try to work out how it is determined those that will be funded. In the case of Busselton, it is funded through the South West Development Commission. I am trying to work out: is there a policy that determines where a project gets funded or is it just a decision of the cabinet?

Mr Carrick: I do not think I can answer that. There are one-off grants that are actually made that the Heritage Council administers. However, if they do not fit within the heritage grants program, in terms of private ownership, then the Heritage Council cannot fund them.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Is that because you have put up a submission?

Mrs Siekierka: No. It was a policy decision of the previous government, your government, to fund the Carnarvon jetty. That is very much a policy decision by whichever government is in power at the time. It is not an operational matter for the Heritage Council. They only administer the grant once a decision is made by government.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: So you do not put up the submission as the Heritage Council asking for funding for those projects?

Mr Carrick: No.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Nor provide any references or that kind of thing? I am thinking of New Norcia, for example, a place which is a heritage icon.

The CHAIR: Have they got a jetty there!

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: It is a long jetty! We would all regard that as a heritage icon, of course! They need heaps of funds, of course, because it is so huge! Do you offer any reference to potential funders in a case like that? Back to Hon Ken Travers' point before, do you offer any assistance at all in supporting or saying, "This is a heritage icon of Western Australia; therefore, it justifies funding from one body or another"?

Mr Carrick: Yes, we do. In the case of New Norcia, we have supported allocations from the federal government to New Norcia, to their conservation program that they have running there. Obviously we provide assistance wherever we can in terms of the significance of a particular place; whether it is on the state register or not on the state register, or any information we have in terms of our library—so conservation plans, reports that have been prepared.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: You play a supportive role in those kinds of circumstances?

Mr Carrick: Absolutely.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: That is good.

The CHAIR: I have a further question as to whether there is an allocation in the budget to allow government agencies to identify, care for and maintain heritage places on pastoral lands that are under the Department of Environment and Conservation estates. Is there any provision for that?

Mr Carrick: I am not aware of any, but that does not mean there is not any.

Mrs Siekierka: The heritage grants that are made are for private owners.

The CHAIR: So they would not be pastoral —

Mrs Siekierka: So the heritage grant program does not apply, as I understand it.

The CHAIR: Because they are lessees?

Mrs Siekierka: Because they are not the owners of the property.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Who does? There are some, what I would classify as very special heritage buildings in that spatial country up there. Who looks after that? Are they on any register at all?

Mr Carrick: There would be obviously some of them on the state register.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: So they can be put on the register even though they are on leasehold property?

Mr Carrick: Absolutely.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: But there would not be any funding coming out?

Mr Carrick: There is no specific funding under the Heritage Council, no.

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: Under any circumstances?

Mr Carrick: I would not say that, but there has not been a history of funding.

The CHAIR: There is the potential that there are heritage buildings that would not be receiving funding. You have got an issue that there is nobody you can identify to give the money to—is that fundamentally the problem?

Mr Carrick: I think that is fundamentally the problem, yes.

The CHAIR: Would it be safe to say then that any heritage buildings that are on pastoral leases, that are under DEC management, would not be receiving any money, or will you take that on notice and check that?

Mr Carrick: Yes, I would prefer to do that.

[Supplementary Information No B4.]

Hon PHILIP GARDINER: My question is in relation to page 840, and the average cost of place assessments in the table under “Efficiency Indicators”. My question is about whether, in the industry, people do assessments on a pro bono basis. Is there an effective cost which is not included in that number as a result of voluntary work by architects, heritage architects or that kind of thing, or is it full fee charge?

Mr Carrick: It is full fee charge, but I might ask Mr Munro to clarify that.

Mr Munro: The costs that are included are direct costs within the agency, specifically associated with the assessment area. But there are also the indirect costs, which are the corporate services or business services-type costs. There is no cost added on for a voluntary-type activity.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is the average. But what would be the upper range of the costs that you spend on assessments in that area for the cost of place assessments? What would be the highest you would ever spend on that?

Mr Carrick: Obviously there are a number of factors—where the particular place is and what specific expertise would be required. A typical team is an historian and an architect—one to look at the documentary and one to look at the physical evidence. For instance, if it is a bridge, you may well be looking at different sorts of expertise in terms of engineering expertise. A typical place assessment has obviously increased. Without trying to give vague figures, we have obviously on record what those costs are. I would be prepared to provide those, if that assists.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am looking at the range. I guess a classic example, which has had media headlines of late, is The Cliffe. What would have been the costs incurred in seeking consultants’ advice on The Cliffe as a heritage property over the years?

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: It is not on the Heritage List.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: It has been, though.

Mr Carrick: There are initial costs for us, which are the costs of assessments, which I thought the question was referring to.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Yes, it is.

Mr Carrick: That can be provided in terms of what is a typical cost for a particular place to engage professionals to prepare the documentation.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am looking more at the range. We have got the average costs; I am looking at the range of costs. Do some come in at a couple of hundred dollars and others come in at tens of thousands of dollars, or are they all around that average price of \$3 000, now \$3 900 and going up to \$5 900?

Mrs Siekierka: What we will do is we will undertake to give you the cheapest and the most expensive in the last financial year, 2008-09.

Mr Carrick: If I can further clarify—a place can be defined as an individual place as well as a precinct. Obviously there is an increased cost for a precinct which comprises a number of individual buildings.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: That is why I am trying to get an idea of what the range of the costs are. I imagine some might be very cheap and some might be quite expensive.

The CHAIR: I wanted to check with the member: did you want to limit your inquiry to the last financial year or would you like to have a broader time frame? What was the extent of your question?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I am happy with the last financial year.

[Supplementary Information No B5.]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I have a very interesting question, I think. The first part of it is: how many passenger or commercial vehicles do you have?

Mr Carrick: In the Heritage Council?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes.

Mr Carrick: Two.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Has any official instruction been received from the government for you to reduce your fleet by 10 per cent over the forward estimates?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: You cannot even go to seven wheels!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I am wondering what you are going to give up!

Mrs Siekierka: The spare tyre!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Have you received that information?

Mr Carrick: Yes.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: How are you going to reduce it by 10 per cent?

Mr Carrick: I do not know.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: What about one wheel and two cylinders!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I think that is enough.

The CHAIR: Any further serious questions?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: I would be interested in the amount that the council has spent over the years on The Cliffe in terms of seeking advice on The Cliffe. You can take that on notice, unless you have it at hand.

Mr Carrick: No, I do not have it at hand.

Mrs Siekierka: That could be complicated. The figures may not be available for that.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: As far back as you are able to. I do not expect you to go digging up every archive box you have got, but if there was a key study done, then obviously the key study, but also any other advice or consultants' reports you have had in terms of the overall cost of The Cliffe.

[Supplementary Information No B6.]

The CHAIR: Thank you very much for your time. I appreciate that.

Hearing concluded at 12.26 pm