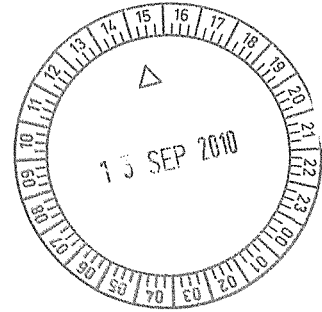


PUBLIC



13 September 2010

Hon Giz Watson MLC
Chair
Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations
Parliament House
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Watson,

I refer to your correspondence dated 6 September 2010, seeking a response to a number of questions on notice relating to the Legislative Council estimates hearing. The following information is provided in response to those questions.

I would be pleased to expand on any of these responses during the course of my appearance before your Committee.

Legislative Council - decrease in funding for support for Committee activities

1. *I refer to page 44 "Significant Issues Impacting the Agency and page 45 "Explanation of Significant Movements", which indicate that the number of Committees has increased by one, but the funding for support of Committee activities has reduced by \$198,000, and that this reflects a reduction in service provision rather than in improved efficiencies. Last year the Clerk gave evidence that the three percent efficiency dividend does not apply to the Legislative Council, so what is the basis of the new budget constraints?*

I confirm that the Department of the Legislative Council was not subject to the three percent efficiency dividend instituted by the government.

The budget constraints are not new, but rather part of a continuing trend whereby the recurrent funding being provided to the Department of the Legislative Council is insufficient to meet demand requirements. Much of the Department's expenditure is assigned to 'fixed costs', such as staff salaries and lease costs for the Legislative Council Committee Office. Given this, the insufficient funding impacts particularly on expenditure areas such as Committee support, including the provision of specialist staffing and advice, and investigative travel.

2. *Has the Legislative Assembly been required to reduce its service provision to a similar extent?*

I am unable to comment upon the operations of the Legislative Assembly.

3. *If no to (2), why not?*

see answer to (2).

4. *To what extent (if any) is investigative travel able to be replaced by Committee hearings conducted via telephone link or video link?*

The extent to which telephone/video conferencing may be used by Committees as an alternative to investigative travel is initially a matter for the individual Committees and their needs. Where Committees seek to receive oral evidence from a witness outside of Perth, the use of this technology is a genuine option. However, Committees conduct investigative travel for a range of purposes, including viewing facilities/infrastructure in person and attending conferences, for which there is no alternative to physical attendance by the Members.

5. *Where investigative travel can be replaced by telephone link or video link, what is the estimated cost saving?*

It is not possible to quantify the savings that might be made by greater use of this technology, as this is dependent upon the activities of the Committees.

Legislative Council - waste reduction - paper

6. *Last year the Clerk of the Legislative Council gave evidence that Parliament is way behind local governments in how it utilises technology as an alternative to paper. How much progress has been made on this in the past year?*

The Department continues to pro-actively explore options to reduce paper usage. This includes improving the provision of documents in user-friendly, electronic form to Members for House and Committee activities, and monitoring technological developments, including equipment such as iPads, that might be used as part of this service delivery.

The use of paper by the Department is in large part driven by the demand requirements of its Members. Given this, ongoing paper usage reduction is dependent upon increasing the Department's capacity to deliver electronic material to Members, and Members increasing their acceptance of receiving this material in an electronic form.

7. *How much paper has been saved as a result?*

The Department is unable to quantify any savings arising from its activities in this area.

8. *How much further can the Legislative Council go on this?*

see answer to (6).

9. *What strategies are in place to further reduce paper waste?*

see answer to (6).

Parliamentary Services (Building Services) - waste reduction – energy

10. *I refer to the energy management plan. Is energy consumption still being monitored?*

Yes, energy consumption is still being monitored.

11. *If no to (10), why not?*

not applicable.

12. *If yes to (10):*

(a) *what energy inefficiencies have been identified from energy consumption data?*

Whilst the energy consumption data that we have available is insufficient to provide much guidance, we consider the main energy inefficiencies are related to old equipment such as air conditioning and lack of control, and catering refrigeration equipment.

(b) *what strategies (apart from solar hot water panels for the main hot water system, which I will refer to separately) are in place to increase energy efficiency?*

With regard to the catering equipment, we have increased the size of the main cool room and freezer, replaced their old inefficient refrigeration equipment and reduced the number of free-standing catering fridges and freezers.

We have been unsuccessful to date in our funding requests for the upgrade of the air conditioning systems.

We are also about to start a programme of replacing our low energy compact fluorescent fittings with new LED lights.

(c) *how successful have those energy efficiency strategies been?*

In order to provide accurate information on what savings we have actually achieved we would need to install and monitor 'real-time' a number of meters throughout the building.

13. *Have the solar hot water panels for the main hot water system been installed yet as referred to in the 2008/09 annual report?*

Yes, the Solar Hot Water Panels that preheat the hot water supply to the Gym and Kitchen are now installed.

14. *If yes to (13), what has been the impact of that on energy consumption?*

The Hot Water Solar Panels were sized to contribute 100% of the total hot water requirement, in the Catering and Gym areas, for the month of January and should provide a payback in the order of 10 years.

15. *If no to (13), how far has this matter progressed?*

not applicable.

Parliamentary Services (Building Services) - waste reduction – water

16. *I refer to the water management plan. Is water consumption being monitored?*

Yes, water consumption is still being monitored.

17. *If no to (16), why not?*

not applicable.

18. *If yes to (16):*

- (a) *how successful have the measures installed last year (installed rain water sensors in the irrigation system and a bore water meter in the bore, converted scheme water irrigation on Hay Street to bore water and installed flow restrictors to tap ware in Parliament House) been in decreasing water consumption?*

In the absence of specific metering, only the overall reduction in water use can be used as an indication of the possible impact of the introduction of those measures. Water consumption figures for Parliament House and 1 Harvest Terrace for Scheme, Bore, and Bottled water over the last two years are:

Scheme Water (Kilolitres)	Financial Year	
Location	2008/09	2009/10
Parliament House	8,408	8,275
Library 1 Harvest Tce	324	221
Total	8,732	8,496

(3%) reduction

Bore Water (Kilolitres)	Financial Year	
Location	2008/09	2009/10
Parliament House	26,827	24,978

(7%) reduction

Drinking Water (No. of 15L Bottles)	Financial Year	
Location	2008/09	2009/10
Parliament House & Library	1,326	500

(62%) reduction

- (b) *what if any water inefficiencies have been identified from water consumption data?*

We will continue to adopt the 'industry proven' approach to achieve further reductions, such as replace exotic plants with natives, monitor for water leaks and carry out regular inspections of the water services systems.

- (c) *what if any further strategies are in place to increase water efficiency?*

Improvements on water consumption efficiency will depend on the availability of funds and resources. The following list provides some guidance as to our principal objectives:

- Install sub-meters into high water usage areas to enable us to monitor changes in demand and provide feedback to units that have high consumption;
- During procurement, insist on high efficiency rated appliances and equipment under Australia's water efficiency labelling scheme;
- Provide rainwater storage in any future designs;
- An education programme to Staff and Members to encourage sustainable practices is about to commence.

Legislative Council and Parliamentary Services Department - member ratings

19. *From last year's evidence, I understand that the ratings are based on the surveys members fill out, or not, in some cases. What was the most recent Council response rate to the surveys?*

For the Legislative Council members' survey, 21 responses were received.

For the Parliamentary Services Department's survey, 8 responses were received from Legislative Council members that were self identified, plus another 7 responses that did not identify a Chamber.

20. *Last year the Executive Manager Parliamentary Services gave evidence that the Office of the Auditor General was going to be approached about whether the survey could be modified to satisfy the Auditor General's requirements and to provide more meaningful data. Has the Office of the Auditor General been approached yet?*

Yes.

21. *If yes to (20):*

- (a) *what if any modifications have been suggested by the Auditor General?*

This question appears to relate to evidence where the PSD EM stated "Invariably, the inherent difficult with surveys is the response rate". He went on to explain that OAG had made comment about the response rate (in that it was low) and that we would discuss with them how we could satisfy their requirements to provide more meaningful data.

OAG made three suggestions, one was to include an incentive to respondents for completing the survey, the second was to distribute the surveys electronically, and the third was to include a "read receipt" on the email containing the survey link so that the number of receipts could be used as the base number of received surveys and responses would form a percentage of that base. OAG also tested our methodology and the analysis process to ensure it was valid.

- (b) *what is the reason for each suggested modification?*

Suggestions have related to increasing the response rate rather than modifying the survey content or structure.

- (c) *have all of the suggested modifications been taken up?*

Yes.

22. *If no to (21)(c), why not?*

not applicable.

Parliamentary Services (Library)

23. *How does the staffing level of the Parliamentary Library compare with Parliamentary libraries in other States?*

Comparative Library Staffing Levels

	ACT	APL	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
Number of MPs	17	226	135	25	89	69	40	128	95
Library Staff (FTE)	4.6	136.9	23	1	28.6	10	10.35	24	9.8
Staff devoted to research	0	78.9	5	0	10	5	5	4	0

24. *How many briefing documents, if any, on particular subjects are prepared each year?*

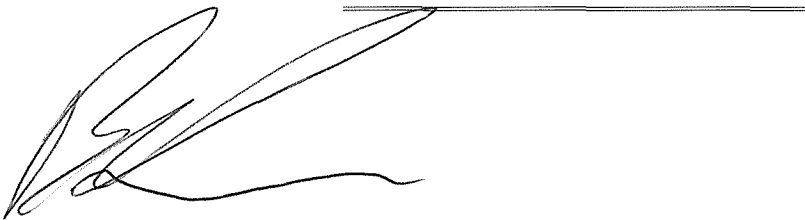
The Library does not produce briefing documents, however it does produce a subject based 'In the Spotlight' page which brings together articles, reports and news items on a particular subject which can be accessed on POWAnet. There have been 16 of these pages produced since 1st July 2009.

The Library also commissions Data Analysis Australia to produce statistical analysis documents twice yearly:

- Estimates of Unemployment Statistics by Electorate
- Estimates of Crime Statistics by Electorate

25. *Who makes the decision on what subjects are covered through more detailed briefing documents?*

Topics for 'In the Spotlight' pages are decided by Library staff based on Member queries, feedback, impending legislation or current topical issues.



HON. BARRY HOUSE MLC
PRESIDENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL