

Hansard

Legislative Assembly Budget Estimates Committee A

1 June 2010

Dr M.D. NAHAN: The sixth dot point on page 75 states —

... the Immigration Detention Centre on Christmas Island require the Department to support Government in its negotiations ...

Is that a big impost on the state in terms of providing all those services; and does the Premier expect substantial growth in the expenditure requirements in provision for the, I guess, unauthorised boat arrivals?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Western Australia, as the member probably knows, does provide services to Christmas Island and Cocos (Keeling) Islands, neither of which I have visited; I do not know whether the member has. The state runs education and health services there; Western Australian law applies in those areas; and at one stage I understand the commonwealth was contemplating basically handing them over to Western Australia. That is something that Western Australia should seriously consider. Obviously Christmas Island has a particular issue at the moment with the detention centre, or asylum centre—whatever it is called—overflowing; so that is a complication.

My own view is that we could take a greater administrative role on those islands. They will always be Australian territories. Various agencies within government basically run the islands and provide the services. We provide teachers, hospital staff, police officers and the like. As to the cost of it, I ask the director general, if he can, to add anything to that.

Mr P.F. Conran: I do not have the specific cost, but I can provide that by way of supplementary information. I can say that we have got about 45 service delivery arrangements between the state and commonwealth. We recoup about 109 per cent of the cost of that. I want to have a review of that. I am not sure that that reflects sufficiently the amount of time that some agencies take to deal with the issues. There are increasing burdens in relation to requests because there are increasing numbers of people at Christmas Island.

We have a dedicated area that looks at that matter; it comprises two people. They spend the whole time negotiating with the commonwealth and dealing with our agencies to ensure that the service delivery arrangements are working well.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: My observation is that Western Australia does a very good job, and has for a long time, on those three islands.

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Riverton, do you want to take up the offer of supplementary information?

Dr M.D. NAHAN: Yes, thanks.

The CHAIRMAN: Through the Premier, the director general agrees to provide supplementary information required by the member for Riverton.

[*Supplementary Information No A15.*]