



\$103m bill to shift Libs

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THE cost of relocating Government ministers to plush new offices in West Perth has reached \$103 million, with another \$20 million to spent on Dumas House.

Tender documents reveal taxpayers will foot the bill for more work at Dumas House, which had \$56 million spent on it in 2012 and another \$1.9 million spent last year.

Dumas House is the new base for ministers who were previously in rented offices on St Georges Terrace.

Premier Colin Barnett had new offices built for himself at Hale House in West Perth, at a cost of \$25 million.

Finance Minister Bill Marmion said yesterday the extra work was needed for "safety reasons".

"The original works at the heritage-listed Dumas House involved a base building upgrade and a significant internal

fitout to ensure it complied with building and other codes and provides a working environment up to modern standards," Mr Marmion said.

"The recent contract has

been awarded for external works, required for safety reasons due to the deteriorating facade and structural frame of the building."

Mr Marmion, who is the only minister not located at Dumas House, said the relocation of ministers from the CBD to West Perth was "the

best value for money outcome for the state".

"With the exception of the Premier and the Finance Minister, all ministers have relocated to Dumas House," he said.

"The Premier is located in Hale House and it is expected the Finance Minister will relocate to Dumas House at the expiry of the existing CBD lease in mid-2018."

The new \$20 million outlay comes at a time when the state is heading for a \$3.1 billion deficit and the Government is hav-

ing to implement tough economic measures, like keeping pay rises for public servants at 1.5 per cent.

The State Opposition yesterday criticised the spending.

"The Liberals must explain what the safety issues are and assure taxpayers this money isn't simply being spent on a facelift for their offices," shadow

treasurer Ben Wyatt said.

"The building just had \$56 million spent on it so it's hard to see how there can already be serious structural damage.

"This is a huge amount of taxpayers' money being spent on ministerial offices and yet there are still safety issues.

"You could build seven new primary schools or two new high schools for what the Liberals are spending on the Dumas House makeover.

"There are schools in desperate need of maintenance where classroom ceilings are collapsing yet the Liberals would rather spend millions on upgrades for their ministerial office block."