



Barnett fat cats up 36pc

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THE number of high-paid government bureaucrats has risen 36 per cent in the past five years.

New figures show the senior executive service (SES) has risen from 374 members when Colin Barnett became Premier in 2008, to 455 in 2012, and 511 this year. Their salaries range from \$139,000 to more than \$500,000.

A spokeswoman for the Premier's office said a "ratio of one SES member to every 217 public sector employees is not considered extraordinary".

But Labor leader Mark McGowan said West Australians would be outraged at the growing number of high-paid bureaucrats when Mr Barnett was preaching fiscal restraint.

"Under Colin Barnett, the Government has got top heavy," he said. "Putting on more highly paid public servants is a slap in the face to the thousands of government workers who have been told their incomes will be held to the inflation rate."

The Premier's spokeswoman said numbers were affected by new jobs being created to implement government priorities, the reclassification of jobs based on "work value increases" and the filling of vacancies and staff resignations and retirements.

"In many areas the Government is also competing with the private sector for skilled employees," she said.

Mr McGowan said WA needed fewer "paper shufflers" and more workers on the front line in hospitals and schools.

"WA doesn't need more fat cats," he said. "This is just another example of the misguided priorities of this Government."

"Colin Barnett simply cannot control his spending and the explosion in numbers of the Senior Executive Service is just more proof of his dysfunctional Government that has blown out debt and lost the AAA credit rating."

He said the former Labor government had put a strict limit on the number of senior executives in government.