



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2010-2011**

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2010-2011](#))

**Members:**

**MS M HUNTER (The Chair)**  
**MR Z SESELJA (The Deputy Chair)**  
**MR J HARGREAVES**  
**MS A BRESNAN**  
**MR B SMYTH**

**PROOF TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**THURSDAY, 20 MAY 2010**

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**Secretary to the committee:**  
**Dr S Lilburn (Ph: 6205 0199)**

**By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

## APPEARANCES

<b>Department of Education and Training .....</b>	<b>710</b>
<b>Department of Territory and Municipal Services .....</b>	<b>643</b>

## **Privilege statement**

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*Amended 21 January 2009*

**The committee met at 9.02 am.**

Appearances:

Stanhope, Mr Jon, Chief Minister, Minister for Transport, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Land and Property Services, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for the Arts and Heritage

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Byles, Mr Gary, Chief Executive

Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, ACT Library and Information Service

Polinelli, Mr Anthony, Director, Canberra Connect

Kalogeropoulos, Mr Nick, Chief Finance Officer, Finance, Corporate Support

Ware, Mr Chris, Senior Manager, NoWaste, Territory Services Division

Perram, Mr Phillip, Executive Director, Territory Services Division

Watkinson, Mr Russell, Director, Parks, Conservation and Lands, Land Management and Planning Division

Zatschler, Mr Gerhard, Director, Heritage

West, Mr Rod, Director, Licensing and Compliance, Land Management and Planning Division

Elliott, Mr Tom, Executive Director, Transport and Infrastructure

Gill, Mr Tony, Director, Roads ACT, Transport and Infrastructure

Greenland, Ms Karen, Director, Transport Regulation and Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

**THE CHAIR:** Welcome to this public hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates. The Legislative Assembly has referred to the committee for examination the expenditure proposals in the 2010-11 appropriation bill and the revenue estimates in the 2010-11 budget.

The committee is due to report to the Assembly on 22 June 2010, and has fixed a time frame of five working days for the return of answers to questions taken on notice. The proceedings today will commence with an examination of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services output classes 1.1, information services; 1.3, waste and recycling; 1.4, land management; 1.5, environmental regulation; 1.2, the Office of Transport—ACTION and public transport.

I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the yellow-coloured privilege statement before you on the table. Could you confirm for the record that you understand the privilege implications of this statement.

**Mr Byles:** Yes, Madam Chair.

**THE CHAIR:** I also remind witnesses to keep their responses to questions concise and directly relevant to the subject matter of the question. We have a great deal of ground to cover during the hearing, and I would like to maximise the opportunity for members in attendance to put their questions directly rather than on notice.

Before we proceed to questions from the committee, minister, would you like to make a brief opening statement of no more than five minutes?

**Mr Stanhope:** Thank you, Madam Chair. No, other than to thank the committee very much for its courtesy in inviting us to attend. We all look forward very much to being here. I and my officials look forward to rendering what assistance we are able to on this year's exceedingly fine budget.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Highlight of the year, Chief Minister.

**Mr Stanhope:** Highlight of the year.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. I will start with an overall question on funding and staffing for TAMS in the budget. Given that there are ongoing pressures on the TAMS budget and there is also now a freeze on hiring staff, how is that impacting on the ability of TAMS to deliver services, and are we going to see significant changes in how TAMS works?

**Mr Stanhope:** Mr Byles will be happy to respond.

**Mr Byles:** We at this stage do not expect it to have any impact on service delivery. Of course, we will have to assess the full impact of the budget. You will note that in budget 2010-11 there has been an increase in our municipal services funding for growth, and we are very pleased with that allocation of funding.

You will also note that, as part of the ongoing strategic budget review, which finished at the end of 2008, some 22 recommendations have been looked at, 15 of which have been implemented. It has provided a better focus for the department on how we provide service delivery and align our budget with that service delivery. I am very confident at this stage that, through some better fiscal control, better awareness of the requirements and a better understanding of our core services, we will be able to continue the ongoing high level of service delivery in the department, particularly given that the budget does provide for growth this year.

**THE CHAIR:** So you do not think that there is any sort of pressure or that it is affecting TAMS staff in any way—a concern that they will not be able to deliver services, that there will not be enough people to deliver those services?

**Mr Byles:** I do not know any chief executive who would not like more resources, but the reality is that you manage within the resources that you have got allocated. Given the satisfaction rates that we receive from the public about our delivery of services, which are very high, given the fact that I have a very good leadership team that monitor the staff and staff morale, and given our separation rates in TAMS, which are lower than the comparable rates across the nation, and certainly within government, I am quite confident we will be able to deliver, and continue to deliver, a high degree of services.

**THE CHAIR:** What is your separation rate?

**Mr Byles:** It is eight per cent.

**Mr Stanhope:** Having said all that, Madam Chair, it is always relevant—one of the issues the government has is simply ensuring that there is an understanding within the broader community about just how massive the task of managing the ACT is. It is the nature of the city and the things that make the city the wonderful place that it is: the fact that it is very expansive, the fact that 54 per cent of our entire area is nature reserve, the fact that we have a level of open space, green space—the facts around just the expansive nature of the city in relation to roads and road verges.

The extent of mowing and urban upkeep that the ACT experiences as compared to other like cities, or indeed all the major cities in Australia, imposes an enormous burden on the ACT budget. It is an issue for us always. It behoves all members of this place, in thinking and talking about TAMS, to understand just how massive in a proportionate sense is the task which we have here in the ACT. It is an enormous task. It is relevant at times to reduce it to some of the constituent parts. Over summer we mow 6,000 hectares of grass. It is stunning in comparison to, say, the area of grass mown in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth or anywhere else in Australia.

Whilst the government has been able to find additional significant operational funds for TAMS to meet some underlying pressure, it is also just a small step along the way to acknowledging the extent to which TAMS's area and range of responsibility grows every time a new house is constructed.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Mr Seselja.

**MR SESELJA:** Minister, last week there was a press release that went out—which was later, I think, amended—suggesting that Canberra Connect shopfronts would be consolidated into the new government office building in the city. Are you able to talk us through what happened there?

**Mr Stanhope:** No press release at any stage suggested that Canberra Connect shopfronts would be centralised. It did not do that at all. It used the word “shopfronts” generically. There was a concern, as I understand it, raised—I think perhaps as part of a deliberate misinterpretation or misunderstanding by the Liberal Party of what was intended, a position that was actually incorporated in some news bulletins. The decision was taken in my office, for the sake of certainty and to deal with the confusion that the Liberal Party was suffering at the time, to make it explicit that Canberra Connect shopfronts would not be moving into a government office block. It was an amendment which, I understand from my office, had as its intention the benevolent desire to disabuse the Liberal Party of its confusion.

**MR SESELJA:** It is interesting you say that, because—

**Mr Stanhope:** That is my understanding. I must say that I was not in the office at the time, but my understanding is that my office took pity on the Liberal Party and thought that they would help them out in their confusion.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Chief Minister.

**MR SESELJA:** Sure.

**MR SMYTH:** Had you read the press release before it went out?

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Smyth; it is Mr Seselja's question.

**MR SESELJA:** The media was reporting it well before the Liberal Party had anything to say—that shopfronts would be closing and suggesting that it would be Canberra Connect shopfronts. It seemed on any reading that people would be concerned. Was there a change in policy at some point or was it just a very poorly worded press release?

**Mr Stanhope:** To the extent that the press release caused the confusion that it obviously did—which did surprise me, let me say—it was a press release that may have been better and more clearly worded.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**Mr Stanhope:** Perhaps in the press release we did give greater credit to some others than we should have. In future, we will be clearer in spelling out the a's, the b's, and the c's, particularly for the attention of the Liberal Party.

**MR COE:** Chief Minister, your press release said—

**THE CHAIR:** No, Mr Coe; Mr Smyth has the floor.

**MR SMYTH:** I am happy to—

**MR COE:** It is a supplementary. Your press release said that the consolidation of 17 separate shopfront locations will also result in major improvements to the delivery of ACT government services for all Canberrans. Are there four Canberra Connect shopfronts included in those 17 separate shopfronts? If not, what are the 17 shopfronts?

**Mr Stanhope:** I will have to take that question on notice, Madam Chair. I do not have that degree of information.

**THE CHAIR:** That will be taken on notice. Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Chief Minister, what initiatives are there in the budget to improve access to libraries?

**Mr Byles:** I might ask Vanessa Little, the Director of the ACT Library and Information Service, to join the table.

**Ms Little:** There is a budget initiative this coming year for the opening of the new Gungahlin library.

**MR SMYTH:** When is that likely to open?

**Ms Little:** Early 2011.

**MR SMYTH:** What will be the floor space of the library?

**Ms Little:** It will be approximately 3,000 square metres.

**MR SMYTH:** What services will be offered there for the people of Gungahlin?

**Ms Little:** A full range of services—story times, books, DVDs. There are also some learning facilities in there. There will be spaces for about 350 people to come and do programs—everything from play group right through to University of the Third Age.

**MR SMYTH:** In terms of size, how does that compare to, say, the Civic library and the Tuggeranong library?

**Ms Little:** It is certainly bigger than the Tuggeranong library and the Civic library. It has been built on national standards. Those national standards were designed for the 90,000 people that we are expecting to have up there. It is easier to explain that the current Gungahlin library is about 380 square metres, so it is considerably bigger.

**MR SMYTH:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Bresnan.

**MS BRESNAN:** Just staying on that theme—it is not exactly about the library; it is about the Gungahlin shopfront and the \$100,000 that has been included in the budget for the feasibility study. I was wondering if we can get some more details about what the feasibility study will entail and when we can expect that to be completed.

**Mr Byles:** I will ask Mr Polinelli, the manager of Canberra Connect, to join the table.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Don't go too far away, Vanessa.

**Mr Stanhope:** Ms Little is disappointed by the lack of interest in the Alexander Bunyip statue that will greet people at the library.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Are we going to get one at the Tuggeranong town centre—a wombat or something?

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Bresnan's question.

**MS BRESNAN:** The question is about the feasibility study for the Gungahlin shopfront, what it will entail and when we can expect it to be completed.

**Mr Polinelli:** We intend for it to be a broad ranging study that will capture the views of the interest groups in Gungahlin—the Gungahlin Community Council, for example. It is intended to develop a plan that will be able to deliver sustainable shopfront services in the Gungahlin community into the future.

**MS BRESNAN:** When do you expect the feasibility study will be completed?

**Mr Polinelli:** The feasibility study, we would hope, would be completed early in 2011.

**MS BRESNAN:** Are you looking at possible locations, what would be best for it in terms of location?

**Mr Polinelli:** Physical location of the shopfront and alignment with other services will be a key part of the scoping study.

**MS BRESNAN:** Sorry, aligned with?

**Mr Polinelli:** With other services.

**MS BRESNAN:** What sorts of services?

**Mr Polinelli:** The department already has other services delivered in Gungahlin around transport and library services, for example. We would want to make sure that any shopfront that goes into Gungahlin in the future is closely aligned, where appropriate, with the existing government service provision in the area.

**MS BRESNAN:** So is it possible that the library will be the location, or close to the library?

**Mr Polinelli:** I would see it would be an option. We will be directed in some sense by space and available location. Making sure that there is a connection with other services would be something that we would want the feasibility study to consider.

**MS BRESNAN:** Do we have an idea of when the shopfront will start operating in Gungahlin, the time line in terms of it being operational?

**Mr Polinelli:** I think we would want to take advice out of the feasibility study about what timing would be appropriate.

**MS BRESNAN:** So you do not have in mind an earliest possible date or when you would like to see it operating?

**Mr Polinelli:** Not at this time, no.

**MS BRESNAN:** \$100,000 is quite a lot for a feasibility study. We know there is quite a lot of space in Gungahlin for this facility. I am just trying to get an idea of where it might be located and when we can expect it to be operational. But you do not have those details as yet?

**Mr Polinelli:** Not at this time. The feasibility study, as I said at the start, is intended to be comprehensive. We need to look carefully at what the range of options are in Gungahlin to make sure that whatever services are delivered in the future are appropriate for the—

**MR SESELJA:** How much work has been done to date, because this has been on the agenda for some time? How much work has been done on looking at the feasibility of

a shopfront in Gungahlin?

**Mr Polinelli:** A study was completed in 2006, from memory, by WalterTurnbull, where we undertook an initial study. That study concluded that a stand-alone shopfront in its own right was not considered appropriate at the time. We will take it from there.

**MR SESELJA:** Since the 2008 election there has been no further work done on looking at the viability or the feasibility of a shopfront in Gungahlin?

**Mr Polinelli:** Not specifically, no. Through Canberra Connect we have modified and amended other services to take into account the population growth in Gungahlin.

**MR SESELJA:** Is it your understanding that this feasibility study will be looking at whether or not to go ahead with the shopfront or simply looking at how you get a shopfront in Gungahlin?

**Mr Polinelli:** I think overall we need the feasibility study to look to how we will deliver shopfront services in Gungahlin in the future and the timing around that.

**MS BRESNAN:** So the focus will be on how it can be delivered rather than whether or not it will actually go ahead or be delivered in the area?

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes.

**MR COE:** So where did the \$100,000—

**Mr Stanhope:** There is no question that it will not go ahead.

**MR COE:** Where did the \$100,000 figure come from? Is it just an allocation that we can spend up to?

**Mr Polinelli:** It is based on other feasibility studies that Canberra Connect and other parts of the department have undertaken and the relative value of those studies, and also giving ourselves capacity to make sure that, whatever study we do end up undertaking, the budget is sufficient to enable that to happen, as well as internal resources to manage it.

**MR COE:** Can you recall, roughly, how much the WalterTurnbull study cost in 2006?

**Mr Polinelli:** From memory, it was around \$80,000.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I would like to ask a couple of questions of both Ms Little and Mr Polinelli and then I can get some of this stuff out of the way. I am referring, if you want to look it up in your books, to page 71 of budget paper No 4. I also have a general one for Mr Byles, perhaps, on pages 68 through to 69 of the same budget paper. I will start with that one, if I may. In the

output classes 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, there is a significant reduction in the estimated outcome for 2009-10 against the budget for 2010-11 and also an increase, clearly, from the estimated outcome for 2009-10 into the budget of 2010-11. There is quite a variation in all of those numbers. I am sure there will be a very good reason for that and I wonder if you could let me have it.

**Mr Byles:** I might ask Mr Kalogeropoulos, the CFO, to join the table.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Nice to see you, Nick. Welcome back to Mr Elliott too—long time, no see.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** So we are referring to pages 68 and 69?

**MR HARGREAVES:** Yes. Just a general sweep on this one, because there will be the same sort of reasons for all of those output classes, I imagine.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Indeed. The increases in terms of the 2010-11 budget from the estimated outcome across each of those output classes are primarily driven by additional funding that we received as part of the 2010-11 budget and, in particular, recurrent funding. That recurrent funding is identified further on in budget paper 4. From page 76 to the top of page 79 it lists the adjustments to the GPO, which is the recurrent funding, and pages 76 to 77 outline the policy adjustments for the 2010-11 budget.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I noticed that the story, if you like, from 2009-10 to 2010-11 is one of a high level dropping down to a lower level in the estimated outcome, then back up to a better level, I suppose, or a more supported level in the 2010-11 budget. What were the reasons for the drops? If you take output class 1.1 as an example, I think the answer that I am looking for is that it is the government payments for outputs?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Yes.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I guess the short question is: would you explain for the purposes of the *Hansard* the variation between the government payments for outputs and the budget figures?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Sure. On those pages, we have got those two figures, the estimated outcome for 2009-10 and the 2010-11 budget. What is not represented there is the original budget for 2009-10. If we look at the original budget for 2009-10, we had AO changes during the course of 2009-10, so that would be a transfer of functions; therefore there would be an appropriation that would move from our administrative unit to other administrative units in government. But then it comes back up in 2010-11 because there has been significant investment into the TAMS portfolio from a number of recurrent initiatives.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Going back to page 71, Canberra Connect—it is probably something that Mr Polinelli or you can grapple with—it is about the changes to the presentation of the budget papers. In a lot of cases, you have changed the presentation of the targets and the outcomes to reflect costs and direct costs.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Yes.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Could you please give us an explanation as to what is the difference between them?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Yes. Direct cost is the direct cost attributable to delivering that service or performing that transaction, which generally would be the people that are involved in effecting or delivering that transaction. Cost, which is not the direct cost, includes other costs which are also known as overheads or indirect costs. For example, that would be Anthony's time in terms of managing that area; it might be my time in terms of financial oversight. We feel, in terms of comparability, that it is better to use direct costs rather than having a full cost, because, particularly when you go to comparing transactional costs with, say, other jurisdictions, what they include as overheads or indirect costs varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Okay, and I understand exactly what proportion of Mr Byles's salary goes into the unit cost of a library book transaction. Can you now explain this for us: in subitem "t" of Canberra Connect, the average cost per transaction is 537, then it drops to 480 and then it goes back up to 537. Have we always calculated direct costs and really the only change is the way in which it is described? I note that in "r" and "s", for example, the 892 is the same in both cases.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Yes.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Is it just a descriptive change there?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** It is a descriptive change. I think it followed work that the audit office did in terms of the previous year's assessment or the audit of our performance indicators. These changes are basically here to provide some more transparency and, hopefully, understandability—if that is a word—in terms of each of the measures. So we have made it specific that the cost that we are identifying reporting against is a direct cost.

**MR HARGREAVES:** With your indulgence, Madam Chair, I have a couple of questions for Ms Little. On page 71, the number of pages downloaded from library databases went from 120,000 to 300,000, which shows a pretty keen interest by people in the library service, I must say. Congratulations on that. I notice that your target is the same as the estimated outcome, yet later on the target is that you want an extra 4,000 or so more library users. Are you anticipating that there may be an increase on that 300,000 but it is hard to quantify?

**Ms Little:** The short answer is yes, it is very hard to quantify. It has to do with which databases are available and which ones we continue to subscribe to. We always review that. That target of 300,000 is pretty firm. We are pretty sure that that is where it will plateau for a while. Of course, with the membership, we are expecting the extra members partly because of walking through the doors but also you have to be a library member to be able to use those databases.

**MR HARGREAVES:** And it reflects the increase of 22,000 in the number of users

accessing the databases in the previous one?

**Ms Little:** Yes, that is right.

**MR HARGREAVES:** But you do not see that extra 20,000 being reflected in downloaded pages, perhaps?

**Ms Little:** No. We think that this is about right, about what the level will be. I guess the climb from 120,000 to 300,000 has been so large that we are not sure that that is going to climb again. That is probably the best way of explaining it.

**MR HARGREAVES:** My last question, Madam Chair, for Ms Little is on the library collection. The number of ACT publications added to the heritage collection has gone up 40 per cent. To what degree do the library service, TAMS or the government, for that matter, influence what goes into the collection, or is it a case of sitting there and waiting until someone like Mr Seselja drops out of the Assembly and gives all of his papers to you?

**Ms Little:** It is a bit of both. Our heritage librarian is very proactive and she targets particular areas that she believes we need to have in the collection. She goes out and talks to those people and encourages them to put their papers and other documents into the library. She has had some quite good success with that. Also, people do decide to give things to us. We have to be very careful about that. We cannot just take everything, or else we would need a lot more space and a lot more staff. She is very well trained in working out what it is that we need to have in the library to fully represent Canberra as a community and as a place.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Little, how is the Kingston library going? It has been open for several months. It is a new style of library.

**Ms Little:** It is going very well, with over 14,000 loans a month now, and that is climbing. That is going up every month. You can never go there and not find people in there. People are really loving it. We are getting fantastic feedback from the community about it. Story times are very well attended. We have a new program now for the zero to two age group, which we call giggle and wiggle. That is very much about giving kids and babies—

**MR SMYTH:** As opposed to *Giggle and Hoot*? You do not watch the ABC at a quarter past seven every morning?

**Ms Little:** No, I do not, actually. I am very busy working, Mr Smyth.

**MR HARGREAVES:** You have an interesting social life, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** I do.

**Ms Little:** And that is incredibly well attended. That is a program where parents come and learn how to sing and read to their children and so on. It has been going very well.

**THE CHAIR:** Great. Ms Le Couteur.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** I would like to continue on page 71. Under “p”, you have got call waiting times for Canberra Connect, which have a target of 80 per cent being for less than 20 seconds, but in fact it was 65 per cent. Does this reflect a lack of staff or too many people wanting to use Canberra Connect? Why do you think you will be able to get it up to 80 per cent next year?

**Mr Polinelli:** The call waiting time and the slightly lower result there is generally a reflection of the demand for the contacts in the service.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Why do you think you will be able to do it better next year—less demand, more staff?

**Mr Polinelli:** Eighty per cent of calls answered within 20 seconds is an industry recognised target, and it is one that we certainly aspire to achieve. We would intend to return to 80 per cent in the 2010-11 period, based on control of the demand and the way that we organise ourselves internally to be able to respond to that demand.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You said “control the demand”. How are you intending to control the demand?

**MR HARGREAVES:** They are going to cut your phone off.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Apart from cutting my phone off.

**Mr Polinelli:** It is a function of how we advertise, how we promote the number to the community as well, how we work with the clients that Canberra Connect services. It is often difficult to predict, year to year, what will happen.

**THE CHAIR:** Is that reflecting the fact that people do not understand what Canberra Connect is there to provide and are ringing the number with queries that do not fit the service that you provide?

**Mr Polinelli:** On occasion, that happens. The service is relatively well known in the community now. It has been operating for around nine years. So the general understanding of Canberra Connect and what it provides, through our surveying, has grown. One of the issues that we are dealing with at the moment—referring back to Ms Le Couteur—is that the Canberra Connect number is frequently given out by telcos as a general number for anyone to call about any matter. That is what I was referring to in terms of being able to work with telcos and being able to control some of that.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You talked about controlling demand. Does that mean you are going to advertise less so that people will not be as aware of Canberra Connect? I am not understanding how you are going to control the demand.

**Mr Polinelli:** As I mentioned to Ms Hunter just then, one of the factors that we have had to deal with is various telcos like Telstra and Optus publishing the Canberra Connect number nationally for any service. That has generated several extra thousand calls a month which we have had to deal with. We have been actively working with

those organisations to make sure that the Canberra Connect number is given out appropriately and not inappropriately. So, for example, people ringing directory assistance have been given the Canberra Connect number to locate supermarkets in Victoria. That is a recent example, and we are receiving several thousand calls of that nature a month.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** So would that be the main piece of demand you are expecting to reduce? You are not expecting to reduce the demand within Canberra?

**Mr Polinelli:** No. The demand in Canberra is absolutely appropriate for the service that is provided. The demand that we are receiving through errors from other organisations is what we need to control.

**THE CHAIR:** If there are no more questions on information services, we might move to 1.3, waste and recycling.

**MR HARGREAVES:** What happened to 1.2, Madam Chair?

**THE CHAIR:** 1.2 is for later.

**MR SMYTH:** It is new counting.

**MR HARGREAVES:** It is a technical adjustment.

**MR SMYTH:** Everything is possible with this government. Just as a general question, Mr Byles, could we get a reconciliation of the pluses and minuses? I notice on page 65 that you have lost Tourism, ACT Property, Government and Assembly Library and Exhibition Park. This is offset by the new initiatives. Can we have the numbers for each area that we have lost, plus the inclusions that have come out of this budget?

**Mr Byles:** I can take that on notice and provide that, of course.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note for Hansard that that is taken on notice.

**MR SMYTH:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** I wanted to start with looking at page 73 in budget paper 4. It is around the targets. We are still achieving 75 per cent of waste diverted from landfill and the target is the same for next year. This is still a lower figure than what was achieved a few years ago. It was about 77 per cent that we got up to. I am wondering why we are not increasing that target, why we are not improving the amount we divert from landfill.

**Mr Stanhope:** Mr Ware or Mr Perram will be happy to respond in some detail, but certainly it is indicative of the level of investment that the government felt able to provide directly to that task in this budget. To the extent that there is additional funding in this budget for waste, much of it is unavoidable investment in relation to the state and anticipated life of our current landfill facility.

There is significant additional expenditure identified in this budget for that

unavoidable priority. In an ideal world, of course, we would have loved to provide significant additional funding to enhance our capacity to divert waste from landfill. The government has taken the opportunity in this budget to meet an election commitment that it made in relation to bulky waste, a \$1 million commitment. It has to be said that whilst I believe there is capacity for a bulky waste collection trial to lead to the diverting of waste from landfill, it is a trial and we will see how it goes.

I would hope and expect that it will provide that opportunity, but I will defer to Mr Ware in relation to this. I do not know what the total dollar amount provided by the government for waste issues is in this budget, but it is some millions of dollars. Much of it is about maintaining our landfill capacity, expanding it, looking to the future and our future needs, as well as leading an ACT government commitment in relation to bulky waste. Significantly, I must say in this context that at this stage it would be hard to anticipate or increase the target.

The government has provided funding to employ within the ACT an additional officer to identify and explore opportunities for the marketing of recyclable waste, an initiative and investment which I would expect would again position us well to be able to revise those targets.

In this year and this budget I think it is fair to say that it is at one level a year in terms of budget funding and consolidation. It provides capacity to meet our needs and obligations in the future, looking to expand, leading an election commitment which on its face will not have a direct quantifiable impact on waste landfill. I am referring to the bulky waste trial. Nevertheless, it is a service which particularly older Canberrans have been very strongly supportive of. Mr Ware can provide far greater detail than I on how these things work and how the computations are done.

**THE CHAIR:** I just pick up on a point that the Chief Minister mentioned. He said that the bulky waste was, I guess, a more targeted sort of social program or social service, that it would not have necessarily a large impact on the landfill. Will it have any impact on reducing the amount to landfill?

**Mr Ware:** A lot of the bulky waste that we envisage being collected is what is presently dropped off to the reusable sheds. These are items that can be reused or they are bulky; so they will either go to existing sources for disposal, such as a reusable shed, or into landfill or on to recycling markets.

Items that I am talking about would be couches, fridges, washing machines—the bigger items that people cannot dispose of. Obviously, the people of Canberra bring those items to the landfill or to reusable centres now or they are quite welcome, as they do now, to sell them on through existing sources. There are a number of those available.

**THE CHAIR:** I also wanted to pick up on strategic indicator 3 on page 66.

**MR SMYTH:** Sorry, before you move off that, the Chief Minister mentioned the dedicated officer for resource recovery. I note in your press release that you say there is \$335,000 for that position. Where would that be located in the budget? Is there an initiative covering that or is that just additional funding for the output class?

**Mr Ware:** There was an initiative put forward. It was \$335,000 spread over two years—\$166,000 in the next financial year.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it in the initiative section of the budget paper?

**Mr Ware:** Yes, page 75.

**MR SMYTH:** What will we get for that \$160,000 a year?

**Mr Ware:** That gets a senior officer and some promotional money for undertaking studies. That person will be tasked to find out where the barriers are for businesses to effectively recycle and break down those barriers, in effect. It is also to entice or encourage businesses in Canberra to see business opportunities, in effect, that they could explore to better recycle.

**THE CHAIR:** I was just finishing, before we went on, around strategic indicator 3 on page 66. It suggests that the target of waste diverted from landfill by 2014-15 will be 80 per cent. Is that an official target or will the new waste strategy revise that figure?

**Mr Ware:** The new waste strategy being worked on by DECCEW has given that target. Obviously, they are setting the policy and we will deliver that policy.

**MS BRESNAN:** When you go back against that percentage of material recovered, if you are going to start moving towards that 80 per cent, you would want to start seeing movement on that target over the budget period to be actually able to reach that 80 per cent?

**Mr Ware:** As I said, the DECCEW waste strategy is still being developed. The future waste strategy is still being developed by them. That is a target that they have set and until they release that for public consultation there are some projects within that future waste strategy that they believe will move us towards that 80 per cent but that will take time to implement and to encourage business—the waste industry—to set up here in Canberra and to capture new waste streams.

**THE CHAIR:** When will that strategy be ready for consultation?

**Mr Stanhope:** As Mr Ware just indicated, that is a strategy that is being developed by Minister Simon Corbell. I must say that in the budget cabinet's discussion around no waste and waste and our determination to advance on the 75 per cent—and it is a determination that we have—we acknowledged the nature of arrangements that the government has, most particularly with the Greens, and the parliamentary agreement in relation to waste and we are committed to those.

But we took a conscious decision in the context of this budget to await the outcomes of the policy review that is being pursued by Mr Corbell's department, the department of environment, in relation to waste as to where we might best and most appropriately in a timing sense first provide the additional funding to take us to that next level—at this stage an indicative 80 per cent over the next four years.

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The government acknowledges that we will, starting in the next year's budget, have to provide additional targeted funding, but we want that to be funding that is consistent with a detailed policy project that is currently being developed by the department of environment.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I just wanted to get some information, possibly even on notice, which will assist the committee in looking at the total environment around resource recovery. I am aware that the percentage recovery is 75 per cent but that is global. I also understand that there is quite a significant difference in the percentage of recovery between the domestic waste stream, the construction waste stream and other industry—if you like, hospitality, restaurants, the soft industries and that sort of thing. What we are talking about in that 75 per cent is an aggregated percentage.

So the total picture, I do not believe, is out there for the community to see. I believe, in fact, that the community generally, through its domestic waste stream, is doing particularly well. The construction industry is not doing too badly in terms of recycling brick, glass, timber et cetera.

But the other industries, with the exception of Ricoh over in Fyshwick, are doing particularly poorly and therefore bringing the average down. I would be interested if you have the percentages on those breakdowns because I think this would actually enable us to look at the target of where the policy initiatives ought to be directed. Do you have that information or do you need to go and get it?

**Mr Ware:** I have some of the information here, Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Thank you, Mr Ware.

**Mr Ware:** I can report on the percentages of waste to landfill. As you mentioned, obviously the 75 per cent is the total aggregated number of what is recovered. A lot of that, of course, is paper. I think a lot of businesses, most businesses now, do a very good job of recovering paper and cardboard. In relation to waste to landfill, commercial waste makes up approximately 46 per cent of the waste stream. That is shops, restaurants, businesses.

**MR HARGREAVES:** If I could stop you there for a tick, does that mean, therefore, that 40 per cent of the material going into landfill is represented in that figure?

**Mr Ware:** Yes, 46 per cent. Households make up 32 per cent. Private delivery, that is people who take their own waste to transfer stations or landfills, is 10 per cent. That is a mixture of small businesses or residents who choose to take it themselves. Construction and demolition make up the final 13 per cent. That is really the material that they cannot recycle or strip out of the waste stream.

**MR HARGREAVES:** What about those other industries like the IT industry and the hospitality industry in terms of their waste streams? For example, some of the materials that some of the fast food industry uses are actually destined for landfill. I am referring, for example, to polystyrene.

**Mr Ware:** We count the fast food industry in the commercial stream.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Coe, then Ms Le Couteur and then Mr Smyth.

**MR COE:** I have a question about the Parkwood Road recycling estate. I know there is an operator there that is having a tough time. The reasons for that are varied, I imagine. Can you please give me an update on what the future of that operator will be and whether they will continue trading? What support has TAMS given to ensure that the operator keeps trading and to ensure both recycling services are still going to be on offer?

**Mr Stanhope:** Thank you, Mr Coe. TAMS has worked very closely with this business, with this operator, over a number of years. It has sought to assist, facilitate and support at every step of the way. It is the sort of issue that does represent significant challenges to government, but the government, through TAMS, has gone to enormous lengths to support this particular business and operator. Indeed, the chief executive of the department, Mr Byles, I know has involved himself in the issue in recent times. It may be that Mr Byles and Mr Ware together can give you a full picture of the issues, the steps that we have taken, the assistance we have sought to give and the current state of play.

**Mr Byles:** Thank you, Chief Minister. Certainly, we regret any financial difficulties by any small business operator or any operator for that matter, of course. Consequently, I have personally been involved with this particular operator on two occasions when I visited his site to try to understand his issues better, look at the options and perhaps then speak to my team about how we might be able to assist. Subsequently, I have written to him this week with the outcome of those discussions. Hopefully, he has got that letter.

It is regrettable. It is a situation that we would have preferred had not developed. But I am confident that the department, the government, has provided every opportunity available to assist this particular operator. Mr Ware will be able to provide more detail about how we went about doing that.

**Mr Ware:** As Mr Byles said, we have dealt with the operator of that business. On a number of occasions we have assisted him to continue trading. We are continuing to work with the administration and the management of that business to explore ways so that it can continue operating because we do recognise that that particular sector, the construction and demolition sector, fills a valuable niche, as we said, in diverting a lot of waste from landfill.

It should be remembered, however, that the particular company is a tenant on land and they have breached several licence conditions as a tenant. Obviously, we are trying to find ways to reduce the waste stockpiles while they continue trading.

**MR COE:** In the event that the operator can no longer continue to operate, what would that mean for our recycling levels? Also, what will actually happen to that particular site?

**Mr Ware:** I am optimistic that we will be able to find another operator who could step in and take over, but until that particular event that you mentioned—him falling

over—comes to pass, it is all supposition at this point in time as to what would happen. As I have said, I would like to think that someone would step in and I am optimistic that someone will step in if that event should take place.

**Mr Stanhope:** I think it is important. These issues are very difficult and one is loath to raise an issue where there are sensitivities, a small business doing it tough. Mr Ware raises the issue around our obligation in relation to the lease and lease conditions by a tenant on leased land.

Some of the concerns that we have been seeking to deal with are very real concerns. These are not trifling matters. The ACT urban fire service—I am not quite sure of the nature of their involvement—have an involvement. A conclusion has been put by the urban fire service in relation to the inherent threat posed by excessive stocks of timber. If you visited the site, there is a massive stockpile of timber which has caused concern in regulatory authorities, most particularly the urban fire service, in relation to the potential threat that it represents and the need for issues around, most particularly, the amount of timber that we stockpile in a location such as this.

I make that point just in the context that we are dealing here with some quite significant issues that we have been working very hard with the business owner to progress, to reduce the stockpile, to allow him to continue to operate, but there are significant issues—they are not trifling issues—in relation to this matter.

**MR COE:** Are all operators on leased land out at Parkwood treated the same way in terms of the standards they have to keep, especially with regard to fuel issues from a fire point of view?

**Mr Perram:** They are treated equally. The timing and the authority in charge of those leases are different. Property, for example, are acting on two other matters that we are aware of, almost adjacent to this site, but their timing is slightly behind ours. The actual approach is similar, if not the same.

**MR COE:** What I am getting at, I guess, is whether the stockpiles of fuel of the operator in question are similar to the stockpiles of other operators.

**Mr Ware:** The stockpiles in question are similar to those of other operators. As Mr Perram said, other agencies are taking action on the other operators.

**MR COE:** A fuel risk is a fuel risk. If one stockpile is deemed to be a fire risk and it is of a certain size surely the one next door is a similar risk. If you are going to approach it from a fire management point of view, should not they be treated in exactly the same way?

**Mr Ware:** I cannot speak for the Department of Land and Property Services on that matter. They are the ones taking the action.

**MR COE:** The reason I ask is that the Chief Minister said that they have received advice from a fire risk perspective. So with that in mind, if that is information which is informing your decision making, surely it should also inform your decision making for all the other occupants of leased land.

**Mr Stanhope:** I think the indication that Mr Ware has just given is that it is and that the other land manager—namely, LAPS—is dealing with the issue in exactly the same way. That is Mr Ware’s understanding. But Mr Ware quite rightly says it is not his responsibility. His understanding is that LAPS, in relation to the same issue on associated blocks, is dealing with the issue in the same way in its approaches to those other leaseholders. I would assume that to be the case. LAPS is appearing before estimates next week. It would be appropriate for that question to be put to LAPS, or I am happy to take the question on notice—

**MR COE:** Yes, please.

**Mr Stanhope:** as Minister for LAPS, in anticipation of next week’s meeting.

**MR COE:** You did mention the fire risk, so I think it is important.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Coe. They are taking that question on notice.

**Mr Stanhope:** That is just fine, Mr Coe. I mentioned the fire risk in relation to a particular site raised by you. You did not raise a number of other sites. You raised one site, which is the responsibility of TAMS. TAMS are responding in relation to how the issue in relation to that site and that operator is being dealt with and what one of the drivers for the action is. One of the drivers for that action is an inspection and report by the ACT urban fire service that they are concerned at the fire risk inherent in the level of the stockpile.

I have just taken on notice the approach that another department has taken in relation to other operators on other sites. We will be happy to answer that. Mr Ware has given an indication, whilst acknowledging that it is not his responsibility, that he understands that the other department is acting in exactly the same way in relation to those other leases as TAMS is acting in relation to the lease for which it has responsibility.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. We probably do need to move on to land management shortly so I will be taking final questions on this output. We have Ms Le Couteur, Mr Smyth and then Mr Hargreaves.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** On page 88 you talk about a new waste cell. Can I ask a few questions about the waste cells? How many of them already exist, how long do they take to fill, and how long did the last one take to fill?

**Mr Ware:** I can answer one of those and I will take—

**MR HARGREAVES:** Well, there is only the Gungahlin Drive extension one.

**Mr Ware:** On the current working face of Mugga Lane, at present we have three cells, two of which have been filled and a third yet to be filled. If you drive past the Mugga Lane site, that is the area that is covered in white fabric. The new cell that we will be building allows us to extend the present cell to get more life out of it. It prolongs the life, in effect. The original design of the landfill cell that is there at the moment was

meant to have a valley in between the hill, where the closed cell is, and the working face. We intend to fill in that valley, in effect, and create one continuous ridge line when the project is finished.

In relation to your other two questions—how long they last—I will have to take those on notice. It does, of course, depend on how much waste is delivered to landfill and how much you can compact it, which is the other part of the factor. Of course, the initial bid that we put up for that allowed for the lease of a heavier compactor that can squash more waste into a given area of landfill space.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note that has been taken on notice. Thank you.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You said there were three cells being used now. Is that the total number in Mugga Lane, or were there other totally filled cells? What is the total number of cells? Maybe that is a question to be taken on notice.

**Mr Ware:** Yes, I will have to take that one on notice. As to how many cells there have been in the Mugga Lane facility since it first opened, I will have to take it on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that has been taken on notice. Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I just wanted to go to the 75 per cent recovery figure again. Thank you for the figures about the contribution to the waste stream and what these groups have done. We are saying the total recovery is 75 per cent. Therefore, by definition, 25 per cent is going to waste. With those four groupings, is it possible to let us know what their achievement is in terms of the 75 per cent? I suspect, for example, it is very high for construction and it would be very high for private and domestic. I suspect it is the commercial that is bringing it down to 75 per cent. I would just like to see some numbers around that, if that is possible.

**Mr Ware:** Yes, we can provide that.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Yes, that is great.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that has been taken on notice.

**MR HARGREAVES:** This is the last question from me on waste, Madam Chair. We are aware that the Mugga Lane landfill has a limited life. We are also aware that it is generating electricity from the methane coming out of it.

**MR SMYTH:** It was a good initiative, wasn't it?

**MR HARGREAVES:** It is a great one. I do not know which bright spark did that, but it was a great one. But it is not a forever thing, is it? Presumably, once the landfill has reached capacity, it will only have a certain amount of life to generate methane before it runs out. In the context of thinking of another landfill site to take care of such things as asbestos, safe custody, blah, blah, blah, have you considered what will happen to that electricity generating facility, and what is it?

**Mr Ware:** Presently at Mugga Lane we generate approximately three megawatts of power. That is fed back into the grid and goes to power Canberra's electricity needs. The figures on waste breakdown in the Canberra climate indicate that most putrescible waste—that is, waste that will rot down and produce methane—produces methane on a curve that lasts out to 70 years.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Seventy?

**Mr Ware:** Seventy years. We expect to be producing methane from the landfill for the next 70 years. Obviously the three-megawatt capacity may go up in time. There is a point in time when the waste reduces the production of methane, so that power generation capacity will obviously drop over time.

**MR HARGREAVES:** It has already been there for a decade. Presumably you are saying that from when we stop putting putrescible waste into that landfill that is when your 70-year clock starts ticking?

**Mr Ware:** Yes.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Roughly.

**Mr Ware:** As part of the carbon pollution reduction scheme that the commonwealth introduced, the commonwealth department did some figures based on various modelling for the different states and territories. The modelling for the ACT indicated 70 years. I cannot comment on whether that is true or not because I am not a scientist specialising in that field. As I said, from that commonwealth report on what the values were, 70 years would be indicative. There is a point in time when, if you follow the curve, it goes up, reaches a peak and then slowly tapers off to nothing.

**MR HARGREAVES:** When you are looking for a replacement site to take the unavoidable waste, because I know that Mr Smyth would know more about this than I do—

**THE CHAIR:** Come on, Mr Hargreaves, get to the point of the question.

**MR HARGREAVES:** The rods that went into the landfill were actually retrofitted, weren't they? Is the thinking—I would like you to tell me—that when you actually come up with another landfill site those rods will be part of the initial process?

**Mr Ware:** We intend to continue mining methane at the Mugga Lane landfill in the present cells. We have certainly mined sufficient numbers of the old closed cells. A lot of methane is captured from those cells. The present working face is continually being fitted with the gas wells, as we call them, and the new landfill will certainly have those new wells fitted as well.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Fantastic, thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Bresnan, and then we are moving on to land management with Mr Smyth.

**MS BRESNAN:** It is just an overall waste funding question. In 2008 the independent Wright review—I think this was raised at last year's estimates as well—noted that the ACT would not just have trouble reducing waste but also containing it within the current levels which we were experiencing. I know you said that DECCEW are undertaking their review, but have we taken in any of the recommendations and the lessons from that 2008 review, which said that we were not just having trouble reducing but also containing it in terms of our overall waste strategy?

**Mr Ware:** We have taken a number of the recommendations from the Wright report. The important point to remember with achieving the 75 per cent is that waste generation increases at approximately three per cent a year, which is over and above population growth. The affluent society of some parts of Canberra and the increased packaging that you are getting—these national and international trends that we are seeing—contribute to the increase in waste generation.

Obviously, if we are producing three per cent more waste to landfill, we are also having to recycle three per cent more to cope with the demand, just to keep pace with waste generation. The resource recovery industry—there are about 110 businesses in Canberra who do recycling or resource recovery—is I would not say struggling but having to keep pace, hence the need for the resource recovery office that we were speaking about earlier. That person has to find new sources for these new companies who can cope with it or expand the existing companies.

**MS BRESNAN:** I am just trying to get a sense of whether that is getting built into what we are doing in the ACT to reduce waste. You are saying that we have this increased affluence and all these issues, but what comes with that is that people are aware of issues. So what are we doing to take advantage of that in some respects? We had this 2008 review, but it does not seem to have flowed on to any part of the strategies which we have in the ACT.

**Mr Ware:** It is certainly informing a lot of the thinking that DECCEW are presently doing on their future waste strategy.

**MS BRESNAN:** So we have to wait for another review, I guess, before we can—

**Mr Ware:** Unfortunately, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Chief Minister, on page 99 of budget paper 3, we have the efficiency dividend table. I note that TAMS has to find \$2 million then \$3 million then \$4 million. Could we have a breakdown of what those savings will be?

**Mr Stanhope:** I do not have a degree of detail in relation to that, but I am sure Mr Byles will be happy to give some explanation of the strategy.

**Mr Byles:** Thank you, Chief Minister. Certainly, for the provision of the \$2 million efficiency dividend, we expect that that will consist of two key components—basically, \$1 million, or thereabouts, in a back-of-house strategy for IT issues and

some consultancies. Our strategy involves reaching a target of approximately \$1 million. I will stand corrected, but the figure is about that. The other half of the efficiency dividend we expect to be able to achieve through efficiencies achieved through action in the first year.

**MR SMYTH:** What will those efficiencies be?

**Mr Byles:** Again, it is business process efficiencies. I am happy to look at providing further information as that develops, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Could you take that \$2 million on notice and do a breakdown?

**Mr Byles:** Sorry?

**MR SMYTH:** Will you take that on notice and give a breakdown of what exactly they are?

**Mr Byles:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR SMYTH:** I also note on page 98—I assume this is in output class 1.4, land management—that we have deferred tree planting well in excess of \$10 million. What is the effect of that deferral?

**Mr Stanhope:** At this stage, it is a partial deferral of funding provided last year to renew the urban forest as a result of some issues we identified—certainly for myself some learning that I received in relation to the strong desire of the community to be involved in a tree-by-tree, street-by-street analysis of issues around urban forest renewal. I have referred the issue of our engagement strategy and the overall urban tree strategy to the commissioner for the environment and sustainability to report on a methodology to engage to deliver the government advice on how we might take forward this complex and what had become a quite controversial and difficult proposal.

We await the report of the commissioner. I think it is fair to say, Mr Smyth, that the decision taken in relation to the partial withdrawal of that funding was taken mindful of the fact that the funding will almost certainly need to be enhanced and replaced in the future. The state and condition of our urban forest is something that is central, that identifies Canberra. There is nothing more important. Some \$1.1 million a year of funding was retained, essentially as an acknowledgement of the importance of trees to our urban landscape and to Canberra. Indeed, in this current financial year, I think all of the funding, Mr Byles, has been utilised in, for instance, pursuing an all-of-Canberra tree audit.

**Mr Byles:** Yes.

**Mr Stanhope:** I think it is fair to say that a number of factors led to the decision the government has taken. One is that midway through the first year of the program, I took the decision that I would like the commissioner for the environment and

sustainability to be involved in an assessment of an engagement process and a way forward and a methodology. That report has not been received. I must say that I have no real idea of the direction or the thinking of the commissioner. I do not know what her report will reveal. The government will take the report. We will respond to it. I imagine it is a report that will be of significant interest to the Assembly. I would like members of the Assembly to engage in this very important project. Indeed, in my thinking around Dr Cooper's report, I had it in my mind that I might refer it to an Assembly committee. And—

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, just on that—

**Mr Stanhope:** Just let me conclude; I have one more sentence. The government remains fully committed to urban forest renewal, but again, today, with Corroboree Park, in terms of our capacity to engage—and the level of engagement, the degree of engagement and the cost of the engagement—one can become perhaps a little too focused on cost, but when you are in government, when you are running a department or when you are a minister, you become very focused on it. It is fair to say that 20 or 30 trees in Corroboree Park have cost us—I am sure Mr Watkinson or somebody else here can tell us, but the consultation on 30 trees at Corroboree Park is coming out at about \$1,000 a tree. We have to find a better, more inclusive community-wide approach to the issue of tree removal and urban forest renewal rather than consulting in detail, in depth on every tree.

I am looking for a new engagement, some bipartisan support, community understanding and a methodology that we can take forward to allow the work that needs to be done to renew our forest. But I believe—I will accept responsibility for this—we got a year or a step ahead of ourselves in that we provided funding in advance of an audit. The audit is currently underway. I think the first thing to have done would have been to do a detailed audit of the entire 600,000 trees that comprise the urban forest. We are now doing that. I think we probably should have done that before we set out on this task.

So I took the decision that we would essentially start again—do the audit, develop the understanding, begin to engage, get the advice from the commissioner for the environment and sustainability and start again.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, the commissioner's report is coming down in July, so I am just wondering about the funding. You have taken out \$12 million, which was over the next four years. How quickly do you think you will be responding to that report?

**Mr Stanhope:** We left \$1.3 million in the budget in next year and each of the outyears. Certainly \$3.7 million was removed, but \$1.3 million was retained in acknowledgement of how important the issue is.

There has been some change in response. We are in the process of removing 1,700 trees as we speak. Some 1,700 trees are currently being removed throughout the ACT. But, in a change from recent practice, each of those trees is being replaced, as it is removed, with the species that it is replacing. That will be the habit that we develop. The funding that is retained in this particular program, in addition to other line

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funding that currently exists for this particular purpose—it is a core function; there is the capacity to ensure that we continue to renew, to refresh, to remove dead, dying and dangerous trees and replace them.

**MR SESELJA:** Could you just clarify something. Ms Hunter's question is a good one. If Dr Cooper's report is going to be available soon and you are waiting on that, are these \$10 million-odd of savings genuine savings or is it almost that you are putting it on hold and you expect you will spend that much or more in those years?

**Mr Stanhope:** There will be \$1.3 million spent next year.

**MR SMYTH:** I think it is only one.

**Mr Stanhope:** One, sorry; I beg your pardon.

**MR SMYTH:** One in each of the outyears is all that remains.

**Mr Stanhope:** It is only a single one, is it? I thought it was 1.3.

**MR SMYTH:** No: 4.7 minus 3.7 is one.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Do you really think that \$1 million is all that we are going to require going forward?

**Mr Stanhope:** No.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** If it is not, why did you not leave the money there and just say that, once Dr Cooper's report is there—you still are committing to the program so the money has been allocated and should stay there?

**Mr Stanhope:** We will wait and see. It depends on methodology and approach. We will wait and see what Dr Cooper says. That is the whole point. We had not even done a tree audit. We have now done it or are in the process of doing it. We are getting a better understanding of the nature of the issue we face. I have just acknowledged that I believe we were a year ahead of ourselves.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** But now we have had this year, surely we—

**Mr Stanhope:** We still have not finished the audit, Ms Le Couteur; we still have not received the commissioner's report; and we still have not assessed the commissioner's report and responded to it. We still have not had an opportunity for the Assembly to debate the commissioner's report. I think it would be appropriate for the commissioner's report to be referred to the Assembly standing committee on the environment.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I look forward to that.

**Mr Stanhope:** I look forward to all members of this place engaging in this very difficult, problematic and controversial program.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Mr Stanhope, is it your expectation—

**Mr Stanhope:** In future, Ms Le Couteur, when we try to cut down a tree that we think is dead and dangerous and you go out in the media and stir it up into a great big media furore, you will take that responsibility.

**MR RATTENBURY:** When has that happened, Mr Stanhope? Name an occasion.

**Mr Stanhope:** I would be happy to get the newspaper for you.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Do I take it from this that your expectation is that Dr Cooper's report will be such that it will cost significantly less for the urban tree renewal program? It was \$4 million a year; you have now cut it down to \$1 million a year. Is that your expectation?

**Mr Stanhope:** They were estimates, Ms Le Couteur. What we have done is delay—

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Is that your new estimate?

**Mr Stanhope:** No; it is not an estimate at all. As I have just said, it is a holding number. It is \$1 million of additional funding to assist in the removal of dead and dying trees and their replacement as we determine a full program going forward, acknowledging the importance and the urgency of the issue of trees.

**MR SESELJA:** So it is not a genuine saving? You expect that that money will be spent?

**Mr Stanhope:** I have no doubt that over time—you need to understand, too, that this is probably a 30-year program. This is a 30-year program that we are talking about here. As far as I am concerned, delaying it by a couple of years will not affect the eventual outcome or our capacity to protect the urban forest. Mr Seselja, this is an ongoing program. We already do significant tree maintenance. This was a spike in our normal program to deal with an emerging issue—a bit like the baby boomers. There is a baby boomer generation of trees—

**MR HARGREAVES:** You are not going to replace one for one when you knock them over, though, are you, Chief Minister?

**Mr Stanhope:** I think there is a range of views, and this community has not yet had the opportunity to engage—nor has this Assembly. For instance, a proposal that has been put in a discussion around how we deal with this issue is that we simply clear-fell entire streets—just chop every one down. This was one of the proposals under consideration in an early stage. I am not, as the minister, or as the head of this government—

**MS LE COUTEUR:** We remember the briefing on that—

**Mr Stanhope:** You have received a briefing on that. I am not going to be the minister who agrees that every tree in a street over in Forrest, in Ainslie or in O'Connor be cut down and the roots bored out. Or—let us take Miller Street—that we cut down every

single tree in Miller Street on the one day. Or let us pick a street in Forrest: National Circuit. Let us pick Melbourne Avenue, shall we, or perhaps Northbourne Avenue.

**THE CHAIR:** I think we get the general idea.

**Mr Stanhope:** Pick a street.

**MR RATTENBURY:** Set up the straw man, Mr Stanhope.

**Mr Stanhope:** This is one of the—

**MS LE COUTEUR:** This was the government's proposal—no-one else's.

**Mr Stanhope:** It is not even the government. No. There you go, Ms Le Couteur. This was not the government's proposal.

**MR SESELJA:** Whose idea was it then?

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Whose was it, then?

**Mr Stanhope:** Actually, it is a proposal being—

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You just proposed it.

**Mr Stanhope:** It is a proposal being agitated by members of the urban tree renewal committee.

**MR COE:** When a tree is removed at the moment, does it get replaced? If someone in Forrest calls up and says, "I've got a dead tree out the front," and it gets chopped down, is it being replaced at the moment?

**Mr Stanhope:** I would have to defer to Mr Watkinson to some extent in relation to that. But it has not been our habit over recent years, most particularly since the drought, to replace old trees. I believe that is an issue that we might better address.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, could I clarify, when you said that was a proposal from the urban renewal committee—

**Mr Stanhope:** No, it was not a proposal.

**THE CHAIR:** The expert reference group—

**Mr Stanhope:** It is not a proposal. It is part of the discussion. That is why, when Ms Le Couteur says, "Oh, it is the government's proposal," it goes to the heart of my concern. "Oh, it is the government's proposal."

**MR COE:** You are giving it lot of air time, though, are you not?

**Mr Stanhope:** It was a discussion about a way forward. You take it back one step. Whom have you engaged in this and gone out and spoken to your constituents and

said that there are in Canberra certain streets planted with trees that some believe are not suitable for our climate? You can see that.

Once you get to that point that this particular species is not ideally suited, does not adapt well—therefore, once you come to that conclusion—the response to that is: “If it is not suitable, get rid of it. If you are going through an urban renewal process, get rid of these unsuitable species.” Who here is going to put up their hand now and say, “Okay, I’ll hack that, every single tree.”

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Chief Minister.

**Mr Stanhope:** Let us have a show of hands. Who backs that proposal?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Chief Minister, where does this fit into a bipartisan approach?

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, thank you for wanting to start the consultation in this room, but what we do—

**Mr Stanhope:** I am seeking to achieve a bipartisan approach, because at the moment there is not one. We have the Ms Le Couteur approach: “Oh, that’s the government proposal.”

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister!

**Mr Stanhope:** That is clearly not the government’s proposal.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister!

**MR SMYTH:** So—

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry, it is Mr Seselja’s call. I want to point out that we are scheduled to take a morning tea break at 10.30, and there may be other questions under this output.

**Mr Stanhope:** Can the record show that there was no hand raised in relation to this proposal? Can the minutes show that?

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Stanhope, could I finish, please.

**Mr Stanhope:** No member of the Assembly was prepared to support such a proposal.

**MR COE:** You are embarrassing, Jon.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, could we move on. I have got the call. I want to let people know that, if there are other questions under land management, we might need to go through them after the break, but we do have a tight schedule between then and lunch. Mr Seselja.

**MR SESELJA:** Thank you. Chief Minister, in the end, after all that, we have got roughly \$10 million that will be taken out over the next three years from planting trees

for our urban forest but you have found \$26 million extra to put into the arboretum? You are taking money out of street trees but you have managed to find, in all this search for savings, an extra \$26 million for planting trees at the arboretum? That is the net outcome? Having gone around for 15 minutes talking about all these issues, you are ripping \$10 million out of street trees and you have found \$26 million—

**THE CHAIR:** Do you have a question, Mr Seselja?

**MR SESELJA:** I am asking whether that is the case.

**Mr Stanhope:** We are ripping trees out. I do not know whether we are ripping money out.

**MR SESELJA:** You are ripping money out.

**Mr Stanhope:** But certainly we have partially deferred the program.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** You mentioned, in answer to my first question, Chief Minister, that it would come at a greater cost. What work is being done—

**Mr Stanhope:** Sorry, Mr Smyth?

**MR SMYTH:** In your first answer to my original question, you said you knew that the deferral would lead to greater cost in the outyears. What is the estimated growth cost?

**Mr Stanhope:** I did not say greater cost.

**MR SMYTH:** I think you did.

**Mr Stanhope:** If I did say that, then I was not clear in what I intended.

**MR SMYTH:** I think you did.

**Mr Stanhope:** What I was seeking to say—I look forward to explaining it—what I was seeking to convey was that, in this deferral, the government acknowledges that the urban tree renewal requirement is such that this is a requirement which will need to be funded in future budgets. When and how much, I do not know. But it is an issue that is not that urgent that it cannot be delayed. It is just simply not that urgent that it cannot be delayed for a few years. It can be managed in the way it is being managed by the provision of an additional \$1 million.

So the issue of dying trees and the need for them to be replaced and our streetscapes maintained is an ongoing, important role and function of TAMS. The government recognises that. We provided in last year's budget additional funding, withdrawn some of it but not all of it, to enhance the capacity of TAMS to fulfil that function. But, in doing that, I acknowledge, as each of us knows, it is not urgent. If 1,000 trees die next year, we will replace 1,000 trees next year, by way of example. But what

I will seek to convey is that at some stage in some budget in the future this budget line will need additional funds.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Chief Minister.

**MR SMYTH:** There does not appear to be any moneys before the 2013-14 budget. Will it occur before then?

**Mr Stanhope:** As I say, the government has not made a decision on that. As I say, we provided funding of \$1 million over these next few years, and I am sure that, as a good holding position, that will allow us to replace all trees that we remove.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. Mr Rattenbury. Then we will go to morning tea.

**Mr Stanhope:** I might add that, in recent times, I am sure if any of you have been riding your bikes around Lake Ginninderra or Lake Tuggeranong or if you have ridden from the Scrivener Dam down to Streeton Drive, you would have seen, in fact, \$1 million worth of beautiful new—

**MR SMYTH:** How is the cycling practice going? Got that holiday booked?

**THE CHAIR:** Over to Mr Rattenbury, who may not want to talk about cycling at the moment.

**MR COE:** It is good of you to raise Streeton Drive. That has been a roaring success, has it not?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Under output 1.4—

**Mr Stanhope:** The government was very responsive, Mr Coe, and actually we have been applauded for our responsiveness, our care and attention to detail.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Rattenbury has the call.

**MR RATTENBURY:** Thank you, chair. On page 69, output 1.4, land management, I notice, in the land management budget line, government payments for outputs have been steadily rising over the 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11 budgets. Can you explain what this is primarily driven by?

**Mr Stanhope:** I think it is certainly the growth of the city.

**Mr Byles:** I will ask Mr Kalogeropoulos to come to the table.

**MR HARGREAVES:** What output was that, again?

**Mr Byles:** Output 1.4 on page 69.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Sorry, what page was that again?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Page 69, output 1.4. I am asking for an historical analysis,

I guess, or a broad analysis on why that number is steadily increasing over the years and what factors are driving that.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** Yes, predominantly, that is driven by the primary function of land management, which is to manage urban open space. Particularly with the city growing as it is, with an increase in the urban footprint, there are basically more assets that are under management at the moment, which requires additional maintenance funding to be provided to maintain those assets. Parallel to that, there have also been increases in price, particularly water, over that period of time, and that has seen supplementation for funding for water as well over that period of time.

**MR RATTENBURY:** I note the estimated outcome for 2009-10 is about \$1 million more than what is set aside in the 2010-11 budget. Where are those savings going to come from?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** That reduction from the estimated outcome of 2009-10 to the 2010-11 budget is what has been discussed in terms of the urban forest program; so it is that partial deferral. That funding was received and expended in its entirety in 2009-10, or we expect it to be. In 2010-11, we have retained \$1 million of that \$4½ million initiative. So that is the reduction in the forest program.

**MR HARGREAVES:** The program that you got funding for is actually completed now; so instead of carrying all of those funds over for a program that is completed, you have carried over a contingency fund into next year, in case, just continuing on that a little.

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** The \$1 million.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Yes. The actual point, though, that has to be made for the record is that the amount of money in the budget is for a program which is now completed?

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** That is correct, for 2009-10.

**MR RATTENBURY:** If I can ask about the accountability indicators on page 73 of budget paper 4. Obviously, in terms of environmental outcomes, some of these are very broad. Are you confident that the indicators cover all the required environmental outcomes for our parks and reserves? The follow-up question would be: are there other accountability indicators that should be included to give a better indication of environmental outcomes.

**Mr Byles:** I might ask Mr Watkinson to respond to that.

**Mr Watkinson:** There has been a move on the indicators to move much more towards a level of satisfaction with the services that we are providing across a whole range of service levels that we provide, and that is what is reflected here. Rather than just reporting on how many reports that we prepared, we are trying to move towards a more, I guess, accountable indicator about what have we achieved and what is the level of satisfaction with what we have done.

**MR RATTENBURY:** And how will that satisfaction be measured?

**Mr Watkinson:** It is measured by surveys of visitors to the parks and through telephone surveys.

**MR RATTENBURY:** So it is an entirely anthropogenic perspective. Are there any actual environmental outcomes that are being measured?

**Mr Watkinson:** No. Primarily, it is reporting from the community levels of satisfaction with the services that we are providing.

**MR RATTENBURY:** And last year we discussed the provision for a state of the park report against the plan of management for Namadgi. I think you made comment on that last year. Is this saying it has been budgeted for in 2010-11?

**Mr Watkinson:** No.

**MR SMYTH:** O the satisfaction survey, how often are the surveys done and how many surveys are done so that we get these results?

**Mr Watkinson:** This year, the surveys have been done every quarter. So we have been trying to cap seasonal variations, and they have been done, as I have said, by on-site surveys of visitors to the parks and by random telephone surveys so that we have got some balance between actual visitors and people in the general community.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it possible for the committee to have copies of those surveys?

**Mr Watkinson:** Yes, of course.

**THE CHAIR:** Just take that on notice.

**MR COE:** How big is the sample size?

**Mr Watkinson:** Sorry, I do not have that detail in my head; so I will have to provide that on notice.

**MR COE:** And is it online? Are the results or the actual survey itself published online?

**Mr Watkinson:** I am not sure. It might be on the website, but I am not sure.

**THE CHAIR:** On that note, we will adjourn the hearing.

**Meeting adjourned from 10.32 to 10.52 am.**

**THE CHAIR:** We will now resume the public hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates. We have a few more questions around land management and then we will be moving on to environmental regulation. Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** In land management, Chief Minister, I have had a couple of

discussions with your office about the leases over the quarries at Pialligo. The last answer I had was that a valuation of the quarries from the AVO was due, but that was some weeks ago. What progress has been made on this issue that has now been running for several years?

**Mr Stanhope:** It certainly has. It has been a vexed and long-running issue and it has not been easy to resolve. Indeed, there continues to be a degree of uncertainty around the nature of the leases and a way forward. My last advice, which was a week or so ago, was that the government was awaiting a response from one of the two licensees in relation to an agreed way forward. We have been waiting for some weeks. Indeed, I think we were in the process of writing again and imposing a time line on that particular business in relation to responding to the government's position. I think the position had been reached that we were indicating that, if no response was forthcoming, we would have to proceed unilaterally with plans for the future of the site. That was my last understanding.

**MR SMYTH:** What does "proceed unilaterally" mean?

**Mr Stanhope:** We need to resolve it. The lease management or governance arrangements around the quarry have always been clouded in some confusion and we are seeking to regularise it. We are seeking to take it forward. We are seeking to protect the public position in relation to it. We have had some difficulty engaging with the proponents. We have set time lines for responses to correspondence or proposals.

**MR SMYTH:** My understanding is that one lease is still operational and one quarry is not.

**Mr Stanhope:** There is a good deal of confusion about the entire site. I will defer to Mr Byles on that.

**Mr Byles:** Thank you, Chief Minister. I know Mr Watkinson has been handling this matter, Mr Smyth, so I will ask him to respond.

**Mr Watkinson:** I think you are correct in saying that one of the quarries has been inoperative for about a year, but I think both quarries currently have ongoing licences. It is a question of the operator having chosen not to be actively—

**MR SMYTH:** Which quarry are you waiting for the response from? The active one or the inactive one?

**Mr Watkinson:** I think we are still waiting for final responses from both of the operators.

**MR SMYTH:** The last time I spoke to the gentleman who was running his quarry he had not heard anything from the department recently. That was as of yesterday.

**Mr Stanhope:** No. We are awaiting a response from him, in fact, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** How was that conveyed? By letter? By email?

**Mr Watkinson:** I am sorry; I am not quite sure what the question is.

**MR SMYTH:** The Chief Minister said you are awaiting a response. How was the question posed?

**Mr Stanhope:** How are we dealing with him? In person, by email or by letter?

**Mr Watkinson:** I am just trying to think of the history of this because it has been a long, complex process.

**MR SMYTH:** It certainly has.

**Mr Watkinson:** I will need to check the records on this because I have not been directly involved for the last few weeks. But there was some correspondence certainly to one of the operators, if not both, some six months ago. I am not quite sure if there has been any follow-up, written correspondence, since that time. I have certainly taken a couple of telephone calls from one of the operators and have explained the process that we are going through, which is looking at what options there might be for the future of those quarries. But the difficulty is in trying to reach some level of agreement with both of those operators.

**MR SMYTH:** The Chief Minister said we are awaiting a response but you said we have not spoken with them for six months. Which is it?

**Mr Byles:** The last information provided to the Chief Minister was that we were awaiting a response.

**MR SMYTH:** Is that in response to the correspondence from six months ago?

**Mr Byles:** That was the information provided to the chief. I would have to take that question on notice, Mr Smyth, and provide advice to the committee.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR COE:** It is a big call to talk about unilateral action when you really are quite vague about whether correspondence has even been engaged in. Do you agree?

**Mr Stanhope:** Not in light of the history of this matter, no.

**MR SMYTH:** But if something has not happened in six months, if the last communication was six months ago—you are saying you are awaiting a response?

**Mr Stanhope:** The question has been taken on notice, Madam Chair.

**THE CHAIR:** We are taking on notice the correspondence in the last few months. Mr Rattenbury.

**MR RATTENBURY:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Before the break, I was asking about the land management expenditure under output 1.4—that most of it goes to urban park management. Am I able to get a sense of how much of the budget goes to

the non-urban parks, or the non-urban areas, for want of a better word?

**Mr Byles:** We will be able to provide that break-up, Mr Rattenbury, but I am not sure we can do it right now. Mr Watkinson?

**Mr Watkinson:** I would not be in a position to give a detailed breakdown. One of the issues is that Parks, Conservation and Lands has deliberately integrated its land management activities. So there is not a regularly distinct breakdown between urban and non-urban parks, but we could get you a broader breakdown of figures, if that is what you want.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR RATTENBURY:** How am I to understand how much priority is being put on the non-urban parks and whether they are being adequately managed?

**Mr Watkinson:** The response to that question would be in terms of the level of community satisfaction, which is our core indicator, about how the community is satisfied with the levels of management, not only of urban parks but of non-urban parks and some specific services which we provide.

**MR RATTENBURY:** Can we go to some of the new initiatives in budget paper 3, page 73. I note that many of the initiatives under the threatened species conservation area are programs that are being continued. That is obviously a positive thing for the continuity. But what is the extent of the new work that will be undertaken?

**Mr Watkinson:** This is in respect of threatened species conservation?

**MR RATTENBURY:** Yes, it is.

**Mr Watkinson:** That is a continuation of programs such as the Corroboree frog breeding program. It is an expansion of the breeding program to look at breeding Tasmanian bettongs and also looking at whether we can breed grassland earless dragons—both of those species for potential reintroduction back into our nature reserve system. There is also ongoing work with both ANU and the University of Canberra in terms of supporting research. With ANU, we have a partnership in terms of Mulligans Flat and a lot of our research taking place there. We are working with Canberra university on research into grassland ecology and some of the issues we have with our grasslands. Another element of that program is also planting food species, food foraging species, for glossy black cockatoos.

**MR RATTENBURY:** How much in total is spent on biodiversity initiatives all up in the next financial year?

**Mr Watkinson:** I am not sure. We do not have a budget line for biodiversity as such. We have a range of conservation activities taking place, but there again, if you wanted, we could probably put a rough figure together of the total expenditure going towards biodiversity-type events. It depends on whether you are looking at management plans, specific works, in-ground tree planting or breeding. It is a difficult question to answer without being a little bit more specific.

**MR RATTENBURY:** It is difficult to frame the question in the sense that the budget papers provide almost no information below the \$70 million-odd line for land management. This is something we discussed in estimates last year—how members are meant to track spending on particular initiatives, on weed programs, on feral pest program controls, when there is no ongoing information in the budget papers. So I have to come in and ask questions that you cannot answer because we do not get any information. It is a very circular process.

**MR HARGREAVES:** There are also the implications of the environment aspect, which is under Minister Corbell's portfolio. The best way of addressing the issue, I would suspect—and correct me if I am wrong—where members have a particular issue that is occupying their minds, is to ask a question.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Hargreaves. Back to Mr Rattenbury's question.

**MR RATTENBURY:** The work at Mount Painter, which is also on page 73, is obviously important work. How does the department prioritise the reserves that are allocated funding for things such as revegetation or weed and pest control?

**Mr Watkinson:** Largely as a result of feedback that we get from our park care groups and from reports that we get from our on-ground rangers. That helps us to identify where we have particular issues or priorities, and then that is fed into our budget process about where we assess the highest priorities to be.

**MR RATTENBURY:** With respect to ranger numbers, I gather that in 2009-10 there was to be a total of 41 rangers employed in the rural district, Tidbinbilla and the north and south districts. What is the expectation for 2010-11?

**Mr Watkinson:** The expectation would be that similar numbers of rangers will continue into next year's budget.

**MR RATTENBURY:** So the total budget for ranger positions in the coming year is the same as for last year?

**Mr Watkinson:** Again, we do not have a specific budget for ranger positions. We have a total budget which we break down in terms of our staffing right across the whole range of functions that we do. But I would expect that the numbers of rangers would be approximately the same going forward.

**MR RATTENBURY:** How many of these positions are full time and how many are part time?

**Mr Watkinson:** Again, I would need to take that question on notice, but the majority of our ranger positions, if that is what you are referring to, are full time.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that that is taken on notice. Mrs Dunne.

**MRS DUNNE:** Thank you. Chief Minister, Mr Watkinson said it is not possible to tell us what is happening in the urban as opposed to the non-urban area in relation to

land management. How then do you satisfy yourself that works are being done and money is being expended on government priorities?

**Mr Stanhope:** I am not sure that Mr Watkinson said that he cannot explain the difference in work. We could detail the work. Indeed, that would be possible.

**MRS DUNNE:** He said we could get a rough figure.

**Mr Stanhope:** I would have to go back and check. The department would be able to provide a detailed explanation of the works carried out. In fact, the department would be able to provide you with an explanation of how every cent within its budget was expended.

**MRS DUNNE:** Are there cost centres in this output class that would cover individual reserves? How are the cost centres set up so that you can report on—to answer Mr Rattenbury's question, for instance—whether the money is being spent in urban parks, in Canberra nature park, at Tidbinbilla, Namadgi or wherever? How are the cost centres set up?

**Mr Watkinson:** The cost centres tend to be set up by activity. For example, if you looked at weed control, we would have a budget for weed control, but weed control would extend within the urban, peri-urban and into the rural areas. That is why it is difficult to provide a breakdown about what is specific for urban parks and non-urban parks. The same would apply for pest management, where we do rabbit control within the urban, peri-urban and out in some of the rural areas. Because we are an integrated land management agency, we do not say, "This is all the budget that we spend in the urban area, and this is all the budget we spend outside the urban area." We have programs of land management that can transact right through the urban, peri-urban and out to the rural areas. But we could give an approximate breakdown of the level of expenditure within those categories, between urban and non-urban areas.

**MR RATTENBURY:** Perhaps the more interesting question then is: where is it possible to find information on, for example, the pest control, so that we know whether it more or less has been spent or what the priorities of it are? Where is that in the budget papers?

**Mr Watkinson:** I do not think you will find that specifically in the budget papers. You would find that information in the detailed works programs that we deliver once the budget is handed down.

**MRS DUNNE:** Madam chair, could I ask on notice that the officials provide the committee with a breakdown of the cost centres under the land management output and a breakdown of the costs budgeted in the outyears?

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. That has been taken on notice. We might need to move on from land—

**MRS DUNNE:** Could I just another question to be taken on notice?

**THE CHAIR:** One more, and then we do need to move on.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could officials provide the committee with a reconciliation or a description of how successful the past rabbit eradication measures have been—the ones that were in the last two budgets. Last budget, it was Mount Majura and the year before that I think it was the Pinnacle? Could we have some sort of accounting on how successful that has been and whether the rabbits have come back, especially at the Pinnacle? You should have some idea of that by now.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. I note that that has been taken on notice. We will move onto environmental regulation, output 1.5. I want to ask what plans the government has to deal with the heritage backlog, which I believe is in the ballpark of something like 10 years at this point.

**Mr Byles:** I would ask Mr Zatschler, who runs the ACT heritage unit, to respond.

**Mr Zatschler:** There has been significant progress in assessing the nominations to the heritage register. As recently as 29 April, the Heritage Council met specifically to have a look at the remaining nominations, and they are in the process of developing a strategy to deal with those. A number of task forces have been set up to look at rural nominations, natural nominations, historical nominations and the Aboriginal ones. They are going to come up with a strategy in terms of dealing with those over the next six to 12 months. Obviously they cannot all be done at once, but there is a plan in place.

What needs to be noted is that there has been significant progress over the last three years in terms of dealing with the register backlog. It has been reduced from over 320 down to about 240. The other thing that needs to be noted is that the backlog is not static. Over the last 12 months, we have had 14 to 16 nominations, most of which have been dealt with immediately rather than being left at the bottom of the backlog.

**THE CHAIR:** When will they have finalised that reprioritisation?

**Mr Zatschler:** They are working on that at the moment. We are hoping that it will be resolved by the next council meeting at the end of June in terms of the strategy that is going to be adopted.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** When do you think you will finally clear all the backlog? You said it was going to be soon. Do you have some idea?

**Mr Zatschler:** I am not sure that the backlog will be cleared soon; it is the steps taken to deal with the nominations that we have as quickly and practically as we can. What the council will be looking at is prioritising which assessments move forward. I think that is the part that needs to be understood. It is not just a question of having a look at what the nomination is. A lot of the nominations need a more detailed assessment. Some of those could be conducted in house by the heritage unit staff. In other instances we may need to call upon consultants to do an independent assessment and refer that on to council. We are also working with a number of agencies in terms of them bringing on board the consultants to work with the heritage unit to do some assessments of their properties.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Do you have any idea when the backlog will be cleared?

**Mr Zatschler:** As I said, it is not a static backlog; it increases. As things come off, things come in as well. Over the last 12 months, quite a bit of time has been spent dealing with the appeals process. A number of decisions that council has made in relation to registering or not registering have been appealed, and it is a fairly intensive process in terms of providing all the T documents to ACAT and going through the mediation process and briefing barristers and solicitors in terms of that.

**THE CHAIR:** What is happening with the Yarralumla brickworks?

**Mr Zatschler:** My understanding is that there is a community consultation process that is being coordinated through the Land Development Agency. They have commissioned a consultancy firm to prepare an update, a conservation management plan. My team and the council have been reviewing that conservation management plan. That is in the process of being finalised. Obviously there is a bit of work involved in getting that straight, given the community perceptions and interest in that place.

**Mr Stanhope:** The conservation management plan was commenced quite some time ago—I think during 2009—and, as Mr Zatschler has just said, I understand that it is almost complete.

**Mr Zatschler:** It has almost been completed. A draft was given to the council early in April for consideration. They had some issues that they wanted dealt with. Those have been addressed. The final version has been forwarded to council for endorsement, and we are hoping that will happen in the next couple of weeks. But again, it is a 150 to 200-page document and we need to make sure that the heritage values and management policies are effective.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** There is a dry stone wall—this is my favourite trick; I will be coming out of the grave and asking questions about this. At the corner of Anketell Street in Tuggeranong and Athllon Drive, next to the swimming pool, there is a dry stone wall. As I understand it, it was the northern boundary of one of the properties down there years ago. It is starting to get into disrepair. Is that wall on the register?

**Mr Zatschler:** I would have to take that on notice.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Would you mind, please? And also, is there a regular program of inspection of that type of heritage asset? A building is one thing, but some of these things are more subject to the weather and likely to deteriorate. Is there a program of inspection, and therefore fixing?

**Mr Zatschler:** Those responsibilities tend to rest with the asset owner, the asset manager. My team does not necessarily go out on a cyclical basis having a look at individual places, but we do make a point of going out to areas with sensitivities. We will liaise with the asset owners if there is an issue that we feel needs to be dealt with.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Could I invite you to go out and have a look at it?

**Mr Stanhope:** I will go and have a look at it.

**MR HARGREAVES:** That would be wonderful. Thank you, Chief Minister.

**THE CHAIR:** In the papers recently we have heard about the CSIRO selling a number of heritage-listed buildings. Can the ACT play a role? Can they afford any protection?

**Mr Zatschler:** There is a limited role that the ACT can play in that. These are commonwealth-managed or owned properties. From a heritage perspective, they are managed by the commonwealth heritage list. Places that have been in the paper are on the commonwealth heritage list. There would be an expectation that, should the CSIRO or the commonwealth divest themselves from those properties, under their act they brief ACT government, presumably the heritage unit, in terms of how those places should be managed. The Heritage Council could then consider placing them on the heritage list. But as it stands at the moment, while some of those places have been identified and nominated, because this is commonwealth owned and managed, and on designated land, our act technically does not apply at this point

**THE CHAIR:** I want to move on to domestic animals and dogs. Budget paper no 4, page 74, gives the number of dogs processed. We have already been told that funding for Domestic Animal Services is such that dogs are not necessarily being housed in the best conditions. What is being done to address that issue?

**Mr West:** I am responsible for Domestic Animal Services. The Domestic Animal Services facility is located at Mugga Lane in Symonston. It is managed by the ACT Property Group and leased by Domestic Animal Services. We have recently gone through a process of having some of the maintenance issues assessed by the Property Group. My understanding is that some upgrades are about to occur, and some have in fact already occurred. We are confident that the facilities that we have got there for housing the dogs that we need to process are sufficient at this point in time.

**THE CHAIR:** Do you have the staff there to ensure that the place is kept clean and the dogs are well looked after?

**Mr West:** Yes. At this present time we are actually looking at resourcing levels of Domestic Animal Services. I have recently moved some of my staff in the broader branch of Licensing and Compliance to supplement the activities of Domestic Animal Services. I am confident that the current staffing levels are sufficient, but I do have the capacity elsewhere in my branch to supplement that when people go on leave or if, as we had recently, we have people resigning from the government service and going elsewhere. We have been able to supplement those people and move to the recruiting process. I think that at the moment we are well covered. In addition to the authorised staff at Domestic Animal Services, I have some people who are returning to work from injury, from other areas of the ACT government. They are assisting in some administrative roles, which takes that burden off the rangers.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, we had the RSPCA in here last week during the

community submissions, and they raised the issue of their future accommodation. One of the issues we discussed was the possibility of a co-location with Domestic Animal Services and maybe a new model of delivering those sorts of services. Have you got a comment on that?

**Mr Stanhope:** In the context of the specifics, I would be more than happy to defer to Mr Byles and Mr West, but a comment I can make in terms of the government's attitude is that the government has been engaging with the RSPCA at a level over the last couple of years in relation to the impact that the development at Molonglo will have on their current facility at Weston.

The government accepts that the RSPCA will move. The government accepts that it will accept responsibility for the cost of that move. In the context of the location, that is something that has been advanced. I have not been involved in that particular conversation for some little time now, but I am aware of sites that have been identified at Symonston. I am aware of the conversation around the possibility of co-location. I do not have a view on that. I take advice and will await advice on the practicalities of that and the possibility of developing a new model. It may be that Mr West in particular may have had discussions with Mr Linke—I am not aware that he has—around that specific possibility. But in the context of the RSPCA, as I said, we have been in discussion.

We also acknowledge that construction—the first sod was turned in north Weston two weeks ago. The first land will be sold in Wright in a month. The defence housing association have just indicated that they are proposing to proceed with the construction of defence housing reasonably adjacent to the RSPCA. So the time has come, and we are now at the point where we do need to make a decision.

**Mr West:** Thank you, Chief Minister; yes, that is correct. The senior officer in my branch has been liaising quite closely with the chief executive of the RSPCA, Michael Linke. We met with Mr Linke only a week and a half ago. We are examining the sorts of issues that the RSPCA has in mind for a suitable facility for its move, which, as the Chief Minister has pointed out, has to occur reasonably soon. We have examined a couple of possible locations for the RSPCA, and the RSPCA has also indicated some preferences. We are currently looking at a property which is immediately adjacent to the Domestic Animal Services facility, as to whether that might be a suitable location. This is a work in progress at the moment. We have recently formally written to the RSPCA to ask them to specify their ideal requirements. So it is work that is happening.

In addition to that, we are working towards a greater working relationship with the RSPCA in terms of cooperative approaches and some efficiencies that might be obtained from doing that. This is a project which is well underway. We hope to make some significant steps forward in that as soon as possible.

**THE CHAIR:** Are there any time lines that have been agreed to?

**Mr West:** No. We have not got agreed time lines at this point in time. I think at this stage we are at the preliminary scoping phase of trying to ascertain what their requirements will be and then take those into account in terms of looking around for suitable vacant land or vacant facilities and at the same time looking to see whether

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there might be some closer working relationships between Domestic Animal Services and the RSPCA. It is early stages but I think, once we get the agreement in terms of specifications, we can move fairly quickly.

**Mr Stanhope:** The government accepts that this is a decision that needs to be taken in this coming financial year in anticipation of next year's budget.

**THE CHAIR:** We might now move on to the Office of Transport.

**MR SMYTH:** Before we do that, Chief Minister, I have found the correspondence from your office concerning the lease at Pialligo. You will understand my surprise when you said you were waiting on a response for six months; it was five or six months ago that you might have to take unilateral action.

The email states that the proponent was made an offer. It was not until September 2009 that the proponent indicated that he would be willing to accept the two-block proposal. Senior managers have since been working to identify the legislative and logistical requirements that will be applied to the new licence which they will shortly provide as a draft to the quarry operators. This will include advice of an appropriate licence fee determined by the Australian Valuation Office. Correspondence to the owner confirming this offer and associated conditions is currently being prepared and will be forwarded to him together with advice from the AVO when it is received.

So I am at a loss as to the three stories that we have—the one you mentioned, the one that the public servant mentioned and one that is in this email from your staff. I will write to you and I will send you back a copy of this and perhaps we can have it teed up for next Friday when you return.

**Mr Stanhope:** Certainly. That is why we took the question on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Bresnan.

**MS BRESNAN:** This is Office of Transport we are up to now?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, this is Office of Transport we are up to.

**MS BRESNAN:** My first question is in relation to the feasibility study for the bus lane on Canberra Avenue. I am wondering whether we could get a few more details about what the commitment is for an additional lane on Canberra Avenue to be dedicated to a bus lane and whether the feasibility study will be looking at how it can be incorporated or, if a bus lane is going to go there, whether we can get some more details on that.

**Mr Elliott:** Yes, a feasibility study will assess possible options for bus priority, including bus lanes, and I think there is funding in the outyears for the construction of such.

**MS BRESNAN:** So it is not looking at whether there are going to be some measures there, it is actually looking at what is going to be the best measure for Canberra Avenue?

**Mr Elliott:** There will be a range of measures. If there are traffic lights, for example, you might put bus priority onto the traffic light system; so the full range of bus priority will be looked at down the corridor. But there is certainly funding in the outyears for the construction of transit lanes or dedicated bus lanes.

**MS BRESNAN:** So there is funding for a transit lane?

**Mr Elliott:** In the four-year program for this particular initiative, there is.

**MS BRESNAN:** That is something that is definitely going to go ahead? There are no ifs or buts there about whether it is going to go ahead?

**Mr Elliott:** There is funding there. If the feasibility study showed that it was not warranted or there was a better way of managing traffic down that corridor—and it is a pretty dense corridor, as we all know—then we would not construct it and we would make necessary adjustments. That would be a matter for government decision but at this point in time we consider that that is a likelihood. And there is funding in the outyears to do so.

**MS BRESNAN:** Is that the same thinking of the people in Queanbeyan that you are speaking to? They do not have any different ideas about how it is going ahead?

**Mr Elliott:** I know it is not a matter for the budget papers but certainly there has been a roundtable which the Chief Minister chaired with the Mayor of Queanbeyan Council and there will be a subsequent task force established to have a look at all of the relationships around transport, including public transport and priority in transport infrastructure through that corridor. That will be the forum to allow a generation of ideas. I think that the feasibility study for Canberra Avenue will certainly get some airing in there.

There has been a bit of a delay in time, I would have to say, in getting officials from different locations. For New South Wales in particular, it has taken a while to get the right officials to be nominated to that task force but I think we received the last nomination yesterday, in which case we will be hoping to undertake that task force meeting, the initial meeting, sometime in June. We hope to do it in May, in fact. And that will align fairly well with the feasibility study approach. When we get the right consultant in place to do that particular project, we will be able to get their preliminary studies done and we will be able to bring that to the task force for a bit of consultation.

**MS BRESNAN:** Do you have an expected time frame for the feasibility study completion?

**Mr Elliott:** The feasibility study has been done. It is a feasibility and then there is a design in the outyears, in the second year. I guess we would be hoping to improve on that a little. Best endeavours would see some construction at the end of the second year and we would bring some of the capital forward, depending on what the outcome was. It might look like, I guess, a straightforward piece of work. We expect to generate a fair bit of community consultation on it; so we have been a little more

generous in our time frames around that particular proposal on this occasion.

**MS BRESNAN:** So it is expected that you will be working pretty well to that time line that has been set out in terms of this funding in the budget?

**Mr Elliott:** Yes. You will see that there is feasibility, then there is the design in the next year and then there is construction in the third year. Depending on how the consultation goes, we have an opportunity, I guess, to bring forward some of those and to cap some of the capital expenditure. It just depends what the measures are, what the options are that are consulted on and what government are eventually pressed to do.

**MS BRESNAN:** I have one other question in relation to Queanbeyan. I know Redex is being extended to Fyshwick and there has been some mention of it possibly being extended to Queanbeyan. Is that something that has been part of the discussions?

**Mr Elliott:** That will certainly be a matter that we will undertake under the task force.

**MS BRESNAN:** So it will be in the task force too?

**Mr Elliott:** Yes. It is a difficult thing, as you might appreciate—

**MS BRESNAN:** Yes, across the border.

**Mr Elliott:** to run bus services or any transport services across borders. We do not have to deal with the sorts of things that we did in the past, like different rail gauges, but certainly the way that different transport services are administered between jurisdictions is quite different. We have different rules about how we do it here and certainly different rules in Queanbeyan and different rules in relation to fares and pricing, which are quite challenging things to overcome. But certainly it will be a matter for the task force to have a look at how we, in fact, join the communities together and provide good transport options for both communities across the border.

In some ways, the border is quite an artificial boundary. We are talking about Canberra and the Canberra region. A lot of people who work in Canberra live in Queanbeyan, and vice versa. A lot of people cross the border every day for work and for other reasons. We have got a commitment to try to improve that transport corridor and improve the public transport options for people.

**MS BRESNAN:** So it is officially on the agenda of the task force that we have?

**Mr Elliott:** It is definitely on it. In fact, it was the first item on the agenda. And the agenda has become a little broader in its scope. So it was certainly the thing we started with. It was about public transport. It was very community focused in our thinking but there are a few other matters that the other jurisdictions, New South Wales and, in fact, the commonwealth, have raised with us. They will be certainly part of the first agenda of the meeting.

**MR COE:** But you will have a compatible ticketing system, will you not?

**Mr Elliott:** Sorry?

**Mr Stanhope:** Deane's is a member of the task force.

**Mr Elliott:** We will have our bus operators there as well and they will certainly be very interested in the public transport conversation.

**MS BRESNAN:** You said there will be transport reps there as well from each link.

**Mr Elliott:** Yes, absolutely.

**MR COE:** You will have a compatible ticketing system with Deane's, is that correct?

**Mr Elliott:** Excuse me?

**MR COE:** The ticketing system will be compatible with Deane's, is that correct?

**Mr Elliott:** Deane's run a smartcard system now to some degree, albeit a slightly rudimentary one. They have been doing it for a couple of years. They upgraded it about two years ago. In our conversations with them, outside the ambit of the task force but certainly in terms of the two biggest bus operators in this district, we have talked to them about the benefits that we might get out of having one ticketing system for both bus operators.

They are certainly open to that. They are warm to that. But they are a commercial enterprise and they need to consider the relativities of that. But in terms of commitment, they have said they will consider it. We should press that forward. I do not think we are going to get too far on that particular initiative until we get our own ticketing system up and running. We will have it up and running by the end of this year. We are well progressed with that. I will not go into details about that particular project now but, I guess, Deane's see the benefits if we are trying to move people across the border—and they do operate into the territory—in having the same ticketing system on all of our buses.

**MR COE:** You are saying that if Deane's come to the party and say, "We want to do it," then it will happen?

**Mr Elliott:** There will be a commitment to it. There would have to be a business arrangement and we would have to get—

**MR COE:** But ACTION are willing to engage in a comparable or compatible ticketing system?

**Mr Elliott:** In that sense, ACTION will not own the ticketing system. The smartcard ticketing system has a lot of applications. The first application for this smartcard development in this territory will be a bus ticket system. But certainly we can use the smartcard for a number of other applications.

In regard to the vendor that we selected a couple of years ago, we selected very intentionally and very purposefully one that was mature, one that had gone through

a series of steps and deployed and had some experience in that deployment. With regard to that, they have, since starting their system about eight years ago, now added other applications.

One of the applications that that vendor provides to Perth, which is where the vendor first started, is actually swipe cards for bike facilities. They have bike lockers and they have smartcard swipe systems on bike lockers. It is our intention, in fact, to enlarge the range of applications on that smartcard in the future.

**MR COE:** What I am getting at is: as a policy position, does ACTION want to engage with Deane's on a shared ticketing system?

**Mr Elliott:** It is not a matter for ACTION; it is a matter for Transport. The bus ticketing system will not be owned and operated by ACTION. It will be owned and operated by the department. And it will deploy the ticketing system where it sees fit within the business arrangements and at the direction of government.

**MR COE:** Does the department then, given we have the department's executive director here, want to have a ticketing system which is compatible with that used by Deane's?

**Mr Elliott:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Le Couteur and then Mr Seselja.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** I have a totally different question. We are upgrading London Circuit and Northbourne Avenue. That is ongoing work. I note that on a small part of it, between AusAID and Rydges, there has been an on-road bike path put in. My question is twofold. Why, in general, given we are doing such a major upgrade and we are removing the gutters, has there not been more provision for on-road bike space? Secondly, why, given we are doing such a big upgrade, have we had the same thing that we find all through Canberra, a bike lane for a short period and then I do not know what the bicyclists are expected to do? But given that the whole of London Circuit is being redone, why, in this case, does it appear that it is not going all the way around?

**Mr Stanhope:** Mr Gill would be happy to respond.

**Mr Gill:** When we undertake maintenance of the roads system, we take whatever opportunity we can to provide for cyclists. In the case of London Circuit, those opportunities are controlled by the width of the existing road. It is not wide enough the whole way. It varies in its width around the circuit. So where the opportunities have been available to provide for on-road cycling, we have taken that opportunity. The project is not funded to widen actual London Circuit itself. So we are taking opportunities when we can, given that London Circuit is one of the bicycle routes that we want to promote.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** And in the future, will you end up having to redo the work you have just done if you do end up doing bike facilities?

**Mr Gill:** We can add to the work we have just done. It is not redundant work.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** So the edge of London Circuit will not change?

**Mr Gill:** The edge of London Circuit will not change, except for where we are trying to accommodate a widening for additional facilities, if that is the case in the future.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** So it potentially is redundant, what has just happened?

**Mr Gill:** No, the work that has been done is not redundant but it can be added to in the future.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** But the gutter would have to be removed.

**Mr Gill:** The gutter would be modified.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** You are just rebuilding the guttering?

**Mr Stanhope:** In places.

**Mr Gill:** In places, yes.

**Mr Stanhope:** Where it is crumbling.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** All the way up Northbourne Avenue and certainly a lot of London Circuit.

**Mr Gill:** But that is a feature of that type of work.

**THE CHAIR:** There was a motion recently passed in the Assembly requiring the government to investigate a number of new actions around active and sustainable transport. That was looking at bike lanes, path lighting and so forth. How far are we along in investigating and maybe moving on some of the parts of that motion?

**Mr Stanhope:** I think you would see from the budget, from the \$97 million in capital being invested in a range of transport-related infrastructure, that there is a range of initiatives in this budget. Ms Greenland would perhaps be best to respond in some detail to your question, Ms Hunter.

**Ms Greenland:** There are a number of initiatives in the budget that deal with those issues. There is a specific initiative in relation to street lighting that supports bike path use. In addition to that, there is an amount in the budget allocated for the bike path program. Both of those will contribute to those objectives in the Assembly motion.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** One of the things that were specifically removed from the Assembly motion related to the involvement of children and young people. Given that children and young people are significant users of active transport—they walk, they ride bikes; they do not drive cars because they cannot, legally—how are they involved in your transport plan?

**Ms Greenland:** There are programs in place. They are not all run through this department. There is the walking school bus program that is run by other government agencies. The transport for Canberra plan will be looking at a range of ways of encouraging people to use alternative modes, and certainly there is an opportunity there for them to explore, to encourage children to become active in terms of using bikes and walking to school. So, while there is not a specific program that has been identified, there is the opportunity in the future certainly to do things like encouraging children to become more aware of road rules and using bikes—those sorts of things—but there is not any specific initiative in this year’s package that deals directly with children.

**Mr Stanhope:** I think Ms Le Couteur’s interest is also in how we consult and engage with children in our planning for transport.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Yes. Thank you, Chief Minister.

**Mr Elliott:** I might answer that to some extent. It might be a bit submerged inside the budget papers, but there is certainly an intent to develop and engage on policy matters related to sustainable transport, in particular, and that will go to walking and cycling and community use. There is a commitment to undertake an action plan, which we will call transport for Canberra, and within that there are a number of strategies and a number of policy initiatives.

The government have decided that they want to undertake that engagement with the community, not only in relation to transport but in relation to a number of other policy matters, and they want to do that in a coordinated way. As a result, we will be undertaking some work and some community engagement on the sort of matters that are in the active transport framework. But it will be done under the government’s direction through a community engagement process that is quite coordinated and integrated. The Chief Minister’s Department are leading that particular process and will be providing sustainable transport policies and strategies within that context.

I take the point and I think that to some extent we would like to engage on some of these matters. But we have really just taken a small breath and within, I guess, either this calendar year or the next financial year you will see a good articulation of some of the policy matters that you are referring to and you will see a strong element of community engagement around them.

**Mr Stanhope:** Just on that, colleagues may not be aware of the motion, or at least the detail of the debate, but the government’s position in relation to the motion, Ms Le Couteur, was that I wished to take advice on a way forward on a number of the issues that ultimately were not agreed to by the Assembly in the terms that you expressed them. It did not mean that we were not necessarily supportive; it was just that I wanted the opportunity to take advice. I am not sure that I have formally conveyed this—I accept that I always expect these things to be just picked up and assumed.

Mr Elliott, Ms Le Couteur’s interest is in the context—and it is a reasonable position—that we develop a strategy to consult with children in relation to municipal planning and transport planning. I will take advice on the issue, Ms Le Couteur, and

will be more than happy to convey that to you when we perhaps have a better feel for how we might engage with younger people in relation to issues around transport planning, particularly as it affects them.

**THE CHAIR:** Certainly, there was an inquiry into ACTION buses a few years ago here in the Assembly. In my previous position, we put out a SurveyMonkey, there was an iPod attached and 230 young people gave very detailed feedback on specific routes and how they could be improved. So, Chief Minister, there is one example of how engagement can occur.

**MR SESELJA:** Moving on to a roads issue, page 84 of budget paper 4 has a revised funding profile for Gungahlin Drive extension stage 2. Mr Gill, could you give us a bit of an update as to how much the project is now being delayed from the original specs?

**Mr Gill:** The project has not been delayed. The project is making good progress. It will be completed by between the end of December next year and June the subsequent year. The budget target is June 2012. It is probably tracking ahead of that in the context, in the order of six months.

**MR SESELJA:** So why do we have the revised funding profile? Why is the funding being pushed back?

**Mr Gill:** The funding is not being pushed back. It is basically the way we have programmed the work. The project is tracking within budget.

**MR SESELJA:** But the way it reads on page 84 it looks like that money is not being spent in 2009-10 and 2010-11 and is instead being spent in 2011-12.

**Mr Gill:** It may well end up being a balance in that project.

**MR SESELJA:** Okay. So what has led to the change in the funding profile?

**Mr Gill:** We have basically programmed the delivery of the Gungahlin Drive extension in six contracts, four of which are in the field and they basically cover Glenloch, Belconnen Way, Ginninderra Drive and Barton Highway and primarily on bridges. They are making good progress and they came in at quite a competitive price, so in terms of what we had forecast, in terms of what it is actually costing us, there is a balance in that context.

Having said that, there are two outstanding contracts to go ahead. One is the completion of the links between the bridges, the actual road component, and a subsequent landscaping project covering the full length of the route so that it will look better. We have adjusted the cash to reflect the contracts that we have in the field.

**MR SESELJA:** So those outstanding contracts will come out of the \$12.747 million for the final year?

**Mr Gill:** Yes. The project is tracking well, it is within budget and it is ahead of time.

**MR COE:** Have the contracts actually changed? Have they been amended, or was the money never spent? I just do not quite understand, to be honest, where we are getting to here.

**Mr Gill:** In the context of the Gungahlin Drive extension, some years ago there was an appropriation of \$85.5 million for the project stage 2. We have subsequently, in terms of how we have delivered that, delivered it in a number of different stages and it is tracking within that. There have been no changes. It is tracking within the authorisation.

**MR COE:** So as of the budget last year you thought that you would be spending \$3 million roughly this financial year and \$10 million next year, so as of the budget last year was it really that far off in terms of the estimations of where you would be spending the money?

**Mr Gill:** No. This year, at the end of June, we will spend \$22 million on the Gungahlin Drive extension. We had anticipated we would probably spend about \$27 million.

**MR COE:** That does not explain why \$10 million has been rolled over from 2010-11 into 2011-12, though.

**Mr Gill:** I suppose we have adjusted the cash flow in terms of what is actually happening on the ground.

**MR SMYTH:** What does the money relate to? What does this \$12.7 million actually relate to?

**Mr Gill:** To which page are you referring?

**MR SMYTH:** Page 84, budget paper 4, second-last line.

**Mr Stanhope:** Congratulations, Mr Gill, on being ahead of time and on budget—music to my ears.

**MR SMYTH:** On time and on budget was July 2005, I thought.

**Mr Stanhope:** Ahead of time and on budget.

**MR COE:** Tell the people in Gungahlin that.

**MR SESELJA:** That is right. They are pleased at the speedy delivery of your government, Jon!

**MR COE:** That is right. I had another smooth run this morning!

**Mr Kalogeropoulos:** I will give it a go. Just on that, when the budget was appropriated in the previous budget, it had a particular funding profile for those years. Tony has let the tenders out and what has happened is that those tenders have actually come in for that period under what we had previously allocated for funding over those

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periods. For 2010-11 and 2011-12, those contracts that had been let have come in under the original budget that we had allocated for that period. So, in effect, what we have done is adjusted the funding profile to reflect the consumption of that funding in line with the contracts that have been let. In doing so, that funding has been pushed back. From what I understand, there might be some additional works that Tony is going to be doing with respect to some of the amenities, if you like—the soft landscaping—

**Mr Gill:** As I said, we have added a sixth contract, which is the landscaping component. That is one aspect of perhaps Gungahlin Drive stage 1 that has received mixed comment from the community in terms of what it looks like. Does it look like a road where you have invested a certain amount of money?

**MR COE:** It certainly does not.

**Mr Gill:** No. So you share that view.

**MR COE:** I have quite a lot of time to look at the landscape when I am driving on it. Where are the savings reflected? You said that the contracts came in under budget—

**Mr Gill:** These are not necessarily savings; this is an adjustment of cash flow.

**MR COE:** No, you said that the contracts came in under what was expected. Where are those figures recorded in the budget? We have got \$12 million here which has been rolled over from 2009-10 and 2010-11 into 2011-12. There is not a dollar of savings there in that line option.

**Mr Gill:** No, but what you are calling savings basically is an adjusted cash flow, which will be used to address the landscape content.

**MR COE:** So the scope of the project is actually increasing? Is that what you are saying?

**Mr Gill:** We are getting more within the same dollars. We are delivering more within the same dollars. The project is going to be within budget, it is going to be ahead of time and you are actually going to get more for it.

**MR COE:** Right. So when was the decision taken to change the scope of the project rather than just save the money?

**Mr Gill:** Landscaping is always a component of a major project.

**MR COE:** So are you saying that the landscaping cost has blown out but the total cost is still—

**Mr Gill:** No, I am not saying that. I am saying that the landscaping component will be enhanced.

**MR SESELJA:** By how much?

**Mr Gill:** Yet to be determined. We are working—

**THE CHAIR:** But it will be within the original funding envelope that was agreed to?

**Mr Gill:** It will be within the original authorisation and the project will be delivered within the time frame.

**MR COE:** Okay. So for the rest of the project, excluding landscaping, how much under budget is that going to be?

**Mr Gill:** We have not finished it yet. We have not let the fifth or the sixth contract.

**MR COE:** So how can you say that you are going to have spare money to spend on landscaping?

**Mr Stanhope:** An exercise of judgement.

**Mr Gill:** We have let four contracts and we know that basically they are within or under basically what we—

**MR COE:** That is the amount. How much are they under?

**Mr Gill:** It is in the range of \$5 million.

**MR COE:** Potentially you could spend \$5 million on landscaping, in addition to what has already been allocated, and you would still be on budget for the overall project?

**Mr Gill:** We would be, yes.

**MR COE:** Right. So do you expect to spend \$5 million in additional money on landscaping?

**Mr Gill:** We will review that when the fifth road contract, which goes out to tender in August, has gone through the tender process and is let. We will see what the balance is.

**MR COE:** Is any of this footnoted or noted in the budget in any place?

**Mr Gill:** No. What is noted in the budget is that we will deliver a project by June 2012 and within an authorisation of \$85.5 million.

**MR SESELJA:** Could we get a reconciliation of each of those contracts so that we can see the breakdown?

**Mr Gill:** We can provide advice on that.

**MR SESELJA:** That would be great.

**THE CHAIR:** Can I just note that has been taken on notice. I also note that we do need to move on to public transport under ACTION. Are there any further questions

on the office of transport?

**MR SMYTH:** I have just got a couple of road programs that hopefully will not be nearly as interesting. On page 83, about four lines from the bottom, there is a revised funding profile for the upgrade of the airport roads. It shows that \$15 million for this year has been pushed back to 2011-12 and 2012-13. What is the reason for that?

**Mr Gill:** I am sorry, where did you find it?

**MR SMYTH:** It is budget paper 4, page 83, four projects from the bottom.

**Mr Gill:** Yes, I am with you. The federal roads program basically allocated \$30 million to the territory in 2009-10 over a five-year period. That initially was flagged for the first stage of Majura Parkway. Majura Parkway itself is a major project which has a \$250 million cost against it. On design, the \$30 million would not deliver a very substantial component of the Majura Parkway stage 1. It would provide a single bridge across the Molonglo River over a small section of road.

In discussion with the minister, an approach was made to the federal department of infrastructure to reallocate those funds to another project, the Monaro Highway duplication in Fyshwick. An approach has been made to them for that to happen. It has not been approved yet. That is why the funding in 2009-10 has been shifted to the current year.

**MR SMYTH:** So that money is for the final section of Monaro Highway from Canberra Avenue—

**Mr Gill:** In Fyshwick—the section that was built in the 1990s. It was basically built as a single carriageway.

**MR SMYTH:** Yes, and that includes the bridge over Canberra Avenue.

**Mr Gill:** Yes, two bridges. There is a railway over Canberra Avenue and a railway bridge.

**MR SMYTH:** And the railway bridge as well.

**Mr Gill:** And that will complete work, as opposed to building a staged component of work that might not be of similar benefit.

**MR SMYTH:** In budget paper 3 on page 142 there is a plan to widen Parkes Way between Glenloch and the Acton tunnel. What will that involve?

**Mr Gill:** That is the provision of a third lane in each direction from the Glenloch interchange to Action tunnel, with work taking place in the median, as opposed to the side.

**MR SMYTH:** Into the median strip?

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** There isn't any side, is there?

**Mr Gill:** Sorry?

**THE CHAIR:** There isn't anywhere to go.

**MR SMYTH:** Well, there is a lake and a mountain. There is plenty of room there.

**Mr Gill:** There is room in the median, but not—

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR COE:** It is a very wide stopping lane as well.

**Mr Gill:** Indeed. But it is work to support the future development of Molonglo and also to get the full benefit out of the improved works at Glenloch interchange.

**MR SMYTH:** All right. On page 148 there is the Ashley Drive upgrade. There is \$150,000 this year for a feasibility study, but there is nothing in the outyears. What is expected from the feasibility study?

**Mr Gill:** Roads ACT is part of our role. We monitor, as well, traffic conditions around the network. The volume of traffic on Ashley Drive, particularly the section between Sternberg Crescent and Johnson, is 23,000 vehicles a day, which surprised me when I saw those figures.

**MR SMYTH:** Come down in the morning; it is all there.

**MR HARGREAVES:** He goes down there more often than you do, Brendan.

**MR SMYTH:** I don't think so.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Tony Gill goes down to Tuggeranong more often than anybody I know around this table.

**Mr Gill:** I visit all parts of Canberra on a regular basis.

**MR SMYTH:** As an observation—

**Mr Gill:** As an observation, there are some technical thresholds. It is a single carriageway. You would expect a road like that to be carrying in the order of 16,000 to 18,000 vehicles a day. It has exceeded that. So I felt it was worth looking at it in terms of not just the traffic aspects—capacity and safety—but what might need to be done in that area and what can be justified in terms of investment. It is important to have an understanding of what you are trying to achieve. In the context of public transport, there are some activities in Erindale that we need to be mindful of too. Looking at it in a broader context, it seems sensible to do some feasibility work to see what might happen.

PROOF

**MR SMYTH:** Will the study include the section of Erindale Drive between Ashley Drive and Sternberg?

**Mr Gill:** It will, yes, because that is a particularly problematic area.

**MR SMYTH:** It will?

**Mr Gill:** Yes. That small roundabout is really a throttle in the system.

**MR SMYTH:** It goes down to one lane.

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** The other side of the intersection of Erindale and Sternberg—if you are coming from Woden in the afternoon the traffic is often banked up, sometimes almost as far as Sulwood. Will it look at the provision of an extra turning lane, a left turn, into Sternberg?

**Mr Gill:** It will cover that extent of work. I do not know what the solutions are, but basically—

**MR SMYTH:** Sure. But it will look at that?

**Mr Gill:** We are looking at that. It will not be just looking at that section of road; it will be looking at a road network in that area to see what the impacts are.

**MR SMYTH:** Thank you. There is just one follow on. What is the current capacity of Majura Road?

**Mr Gill:** At the moment it is carrying between 16,000 and 18,000 vehicles a day, of which about 16 per cent would be commercial traffic.

**MR SMYTH:** 16 per cent would be commercial?

**Mr Gill:** That is very high.

**MR SMYTH:** Is there equivalence between, say, a B-double and a car—all the B-doubles that travel up and down there?

**Mr Gill:** Commercial traffic has a much more significant impact in terms of damage to the pavement and also operating costs.

**MR SMYTH:** Could you take that on notice and tell me what a standard semi-trailer and a B-double—

**Mr Gill:** From what point of view?

**MR SMYTH:** For every trip by a B-double along that road, how many cars do you have?

**Mr Gill:** It is the equivalent of three to four.

**MR SMYTH:** It is equivalent to three or four. You said Majura has 16,000 to 18,000 movements a day?

**Mr Gill:** Vehicles a day, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** Yes. What is Majura Road rated at? How many should it carry?

**Mr Gill:** It is a rural road, so it would have a carrying capacity in the order of 15,000 to 18,000. The issue with Majura Road is the commercial traffic component.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it fair to say that it is well beyond capacity at this time?

**Mr Gill:** It is getting close to capacity, if you compare it to Ashley Drive.

**MR SMYTH:** Yes.

**Mr Gill:** Using that comparison, and looking at, say, other roads around the territory where there are upgrades, let us take Lanyon Drive as an example. It is currently being upgraded. That was upgraded at 22,000 vehicles a day. It is in that range where basically the need for improvement has been flagged. It is just a question of what is required and what can be justified in an economic sense.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Is it true that the strength of the pavement of Majura Road was intended for rural road traffic and not particularly B-doubles and that is why, in terms of the effect that that sort of vehicle will have on those roads, it is imperative that we move forward?

**Mr Gill:** Majura Road is a country road. It is a country track that has over time basically been formed as a road pavement. It is not designed for commercial traffic. Part of the justification for a road like Majura Parkway is the improvement for freight traffic connecting the Federal to the Monaro Highway via Majura.

**MR HARGREAVES:** It is true, is it not, that the pavement, because of the need for it to be of such strength to take that size of vehicle, will significantly increase the cost of providing that parkway? So our mindset about the cost of a road, if we just build a road, is not correct when we approach the Majura Parkway?

**Mr Gill:** The argument about Majura Parkway is that, as an important freight route, it is contributing to the national economy. That is the benefit side of it. The cost of the infrastructure to support that is more costly.

**MR COE:** There is also a rail reservation issue there—is that correct? There are tentative plans—

**Mr Gill:** The Majura Parkway was designed to not preclude a future high speed train, without any well-defined rail reservation being identified.

**MR COE:** Right. So is that a potential planning issue to deal with?

**Mr Gill:** That is a planning issue that has been considered in looking at the Majura Parkway.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. We will now move on to ACTION—output class 1, public transport. Mr Seselja and then Ms Bresnan.

**MR SESELJA:** Turning to page 113 of budget paper 4, it has got the accountability indicators for ACTION. There are some pretty poor results. The increase in total patronage, instead of going up by 529,000, has gone down by 800,000. The increase in modal share, instead of going up by three per cent, is down by five per cent. The total cost per vehicle kilometre is above target and the total cost per passenger boarding is well above target. Could you, Mr Byles or Mr Elliott, explain to us why we are falling so far behind in some of these key indicators?

**Mr Byles:** Yes, Mr Seselja. I will defer to Mr Elliott and possibly to Mr Roncon.

**Mr Elliott:** I think primarily the results in 2009-10 are outcomes of a fairly fragmented and increasingly failing ticketing system. We use that as a basis to measure how many people we carry. We use it as a basis to collect revenue. It is a fundamental tool for us to deliver our results.

Our view is that we know we are tracking to come in under budget for revenue this year because we are just not able to collect and record effectively. We think our passenger numbers are driving the same results. The outcome of that is that all the figures you see down the page are poorer than we would want.

My view is that if you look at the existing levels of service that we have had in past networks and the extra services that we have put on this year, in fact our result should be a lot better. So our conclusion is that we are just not recording people who are travelling and we are just not getting the results through. I suspect that the real result is better than what we can report. But we have to report on the numbers that we are collecting and that is all we can use.

**MR SESELJA:** If we are not recording people travelling, presumably that also means we are not getting revenue for those people?

**Mr Elliott:** Correct; absolutely correct.

**MR SESELJA:** So how much of the shortfall there, the 800,000 down, do you put down to the ticketing system, and how much is—

**Mr Elliott:** My estimate is round about five or six per cent. We monitor this on a monthly basis just to see how it is going. We did get a little bit of an improvement during the last financial year with regard to some equipment. Our partners in the new ticketing systems, Downer EDI, were able to scan the world and they found some chips and bytes from a couple of European countries. They sent them over and we were able to upgrade some of our technology a bit.

But again, the equipment is really on its last legs and other material has started to fail.

PROOF

We just cannot validate effectively at the moment. I estimate it within a range of round about five or six per cent, but it could be higher. We are just monitoring as we go.

**MR SESELJA:** So five or six per cent—in real numbers, what does that amount to?

**Mr Elliott:** We are projecting to be about one million short in ACTION revenues this year, at this point in time.

**MR SESELJA:** \$1 million?

**Mr Elliott:** \$1 million, yes.

**MR SESELJA:** In passenger numbers, what does that five or six per cent amount to, if 800,000 is what is being recorded? What would that make the real number?

**Mr Elliott:** I would have to take that on notice, because I would not want to mislead you with inaccurate numbers. I would have to go back to what we were projecting to carry.

**MR SESELJA:** Sure.

**Mr Elliott:** I would want to have a look at the proper numbers and then do an estimate about what we think we are missing or not recording. That is not to say people are not using. It is just to say we are not recording them using, actually. So I will take that on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** I will note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR COE:** Roughly how many passengers do you get per year?

**Mr Elliott:** I think we are carrying—do not hold me to this—around 24 million trips a year, but I would rather take it on notice and give you that.

**THE CHAIR:** That is taken on notice as well.

**MR SESELJA:** So the ticketing system is one aspect. We heard earlier, I think, that \$1 million of the efficiencies that you have identified in TAMS was going to come out of ACTION, but the Indec report has identified far more than that—by some measure up to \$30 million a year. Why are we not doing more to address some of these serious inefficiencies that have been identified not just in this report but presumably in reports in previous years?

**Mr Elliott:** I think I have spoken in this chamber before about the reform of ACTION, and said in the past that there are really three strategies around trying to improve ACTION. One of them is an industrial strategy which is being engaged again as we try to renew our agreement at the moment.

A second strategy is really about modernising the bus service. There has been significant investment in that bus service over the last few years in particular. There is

## PROOF

a new fleet and there are new information systems. The new ticketing system is just one of those. It is just taking a long time to get right and get into place. We are suffering from that right at the moment, but it will be a long-term improvement.

The third strategy is really about the market that ACTION operates in. ACTION has traditionally operated as a sole monopoly provider of transport services, bus services in the territory. The intention is that it would not want to do that forever and it cannot do that forever as the city grows.

So they are the three strategies. I guess that in terms of the efficiencies that are being put through ACTION this year, or in the next financial year, there has been a considered approach to what the outcomes might be out of our industrial negotiations, there has been a conservative approach to efficiencies that could be obtained, and we may do much better.

If we had been able to negotiate our agreement last year, we could have been much more confident about our projections for next year. So there has been an effort made to say that we need to get better, but we cannot go too far because we cannot predict the outcome of that industrial negotiation at this point in time.

**MR SESELJA:** Minister, these inefficiencies are not anything new. Why has it taken so long to start addressing some of the serious inefficiencies that are identified in that report?

**Mr Stanhope:** It is important to understand the nature of the report and suggestions of 30 per cent or \$30 million of inefficiency is not really a proper or true reflection.

**MR COE:** Why did you put that in your press release?

**Mr Stanhope:** Because that is what they determined in the report, but I am explaining the context.

**MR SESELJA:** What is the real number?

**MR COE:** You did not qualify it in your press release.

**Mr Stanhope:** The real number, the real number—

**THE CHAIR:** All right. Mr Coe, one at a time.

**Mr Stanhope:** It depends on how one characterises it. In the context of a comparison of bus networks across the nation, it is what is regarded as an inefficient cost. But some of those so-called inefficient costs simply arise from the fact that bus drivers in ACTION receive more pay than bus drivers in other networks.

So the benchmark is the benchmark against an efficient provider. This government and previous governments since self-government—indeed, before self-government the commonwealth—have negotiated pay outcomes that have led to ACTION drivers being better or more highly remunerated than bus drivers in other networks.

Certainly, that can be categorised as inefficiency—not representing best industry practice—but it is a bit unfair on the workforce to characterise their level of pay as an inefficiency. It is incorrect to suggest that \$30 million of inefficiencies have been found and therefore \$30 million worth of efficiencies could be gained and that this leads to the position that we are interested or involved in seeking to reduce the level of pay of ACTION bus drivers. In fact, we are not. We are seeking to negotiate a new certified agreement which proposes an increase in the pay of ACTION drivers. You need to understand that.

In the context of that understanding, it is a bit tough to say that ACTION bus drivers are the most highly remunerated bus drivers. Therefore, their salary is inefficient. Therefore, we can gain savings. We could, of course. We could go out and seek to negotiate a cut, but we are not going to. In fact, we are proposing to increase their salaries. That is the context I wanted to provide.

Having said that, there are in place a number of industrial arrangements that Mr Elliott has just referred to which we do not believe appropriate. Some of them reflect a view around industrial relations and the nature of certified agreements and industrial relations. They were granted through EBA negotiations such as those we are currently engaged in and have found their way into the agreement.

We are bound to that. I refer, for example, to the 60-40 full-time/part-time split; no shift arrangement on weekends; a five-day shift for a seven-day network; a designated number of transport officers to be employed come hell or high water, whether there is a continuing role for them or not. There are things that in the 21st century probably are not appropriate to a modern company, a \$100 million business, trying to provide public transport.

They have been there, as I understand it, since the early days of self-government through a number of years of Liberal government and indeed through these last three terms of Labor government. We are now negotiating again. I believe Mr Smyth may have been a minister in charge of ACTION at one stage.

**MR SMYTH:** Indeed, I was, and we performed enormous reforms.

**Mr Stanhope:** Through an EBA negotiation—

**MR SMYTH:** And got tremendous savings.

**Mr Stanhope:** Mr Smyth says he put through enormous reforms, gained enormous savings, but he left the 60-40 ratio in place. He actually continued ACTION without a weekend network. He actually maintained a designated number of transport—

**MR SMYTH:** So that is your excuse?

**Mr Stanhope:** Not an excuse at all.

**MR SMYTH:** You failed for nine years because I did not do your job for you.

**Mr Stanhope:** Because you failed for six years, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** It is an interesting conclusion. I did not do your job; so you failed for nine years.

**Mr Stanhope:** Because you failed for six years.

**THE CHAIR:** Could we get back to the questions—

**MR SESELJA:** I have got a couple more questions.

**Mr Stanhope:** These are very—

**MR SESELJA:** He seems to have concluded, so—

**MR SMYTH:** It is all my fault. It is very interesting.

**Mr Stanhope:** No, there is a number of—

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth! Chief Minister, please come back to the question.

**Mr Stanhope:** quite entrenched issues that are the subject of current productive negotiations.

**MR SESELJA:** But Minister, I mean—

**MR SMYTH:** But your failure for nine years is my fault?

**MR COE:** I look forward to part 2 of Network 08, by the way.

**MR SESELJA:** You have identified the higher pay and conditions, but there are a number of other things that go to it. There is the high amount of dead running, which is millions of dollars a year. There are things that seem to be management issues, like employing more mechanics, cleaners and refuellers per bus; that is \$1.18 million. There are a number of things that, it would seem, cost several million dollars per year in inefficiencies that have not been addressed. How many of those are you planning on addressing aside from changing some of the industrial arrangements and looking at part-time and full-time splits?

**Mr Stanhope:** They are all industrial relations issues around the number; that is the point I make. Issues around the number of mechanics and the number of cleaners are industrial issues. We are seeking to address all of those issues. I might just say in relation to dead running that ACTION—give credit where credit is due—has reduced the level of dead running enormously in recent years. I believe from the Indec report released a couple of weeks ago that one area where the ACT exceeds the industry benchmark is in relation to dead running. One of the many feathers in ACTION's cap, most particularly in relation to excellence of service and breadth of service, is that it exceeds the industry benchmark in relation to dead running.

Mr Elliott will give some detail around the potential that we see for improving the business, but I might just say that we are engaged in detailed and quite sensitive

## PROOF

negotiations. You are all aware that ACTION has resolved to take industrial action from next Monday. Mr Elliott and Mr Roncon are the negotiators. Negotiations are a very sensitive process, and I would just ask for some forbearance. Mr Elliott and Mr Roncon—and indeed me—feel constrained at one level in relation to our negotiating position. But Mr Elliott will happily go to the very issues you raise and explain why they are issues for us and what we are seeking to do to address them.

**Mr Elliott:** Thanks, minister. Mr Seselja, on the two matters you have just mentioned—the matters of mechanics and the efficiency of the workshops and the dead running—firstly, let me go to the mechanics. Certainly a part of the industrial framework that we need to work in is a prescribed amount of mechanics per numbers of buses. In fact, we exceed the industry benchmark on that, and therefore we are always inefficient in that regard. It is also a fact that in some ways you could be an apologist for saying that that number was appropriate some years ago—four years ago, eight years ago—because the bus fleet was getting very old and then you need more mechanics, you need more parts and you need more labour to keep them on the road.

Part of the modernisation program, as you put new buses through and you manage your warranties more effectively, is that you are going to need potentially fewer mechanics to do what you need to do, because you do not need to maintain them. It is also a fact that a modern bus and a modern bus fleet do not come in the same way that the old cars of yesterday came: they come very modernised; they come componentised. You do not need the same sort of workforce. You need a new modern workforce that plugs out pieces and plugs them back in, just like your car.

So in terms of the reform we need to make in the workshops, one of the planks of that is really about the numbers of mechanics we have in relation to the numbers of buses. That is a feature of the current industrial agreement that we would seek to remove, simply because we are trying to run a modern bus system. It is not something we can just do because we want to; it is prescribed under the law. We are seeking to relitigate that with the relevant unions—the AMWU in this case.

Your second point was about dead running. Some time in the past—I have not delved into the history of it to get an understanding of when—there was a view formed in ACTION that the best and most efficient way to manage the network in terms of its running, in the construct of the size and scope of its services and the geography of the place, was to have two depots. Depots are very heavy infrastructure costs. They are very expensive to operate. You have surplus staff to operate them, so there are running costs et cetera.

There was a view taken that we only needed two. At the time that those decisions were taken, they were probably appropriate. Because of the size of the population and the way that the place was growing, or had grown to that point, it seemed to be the most efficient decision at the time. I would not be critical of anyone who made that decision at that point, but we would all appreciate that this city is growing. It is growing at such a rate and in such a way—that is, constrained by its boundaries—that we need to position some depots in the right places to optimise the way that our buses are coming back to fuel and going out on the service runs. It logically tells you that you need more than two depots and you need to put them in the right places around the city in order to optimise that dead running.

As the minister suggests, we have made some great inroads and some great progress on dead running. This city, if you look at it in the purest terms, will always not be as good as other places in terms of its dead running. We do not have the density of population. We run through beautiful parks like the Canberra nature park and over up on Belconnen Way through the greenery of the hill; other cities just do not do that, so we will always have an element of dead running that other cities just do not have. But that is not to say that we should not improve it and we should not try and deliver our services from our depots back to refuel, back to rest our drivers, back to give them the facilities they need in the right places around town.

In terms of the infrastructure costs, there are two locations that we think—if you worked from a greenfield basis, you may put them in different places, but we have certainly got two locations where we think we need to be operating from. One of those is Woden, which had a depot, and we have gone back into that depot. We have leased a piece of it from Land and Property Services now. And we are certainly having a look on the north side of town, towards Gungahlin; that will be around the Mitchell site, where there are some industrial spaces. There is in fact a small bus depot that is not very big that used to be owned and managed by transport—now Deane's Transit. They operate some transporter coaches out of there.

We certainly have a strategic view that we need to reallocate where we house our buses, how we service the community and how we reduce that dead running through some adroit development of infrastructure around depots—and manage that process. I think the same people who did the benchmarking report also did a business case study on the Woden depot—before my time in ACTION, but not that long ago: six or seven years ago, maybe. There was a really solid business case for re-opening Woden and using it as a satellite depot, which is the intention. It has taken a while to get to that, but we are into it. We are in that space now. I think we have only got our special needs transport fleet there at the moment, but the intention would be, if we can update the fuelling facilities there, to put a small enclave of buses there. I think we can store 68 to 70 of our standard buses in that location. Certainly, that is the intent—re-use what we have got as infrastructure, and repurpose it, and reduce that dead running and running cost. They were two of the issues which you mentioned.

**MR SESELJA:** Thank you, Mr Elliott.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Bresnan.

**MS BRESNAN:** My question is in relation to the patronage figures, but also the ticketing system, which has been mentioned a number of times this morning. On page 117 of budget paper 4, there is a note that the increase of 3.544 million is—

**Mr Elliott:** Yes.

**MS BRESNAN:** Is it solely due to a decrease in validated figures or is it due to the changed fares?

**Mr Elliott:** I think what you see, as was referred to before, is a diminution last financial year, as I have explained.

**MS BRESNAN:** Yes.

**Mr Elliott:** What we are projecting next year is an improvement. Again, we were really challenged by this in terms of putting an estimated outcome in terms of patronage and revenue, simply because we know that the new ticketing system will capture all of our rides and all of our patronage figures. That is why you see that increase.

**MS BRESNAN:** So it is solely due to that validator?

**Mr Elliott:** Absolutely. It is also a feature of network 10. There has been an investment in the recurrent side of ACTION for this year, and that means that we are intending to put some more services on, effectively. There are probably three elements.

One is the integration of the current Redex into the primary network. Redex at the moment runs on top of the network. It is like a supplementary service, because it was run as a pilot. It will be integrated into the network and there will be adjustments around some of the northern routes.

We are certainly adjusting the services through Belconnen, because the new bus station system in relation to Westfield, which comes all the way through to Eastern Valley Way, will be opened in November—or before Christmas. Westfield's hope is certainly to have it open before Christmas, I know. Mr Gill has told me that our element of it, the government's element of it, is on track. So we expect to have that facility open. The result of that is, in fact, we have to change our network around, because the way the services run through there is different.

The third element is really a bit of feedback from the way that the network operates now and how we will reconnect some services because of those other two changes. That just means a bit of a recalculation of connections and what-have-you. They are the three elements in the network.

Out of all of those, we would expect to get the patronage figures and the revenue figures that we are estimating. That is why you see them dip down and dip back up. But it is also a feature that we will only get 50 per cent of that. This is where we were quite challenged in our estimates. The new ticketing system will not collect until it goes live.

**MS BRESNAN:** When is that?

**Mr Elliott:** That is midyear. So we are only going to get six months worth. That is why we are a bit conservative.

**THE CHAIR:** That is mid-financial year?

**Mr Elliott:** That is right.

**THE CHAIR:** December.

**Mr Elliott:** So we are getting a half-year worth of full. In the meantime, we are in the same position as we are today. That is why we were quite challenged with putting our estimated outcomes in. If I am still here this time next year, I would expect to be reporting to you on adjustments in whatever way.

**MS BRESNAN:** In terms of the modal share percentage, then, that you have got on page 113, you have got 2.9 per cent, minus five per cent, to deal with the issues you have already explained, and 2.9 per cent. You are talking about an increase in the fares due to the validator and due to having a new ticketing system. You are waiting for those figures to come through for the new ticketing system. We can expect that patronage level would go up with those improvements. When do you think that would start being reflected in budget papers?

**Mr Elliott:** Because of the way that patronage works and the way that this system will work—we will certainly collect with much more accuracy, even more than with the old system when it was working well—in my view, I would not expect to see a really good result until about the third quarter; so about March. I think in March 2011 you will have a quarter of data under your belt. It is important to note that because, at about that time, we will be making projections for the next year, which is why we were so keen to get the ticketing system up and running.

**MS BRESNAN:** So hopefully in the next budget papers we will see an increased percentage?

**Mr Elliott:** I am optimistic that you will. But I am also cautious about what we put out into the public in terms of—

**MS BRESNAN:** On the ticketing system, is there going to be a campaign accompanying that? I guess we are aiming to increase that modal share and all those other issues.

**Mr Elliott:** There are two elements to that, I think, that I could comment on very quickly. One is that we are just finishing the first phase of the ticketing system in terms of the business rules, policy, fares, relationships and the automation of equipment. I think two members of the ticketing project team are heading off to England in the next week, and they will complete the factory acceptance testing so that the people who manufacture the equipment can have it approved and they will start going into production. So that element of it will be completed.

The next element is really the deployment and the community engagement. We are actually having a change in staff and a new emphasis and a different direction pretty much from next month. It really will be about the community engagement and gaining public confidence about the system and making sure we can deploy. That is a really significant thing to do, given the nature of the system and how it interacts with all the transport elements in the community.

**MS BRESNAN:** Have there been any details finalised about how that might be rolled out?

**Mr Elliott:** We have some strategies. The minister has seen some of those in a broad sense. We would want to refine those and get down to some very specific milestones around those, on a quarterly basis. The steering committee that governs this particular project has seen some of those details. We just want to take a bit of a breath and have a look at them for another couple of weeks. Then we will brief the minister about them and then you will see some delivery around them.

**MS BRESNAN:** So we should see something coming out?

**Mr Elliott:** You will. There will be some fairly tangible things as well. You will see a display centre in the middle of the city, with some stuff around the new system. You will certainly see some campaigns. But given that it is really a community-based system in many ways, our strategy is really to work with the key elements of the community. In the first instance, these are students and older people. So our engagement is heavily predicated towards working with schools and working with the Office for Ageing in the first instance.

What you will see on the card—and actually I have in my pocket the first one printed—on one side, is the brand. On the other side, you will see, for seniors, a seniors card. For some schools, you will see the standard brand and, on the other side, you will see a student identification pass. They will use it for ID and their library pass et cetera.

**MR COE:** Is not the change in modal share that you are talking about more accurately measuring the existing passengers? Are you expecting to get a whole heap more passengers on your buses, or are you just going to be capturing the existing passengers, in which case, really, we are not making that much progress; we are just changing something on paper?

**Mr Elliott:** As I said, I would be cautious about the numbers simply because of the way that we cannot record what we need to right now. I am the first to say that I am very frustrated by that. So we are cautious about that. But I think you may well be right for next year. But I think, in subsequent years, what you are going to see are the outcomes of the investments that are being made not only in the bus service but in public transport infrastructure, which are a heavy emphasis in this budget.

**MR COE:** So in six months time or in nine months time, no doubt when we are more accurately recording the data, I envisage the media release by the Chief Minister about a million more passengers on ACTION buses—

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Coe, could you get to your question because Ms Le Couteur would like to ask a question before lunch.

**MR COE:** Finally, on the ticketing system, there must be 30, 40, I am guessing, ticket providers in Belconnen alone that sell ACTION tickets at the moment. I understand it is going down to three in Belconnen. Is that correct?

**Mr Elliott:** I would have to take that on notice. Certainly, there has been a review of the way that ticketing access is provided. There was a tendering process. Various agencies tendered. Some agencies did not. They were all written to. The people who

did not want to be involved are not involved. Certainly, there is a different way of delivering tickets. And the reason for that—and it is a very fundamental one—is a balance between access in the community and efficiency. We want to be able to provide as much upload of the value of ticket into the card over the internet. We want to be able to self-serve as far as possible. It is a far more efficient way to do it.

In different jurisdictions, they do this by providing absolute restrictions on how people can upload into their cards. We will have an ability to upload value into the card in three ways, through our three channels, exactly the model that Canberra Connect operates under. And they deliver all of the customer support for transport, generally speaking. That will be through the internet. Our primary focus is to get people uploading on the internet, through the call centre or through shops. And that is how people will be able to do it.

We are considering—and it is a thing that we are still debating—whether we use what are called value-added machines, which are a bit like a parking machine, on some platforms in some of the major town centres. We are debating it because they are expensive. We can buy them within our capital budget. We think they are high maintenance. Generally speaking, from other jurisdictions, we get bad press. People do not like using them. People tend to use them in train systems but not bus systems.

You can add value actually on the bus as well; so you can pay for your ticket and upload more value on your bus. There will be a range of newsagencies where you will be able to do the same.

We think we have got the right balance between an efficient way of getting money up onto the card and providing the right level of access. But again, it is a bit of a watching brief. We will see how we go through the deployment and, if we think we have got the balance wrong, we will redress it.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms Le Couteur, a final question, then we will break for lunch.

**MS LE COUTEUR:** Thank you, Madam Chair. On page 73, budget paper 3, we have got an amount which is I think over about 10 years for expansion of the ACTION network service. I understand that part of that is Redex, which is, I understand, about a million dollars a year. My question is: given that most of the expansion is to Redex—and I think Redex is a great service—have you got enough money to cover the new suburbs of Gungahlin, some of which do not have a bus service as yet and some of which are only just starting, and the new suburbs in Molonglo? It just does not seem enough for the new bits of Canberra.

**Mr Elliott:** I think we have an issue with new suburb development generally speaking and the way that we approach these. We have been talking to Land and Property Services about that. We tend to do it by catch-up. We tend to wait till there are enough people. It is a balance between a community service versus an efficient bus service. There does not seem too much rationale—and I do not think too many people would argue that—and it does not look too good to have an empty bus running to a suburb with two houses in it, two families who may want to drive anyway. So it is a balance about when, in fact, you have a critical mass sufficient to put a bus service on.

PROOF

We think that we have got the balance right in 2010. We have enough money to run Redex, to change the services through Gungahlin, and to service suburbs at a commensurate level. I am not here to say that I think we have got that precisely right. As I say, we are working on perhaps a better model. It is about finding the right critical mass. I know Molonglo is a particular issue in that regard, and I think we have briefed you about that.

**MR COE:** Madam Chair, there are many more questions that we have got. I wonder whether the committee—

**THE CHAIR:** They can be put on notice.

**MR COE:** Perhaps the committee could discuss whether we could use the Monday or Tuesday of the following week to continue the conversation.

**THE CHAIR:** That will be up to the committee, Mr Coe. As mentioned at the commencement of the hearing today, there is a time frame of five working days for the return of answers to questions taken on notice at this hearing. In relation to questions given on notice, these will be accepted for three working days following today's public hearing for TAMS and ACTION. Members, please provide any questions on notice pertaining to TAMS outputs 1.1, information services, 1.3, waste and recycling, 1.4, land management, 1.5, environmental regulation, 1.2, the Office of Transport, and ACTION output 1.1, public transport, by close of business on Tuesday, 25 May 2010. The committee will continue with TAMS output class 2, Shared Services Centre, output class 1, and the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority next week.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services and officials for attending today and, in advance, for responding promptly to questions taken on notice and given on notice.

We will now break for lunch. We will resume at 2 pm, when we will begin with the Department of Education and Training.

**Meeting adjourned from 12.33 to 2 pm.**

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Planning, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation and Minister for Gaming and Racing

Department of Education and Training

Watterston, Dr Jim, Chief Executive

Johnston, Ms Jayne, Executive Director, School Improvement

Tardif, Mr Phillip, Executive Director, Corporate Services

Kyburz, Mr Steve, School Network Leader, South/Weston

Garrison, Ms Joanne, School Network Leader, North/Gungahlin

Baird, Ms Linda, School Network Leader, Belconnen

Collis, Dr Mark, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Support

Wilks, Ms Trish, Director, Learning and Teaching

Harris, Ms Carol, Director, Information Services

Stewart, Ms Tracy, Director, Measurement, Monitoring and Reporting

Whybrow, Mr Mark, Director, Finance and Corporate Support

Bateman, Mr Michael, Director, Human Resources

Bray, Mr Rodney, Director, School Capital Works

McNevin, Mr Tim, Manager, Transitions, Careers and Vocational Learning

**THE CHAIR:** Welcome to this public hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates. The Legislative Assembly has referred to the committee for examination the expenditure proposals in the 2010-11 appropriation bill and the revenue estimates in the 2010-11 budget. The committee is due to report to the Assembly on 22 June 2010 and has fixed a time frame of five working days for the return of answers to questions taken on notice.

The proceedings today will commence with the examination of the Department of Education and Training, output classes 1.1, public primary school education; 1.2, public higher school education; and 1.3, public secondary school education.

I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the yellow-coloured privilege statement before you on the table. Could you confirm for the record that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

**Mr Barr:** Yes, thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** I remind witnesses to keep their responses to questions concise and directly relevant to the subject matter of the question. We have a great deal of ground to cover during the hearing, and I would like to maximise the opportunity for members in attendance to put their questions directly today, rather than on notice.

Before we proceed to questions from the committee, minister, would you like to make a brief opening statement of no more than five minutes?

**Mr Barr:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Other than to welcome the opportunity to appear

today and to thank the committee in advance for what I am sure will be an interesting and enlightening afternoon in relation to the education portfolio, we are happy to take questions.

**THE CHAIR:** I would like to start on page 309 of budget paper 4; it is also on page 88 of budget paper 3. This is about improving teacher quality. It is one of the key priorities for the department for 2010-11. Some \$1.964 million has been allocated in the 2010-11 budget. How will the ACT teacher quality institute operate?

**Mr Barr:** As you have identified, the institute will be set up commencing next year. It has a budget allocation of just short of \$4 million over four years. It is part of the national partnership agreement on improving teacher quality. The ACT was the only jurisdiction in Australia without such a teacher registration body. What it will do is establish processes to register all teachers—government, Catholic and independent—in the ACT, accredit pre-service education programs for our two local teacher training institutions and certify the skills and knowledge of teachers against the nationally agreed teacher standards. As I have indicated, this initiative will bring the ACT in line with other jurisdictions that all currently have teacher registration bodies and will ensure national consistency in teacher registration and the application of the national teaching professional standards.

**THE CHAIR:** We have that \$1.96 million allocated. How will that be spent?

**Mr Bateman:** The budget covers salary costs for about four to five staff, depending on how quickly we develop through to the full spectrum of what the institute will cover. IT costs—set-up—are quite a substantial part of it; we need to get national consistency in sharing data through IT mechanisms. And there is some training, publicity and things like that. Essentially, the main cost is salary costs.

**THE CHAIR:** How will the outcomes be monitored to determine that it is doing the job? How will it be monitored?

**Mr Barr:** We obviously have, as part of the national partnership, reporting requirements back to the commonwealth, so there will be a degree of accountability there. But equally, there will be a requirement for all teachers in the territory to be registered. That will be the key function of the institute. In terms of other accountability mechanisms, does anyone wish to comment further?

**Mr Bateman:** Again, as the minister said, we will use nationally agreed standards. That all sits under AITSL, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. Through that body, we will have nationally agreed standards, hopefully by the end of the year or early in the new year, which will fit quite nicely with our introduction of the institute. That will govern the commencement of graduation. So we will know at what standard teachers are coming to us from the universities. The first stage of registration will be around what is called the proficient standards, which will be administered by the institute. Then there will be two voluntary levels—in the current model anyway; it is under consultation—which are highly accomplished and elite teaching.

**THE CHAIR:** The Education Union appeared before the committee last week and

stated that some of the large issues that they believe are facing the teaching workforce are things like salary rates and also professional development for teachers. This obviously is around teaching standards and a registration-certification type of institute, but, minister, what are you going to be doing in the next year around ensuring that teachers are getting the level of professional development, for instance, that they need?

**Mr Barr:** The focus for PD over the next period is going to be on the implementation of the national curriculum. That will be the most important element for our system, as we have committed to the implementation of the national curriculum within the agreed time frame for all jurisdictions. We have got nine schools trialling it at the moment, so we are beginning implementation now, and we will aim to complete it by 2013. That will be the main focus for professional development. There is a range of other ongoing programs that will continue, but I see our main emphasis over the next period being that national curriculum implementation.

Phase 1 is out now and being trialled in some of those subject areas, some schools taking on just one subject, others more than one. In phase 2 and phase 3 of the national curriculum, new subject areas have been added in. I know that there was particular excitement when physical education was added into stage 3. It is a bit of a breakthrough for sports ministers to have that agreement. The arts were included in phase 2, and I know that Minister Garrett was a particular advocate of that. We will be focusing on that area of professional development in the years ahead.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair, can I ask a supplementary on that?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair has alluded to the information that was given by the Australian Education Union. Part of that information was that 76 per cent of the members of the Australian Education Union saw their single greatest priority as the requirement for looking at salary levels where the teachers are falling behind their near jurisdictions. How does this rate in terms of priority from your point of view?

**Mr Barr:** We delivered what we believed to be a fair and affordable pay outcome for teachers in the most recent EBA. That expires in the middle of 2011. We have indicated our desire to fundamentally change the way we reward teachers, how we pay our teachers. The national professional standards are an important element of that. As is the usual process with the union, we will, of course, engage in discussions around a new EBA. Those discussions will commence in the near future. We are 14 or 15 months away from the expiry of the current EBA.

**MR DOSZPOT:** So you are saying that for the next 14 or 15 months the teachers should—

**Mr Barr:** We have an EBA. We have an EBA in place. There are pay rises that occur every six months over that EBA. Those pay rises are in place and agreed with the union. We will negotiate new agreements on the conclusion of the current EBA.

**MR DOSZPOT:** And the fact that the deputy principal levels will fall something like

15 per cent below their counterparts interstate—is that of any concern to you?

**Mr Barr:** I understand that comparison applies to New South Wales, but not necessarily to all other jurisdictions.

**MR DOSZPOT:** No. I said the nearest jurisdiction.

**Mr Barr:** Generally speaking, the ACT is in the top three in terms of salaries. It is not always directly comparable, because different jurisdictions have different pay structures and there are different time periods which classroom teachers must serve before they reach different pay points in the scale.

That said, I have a view that we should be moving away from that promotion by exhaustion process for advancement within the teaching profession. Certainly our goal, through our reforms to school-based management and our proposals to reform how we reward teachers—we would make some changes there, move to a system that provided greater opportunity for early advancement for our best and brightest classroom teachers and that provided the opportunity for our best classroom teachers to stay in the classroom rather than have to move further and further away from teaching in order to obtain the high salaries that come with promotional positions.

So I think that a restructure is critical. In order to achieve that, though, we need these national professional standards and we need an evidence base to be able to assess teacher performance against. It has got to be more comprehensive than some of the models that have been floated previously, which essentially related to popularity votes amongst students or parents as to who they thought were the best teachers. Those sorts of models will not work. You cannot simply base performance-based pay on test results, for example.

We need a better way of rewarding teachers; we need a better way of assessing teacher performance. The national professional standards and the teacher quality institute provide that pathway. They lay out the direction that the government intends to pursue. Together with some important reforms to school-based management in response to the recently commissioned review, it will present that opportunity for that critical structural reform in the education sector.

**MR DOSZPOT:** My question is based on some articulation of what you feel a quality teaching institute will achieve. Obviously, in terms of prioritising some of these, there are some merits in the teacher quality institute. There are also, I think, a lot of merits in addressing some of the needs of the teaching community now—and the disparity that is occurring and the ability to maintain the quality teaching when the nearby jurisdictions are going to be offering far greater financial rewards to our teachers in a competitive mode—

**THE CHAIR:** Your question, Mr Doszpot?

**MR DOSZPOT:** What are you doing to address the urgent priority that this would represent in terms of retaining quality teachers?

**Mr Barr:** If you would like to make a recommendation through this committee,

Mr Doszpot, for an immediate increase in allocation for teacher salaries, you are free to do that.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I am asking for your priorities, minister, not mine.

**Mr Barr:** Our priorities are here in the budget, Mr Doszpot.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Just going to improving teacher quality, I notice that on page 325 of budget paper 4 there is a revised commonwealth grant called improving teacher quality where we seem to have lost about \$730,000. Where has that money gone and what is the purpose of its removal?

**Mr Whybrow:** Always within our ACT government budget papers, we take updated estimates from the commonwealth. The forward estimates were based on a time frame of payments. There has been simply a change to that schedule; the overall program itself has not changed. Within that improving teacher quality, there are two elements, the second element being reward payments when particular standards are met. They were never included in the initial budget paper position, and they still are not, but this is just simply an update from the commonwealth of their estimation of the value of that program.

**MR SMYTH:** So if they are not funds lost, where are they shown up in the rest of the documents?

**Mr Whybrow:** I am sorry, I am not sure I understand the question. This was a forward estimated position of what funding was going to be provided by the commonwealth. We rely on the commonwealth budget papers to provide us that information.

**MR SMYTH:** So it has been revised down to that value?

**Mr Whybrow:** They have revised that. I can pass you over to Michael Bateman. My understanding is there has been no change to the requirements under the implementation policy and that the future reward payments remain in place if particular standards are met.

**Mr Bateman:** The teacher quality national partnership has just under \$8 million available to the ACT through facilitation and reward payments. The front end of that particular NP is the facilitation payments. The total payment when we realise it across the three sectors within the ACT, because it is a cross-sectoral payment, will be around \$1.68 million. The remainder will come in the last two years under reward payments. That would be the estimate at this particular point in time up to that stage of the initial payment.

**MR SMYTH:** If we go to the bottom of page 324 of budget paper 4—minister, I notice that we are going over to this quality institute, but surely teacher development is an important part of that. Why have we rolled over \$1.3 million of the teachers' professional development fund?

**Ms Wilks:** The rollover is due to the fact that payment to schools for programs is on a calendar year and not a financial year. There is always a catch-up time relating to the level of reporting mechanisms.

**MR SMYTH:** So how much has been expended in this calendar year?

**Ms Wilks:** In this calendar year? I would have to take that on notice. I would hope to provide that before the end of this afternoon.

**MR SMYTH:** All right. If that money is being moved into 2011, does it all have to be spent in the first half of 2011?

**Ms Wilks:** No, because this is a financial and a calendar year arrangement. For instance, one of the factors is around scholarships. The money for scholarships is paid to the university at the completion of programs, hence that money has not been expended. Around half the money has just gone out to schools—and again it is to schools in the April SBM payment—which will then go out again in the following year as part of the next financial year's payout. It is really an issue around calendar years and financial years and the fact that schools work on calendar years and the budget is on financial years.

**Mr Whybrow:** Just supporting that, I refer you back to last year's budget paper, page 372. There is a similar line adjustment there. The rollover from 2008-09 into 2009-10 was \$987,000. I guess this reflects, as Trish says, that there is commitment for PD development. We hold that and we move that forward where there are changes in financial years versus calendar years.

**MR SMYTH:** All right. Minister, if we go to page 310 of budget paper 4 there is the staffing chart. I notice the budget for 2009-10 was for 4,565 teachers. The outcome is some 80 more, 4,645 teachers, but you are winding that back by 35 teachers. If the system—

**Mr Barr:** 35 staff.

**MR SMYTH:** Sorry, 35 staff. Can you give us a reconciliation of where that will come from?

**Mr Barr:** Yes, I am sure that can be provided.

**MR SMYTH:** It says in the notes that the reduction in FTEs is primarily due to the impact of the efficiency savings.

**Mr Barr:** That is correct, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** Can you outline what the efficiency savings will be?

**Mr Barr:** We can do that. I am happy to do that.

**Dr Watterston:** The efficiency savings have been quarantined, from a staff point of

view, to central office. There is a range of efficiency savings which I will get Mr Whybrow to go through in a minute. But in terms of the staff numbers, we have managed to use economies of scale, as we predicted, to lessen the number of staff but maintain the same services to schools. Across the Department of Education and Training none of these staff reductions will impact on schools. They certainly will not impact in terms of diminishing the services that we provide to schools. It has been done through economies of scale within the department.

**Mr Whybrow:** There are probably a couple of things that I should point out first to give you a bit of context. I refer you to strategic indicator 7, which is the staff retention rates, on page 313. It talks, effectively, about an eight per cent movement in our staffing numbers. That equates to approximately 372 staff in total. As Jim has outlined, we are talking about efficiency dividends being quarantined to central office staff. Our central office staff numbers are in the order of 530.

There are a couple of other things that we are doing in terms of achieving our efficiency dividend this year—I should say from 2010-11. Part of this is about the success of our system. We are projecting increased international student revenue, based on international student numbers, and that is helping us maintain our operations. There is also on-passing of savings to some of our other service providers, such as shared services, and an improvement in the management of our staffing arrangements, particularly our casual relief system. You would also see within the 2010-11 budget that there is an ICT initiative around SIMS, which is about better casual relief management and improved systems there. There will be some efficiencies in our overall operations by the use of those systems.

I guess a key point is that there are no involuntary redundancies. This will be managed through natural attrition. As to the number I mentioned earlier—35 out of 372—we do not see that as being a significantly difficult task. Obviously there will be continued consultation with staff and unions. This is really being achieved through the continued operation of our staffing freeze within the department.

**MR SESELJA:** This 35 you are talking about—is that in is this financial year coming?

**Mr Whybrow:** 2010-11, that is correct.

**MR SESELJA:** 2010-11. Then we have got \$18 million of efficiencies to find in the subsequent years, 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14.

**Mr Whybrow:** Maybe I should clarify that. I point you to page 324. There is \$3.978 million in 2011-12, the following year, and then \$6 million the year after. I think you have just quoted to me those three numbers added up.

**MR SESELJA:** Yes.

**Mr Whybrow:** That is not how it works. In that table, for 2013-14 there is an additional \$8.3 million only in that year.

**MR SESELJA:** I am aware of that, but it is \$18 million cumulative savings—

**Mr Whybrow:** That is correct.

**MR SESELJA:** that you have to find over those three years. The question becomes: where is the fat? You talked about 35 FTEs. How many staff in head office will need to go in order to find the \$18 million cumulative savings over those three years?

**Mr Whybrow:** I guess the important bit to note here—and it has been announced by Treasury as well—is that the further savings are subject to the expenditure review and the evaluation committee. The department, like they did last year, will be putting forward individual proposals for future year savings and they need to be ratified by government. At this stage I do not have a plan to say to you that the areas that we will be cutting will be A, B and C. There will be some decisions that need to be made. We will be putting forward what we would consider to be either lower hanging fruit or greater levels of efficiencies and improvements to our services which may well result from the recently announced school-based management review.

**MR SESELJA:** So where is the low-hanging fruit?

**Mr Barr:** I am looking specifically at human resources, workers compensation, ICT costs and our shared services costs. I think there is scope for efficiencies with some of these new systems. The changes we have announced in school-based management that come into effect from the next school year will generate savings. This is an efficiency dividend, so we need to do things better—be more efficient.

The greatest area, I think, for savings will be in ICT. Having invested heavily in our broadband networks, there is the capacity to generate savings particularly through our contracts with various ICT providers. Being able to deliver services more effectively to schools through a centralised ICT program will deliver savings. We will, of course, work through those in the years ahead. My goal is to treat the efficiency dividend in exactly that way—that is, to be more efficient in the delivery of our services.

**MR SESELJA:** So some staff will have to go in order to get these \$18 million savings. What, if anything, will be quarantined from the \$18 million in efficiencies?

**Mr Barr:** At this point I am not quarantining anything. We will make those decisions based on sound advice from the department over the next few years.

**MR SESELJA:** So it will not just be out of head office; it will be also out of schools. It will involve the teaching staff—

**Mr Barr:** I am not ruling anything out at this stage. We will look at all of the options and make our decisions and our announcements in due course.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, you just mentioned that there would be some efficiency savings from the government's response to the school-based management review. In this budget you set aside \$600,000. You have made an announcement this morning that that will be around trialling this new school-based management in two schools. Is that \$300,000 a school over two years?

**Mr Barr:** No.

**THE CHAIR:** How will it work? Where will these savings come from?

**Mr Barr:** We are commencing the new school-based management arrangements in the two new schools at Gungahlin and Kambah. We will also have an opt-in opportunity for existing schools to start with the new system from next year. Our expectation is there will be a number of existing schools who will want to be early adaptors to the new system. That will involve greater educational autonomy for principals and school leaders.

But commensurate with that change will be cutting some red tape for principals and centralising some functions that are currently being undertaken by schools. ICT is one of them. Cleaning contracts is another. We will also look at strengthening governance arrangements and, in particular, providing greater support for school boards by allowing school boards to co-opt onto their membership ex-officio people who have skills in a variety of areas to strengthen the capacity of school boards. There is some funding as part of this initiative to provide some of that training and to assist with the implementation of the new system in a number of schools in the first few years.

I am not anticipating that every school will change to the new system overnight. We would anticipate a gradual rollout across our schools. From my regular meetings with the principals association, I am very confident that there are a number of schools that are keen to move very quickly to this new system.

**THE CHAIR:** The efficiencies will come because with ICT, cleaning contracts and so forth you will get the economies of scale.

**Mr Barr:** There are certainly some economies of scale from centralised ICT, simply in terms of the number of licences that you need to purchase from particular software programs. A range of savings can be achieved through that process. The centralisation of cleaning contracts will deliver some capacity around economies of scale to get better outcomes for schools. Our goal there, of course, is clean schools. We want to ensure that that is the outcome, but it is also as much about relieving an administrative burden on principals around managing cleaning contracts. Those are a couple of examples.

**THE CHAIR:** Would you be renegotiating those cleaning contracts?

**Mr Barr:** Yes, we would be looking to move to a cluster-based model—so a series of regions. We would, in fact, put out larger contracts rather than individual school-based contracts, as has been the case.

**THE CHAIR:** So will you be taking that opportunity to try and ensure that the sorts of cleaning products used in schools are going to be—

**Mr Barr:** I am aware of your interest in this matter and certainly we can take that on board as part of that process.

**THE CHAIR:** kind to children with particular respiratory illnesses.

**Mr Whybrow:** I can add to that. We have done a lot of work in creating a new statement of requirements. We have specifically included those requirements around the use of chemicals. We are currently working through with both the unions and industry that statement of requirements. It went out for consultation. Some of the things that we are looking at include ensuring that we have tamper-proof containers and assured understanding and control checks about the quality and type of chemicals being used in our school or a better quality and control check there.

**MR SESELJA:** Minister, given that you identified human resources and ICT as some of the low hanging fruit, how much do we currently spend in education on those two areas?

**Mr Barr:** Do you have that?

**Mr Whybrow:** I should take that on notice, but to give you a ballpark figure, in cleaning contracts it is around \$5½ million annually. I will get an exact figure for you.

**MR SESELJA:** On each of those areas—that would be great.

**THE CHAIR:** I wanted to go back again to the priorities. One of them is about developing the next generation of teaching and learning online, including through delivery of a new virtual learning environment.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I need to hear more about that.

**Mr Barr:** Certainly. We will just have a quick change in personnel.

**THE CHAIR:** That was about what funding has been allocated, how will it operate and will it roll out across schools?

**Ms Harris:** We are currently finalising the contract for the full rollout of a new virtual learning environment across all of our schools, with the expectation that that will be ready to roll at the beginning of third term. Currently, we have a number of schools who are trialling the product. What the virtual learning environment does is replace the previous system, which was MyClasses. It has allowed teachers to prepare materials that are available to students. This next generation takes it a step further.

It allows a range of Web 2.0 technologies to be used, including things like blogs and wikis within a very safe environment. It also has a videoconferencing component, which will allow students across schools to connect, but also teachers across schools to connect. It has a very interesting button that picks up the cyber safety notions and that allows students to talk about whether or not they are feeling safe and to make direct contact with someone in the school around that.

The schools that are currently involved in the pilot are reporting that they are finding it an easy system to use, that they can see enormous opportunities for students and for the relationships within classes. The notion of the VLE is that it allows 24-7 access so that students can access from home. Ultimately, once we are able to go through appropriate identification authentication, we will be able to allow access for parents.

But that obviously is further out into the program.

We are currently looking at and finalising a contract that will allow the rollout. That will provide this over a seven-year period; so the parent portal is a later stage in the development. One of the other features that will come a little later as well is click view, which is a system that allows schools to access programs which are free to air on television. It captures those things that have happened over the previous seven days and can be accessed retrospectively so that on the VLE, you can throw up a program that a teacher might have viewed on Tuesday of last week or it might have been advertised on Tuesday of last week. It can then be used in the classroom environment.

So it is taking us into that next generation of technology. Certainly, the observations that I have made so far in looking at how schools are using it is that students are really engaged with it, as are teachers. So the trial is giving us information about how we will implement the next phase, phase 2, which is the rollout across all schools.

**THE CHAIR:** So when does the trial finish, and when will that next phase go ahead?

**Mr Whybrow:** The trial will finish at the end of this term. We are regularly getting feedback from teachers and from principals about that so that the intelligence can inform how we support the rollout at the school level in phase 2, which will begin at the start of term 3.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay, thank you. Ms Bresnan and then Mr Doszpot

**MS BRESNAN:** I wanted to go to budget paper 4, page 320. You report here on Indigenous students in this particular table on page 320. Is there scope to be given a breakdown of ATSI statistics across other tables in the budget of which 321 is an example?

**Mr Barr:** Sorry, on page 320 it has the NAPLAN results and the question was?

**MS BRESNAN:** Obviously there are Indigenous students reported on in the NAPLAN result.

**Mr Barr:** Yes.

**MS BRESNAN:** I am wondering whether, within ACT statistics and using that table on page 321 as an example, there is further scope to report on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander statistics. I just note, too, that we had Chief Minister's Department in yesterday and they said they are working on a government-wide project. The department of education was mentioned in the scope. Is there some scope to start reporting on those statistics?

**Ms Stewart:** I think there are two components to that question; so please tell me if I have not answered both.

**MS BRESNAN:** Sure.

**Ms Stewart:** The first one is if we might report more information around Indigenous students in our budget papers. The answer is yes. We do have quite a lot of information about Indigenous students. We do need to be a little bit cautious about our reporting, though, because, as you will appreciate, our numbers of Indigenous students are quite small and their proportion within the student population is quite small as well. This leads to some discrepancies in the data, some statistical variation and high movements in the data from year to year, because it is influenced by the small number of students. We certainly do have scope to put more in there, but just with that caveat that we need to be a little bit cautious about what the data is showing.

You mentioned the initiative from Chief Minister's Department to improve reporting of Indigenous people in general. We are involved in that project with Chief Minister's Department. We are one of a number of departments and agencies that are involved, and we are working with them to look at improvements around our data reporting.

The initiative to start with is really about how we can improve the quality of data and how we can overcome some of those difficulties with the small numbers in the ACT—make the data of higher quality and more rigorous—so that when we do report the results they are more meaningful in how they can be interpreted.

**MS BRESNAN:** Sure, because we had a representative from the Indigenous body address the committee last week. He expressed frustration. Although we have the small numbers, they nevertheless make for a fairly significant proportion of students when it comes to certain areas and not just in education where this sample is used.

Even yesterday, the Chief Minister actually said that we should be able to do this better in the ACT. Even though it is a small number, it is still a significant number. Do you expect that out of the Chief Minister's project we will actually be able to start seeing that in the budget papers?

**Ms Stewart:** Yes, I certainly do expect that. That is one of the core aims of that project—to improve that data. In a number of respects in national reporting, there is no ACT data reported because of the quality. One of the first things we want to see is that at least where other jurisdiction are being reported, we can have that data in there as well. That is quite an important aim for us. I have actually been involved with this project for a number of years in my previous position at the Bureau of Statistics. It is something that I would really like to see us make some significant advances in.

**MS BRESNAN:** Thank you.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I had a supplementary question following on from what I asked before. Can I get back to that?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Getting back to the question I think Mr Smyth asked on the teachers professional development fund and the rollover, what percentage of that rollover is of last year's budget? I think you have got budget figures handy there. Would you be able to tell us what percentage figure that is of the actual budget for last year?

**Mr Whybrow:** I do not have that in front of me, but we could obviously get it. I think I know but I would hate to mislead you.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can you tell me what percentage that is of this year's budget?

**Mr Whybrow:** Trish Wilks has some figures.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Excellent.

**Ms Wilks:** Yes, I have got some figures for the 2009 calendar year. We spent \$1.45 million. On the calendar year January to April this year, we have spent \$0.74 million. Each year the total amount is committed but sometimes due to factors beyond our control—for instance, the number of teachers being able to access either the scholarships or professional development and the relief costs associated—there are savings that are then rolled over to the following year.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I guess my question relates to the fact that that seems a very high amount in comparison to the total budget. Do teachers get enough opportunity to study? It is pretty important from the point of view of the national curriculum being rolled out as well. I should imagine there would be even more requirement. Are we giving teachers enough opportunity to take advantage of the professional development funding that is available?

**Ms Wilks:** Each year we have a quarter of a million set aside for scholarships. This amount, due to factors in previous years, has been rolled up so that in 2010 we expect to spend \$328,500. This is around scholarships for early childhood teaching. As you would know, increased qualifications are required. It is also for teachers studying to upgrade their qualifications in ESL. As well as that, there are the targeted scholarships, which cohorts and special programs developed. As well as that, we have individual scholarships awarded to teachers for up to \$5,000.

**MR DOSZPOT:** It is not so much the dollar amount I am querying. I think there are some significant dollar amounts. I am asking whether there are enough opportunities for teachers, because of their busy schedules and programming, to actually take time off. That is what I am asking. Is there enough planning for the opportunity for them to take advantage of it?

**Ms Wilks:** I can give you an example of the ESL program that we are currently working with the University of Canberra to develop. It is a four-unit program. We are looking at just offering teachers the opportunity of doing one unit per semester rather than two, which is the usual practice, to allow those who have other commitments to be able to undertake these scholarships. So we are very aware of the need for work-life balance.

**MS BRESNAN:** Just a quick follow up on Mr Doszpot's question. As Mr Doszpot said, and you said earlier, the focus for the PD would be the implementation of the national curriculum. Will any of the development opportunities coming out of that come out of that pool of funding that already exists or will it be additional funding put in place for that?

**Ms Wilks:** A number of the programs around the implementation of the Australian curriculum will be funded internally. As well, we suspect there will be some scholarships. For instance, we are looking at history as an area. That could be an area for scholarships for 2011-12. But the curriculum section of the department runs a large number of professional development opportunities, both in school time and outside school time. The major focus of their work for the next few years will be around implementing the Australian curriculum.

**MS BRESNAN:** Will there be additional funding for that as it rolls out to provide those opportunities, or is it going to come from within the existing pool of funding?

**Ms Wilks:** It will be a refocusing. We have moved now. The end of 2010 is the final year for implementing “every chance to learn”. The resources that have gone into the implementation of the ACT framework will now move to the implementation of the Australian curriculum.

**MS BRESNAN:** So basically the refocusing of the PD will be on that.

**Ms Wilks:** That is correct.

**Dr Watterston:** Could I just add that there has been a recent project conducted into mapping the current curriculum in the ACT with the Australian curriculum in the four areas that are being trialled. In literacy and numeracy that correlation is quite high; also with science, but less so obviously with history because in some aspects it is a new part of the curriculum. So, in terms of the work that will need to be done to transition our staff to the Australian curriculum, while it will be important and need to be resourced, it may not be as big a task as some of us were expecting.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, you started by saying that there would be a focus—and Ms Wilks has followed that up—around the curriculum, taking on board Dr Watterston’s comments. We also had a change not long ago around earn and learn, and I am wondering: has there been the need for extra PD around those students who may not have stayed in school before who now might be staying in the school environment? May there need to be some PD for teachers to be able to support them well?

**Dr Watterston:** In terms of professional learning, it is a wide-ranging spectrum in a sense. There are a number of aspects to it. One is, certainly, ensuring that teachers in senior secondary have the pedagogical understanding to engage those students that would not otherwise be there, and certainly there has been work done both at the individual school level and across schools. There has also been a campaign, if you like, or an awareness-raising effort, to make sure that, from a community standpoint and from a stakeholder standpoint, we understand the ramifications of this legislative change. So, to that end, we have developed a youth commitment which is about making sure that we keep those students at school, recognising that they perhaps may not have chosen to be there if the legislation had not changed.

So there is that aspect to it, and there is certainly involvement of all three sectors: independent, Catholic and government school principals and employers and non-government groups that interact with some of those disadvantaged students to

make sure that we provide a structure, if you like, a network, that supports those students and keeps them very much focused on the education, earning or training that they are involved in. But, in terms of the specific professional development, I might hand over to Jayne Johnston.

**Ms Johnston:** And in a minute, I will hand to—

**Dr Watterston:** Sorry, I did not see Tim McNevin. We might just go straight to him.

**Mr McNevin:** Just to supplement the chief executive's comments, I think as well as our teachers requiring a greater level of understanding of the needs of these young people who are affected by the legislative change it also requires our school to connect to a greater degree with the other range of services available across the community that have previously been assisting these young people.

The youth commitment that the chief executive referred to is the key vehicle for driving that connection. Some of the key agencies that we are working with in that regard include the youth coalition. We are reaching out more than probably we have in the past in terms of understanding the range of services that exist across the community to help young people, and I think, equally, those community service agencies are gaining a greater understanding of the mechanics of schools as well.

Ultimately, I think the aim is to better understand the needs of individual students and to connect them with the right service at the right time to meet their needs so that any barriers that may exist for them in re-engaging and learning can be addressed efficiently and effectively so that those young people can re-engage with their learning quickly and can establish a pathway that will take them through to help us achieve the targets that we have through the national partnership on youth attainment and transitions but also to ensure that they transition positively out of school into further education, training or employment opportunities.

**Mr Barr:** It was, of course, remiss of me to not mention that there is an initiative in this year's budget that does provide some funding, \$1.1 million over four years, to manage that and provide some staffing support for the youth commitment and the national partnership.

**THE CHAIR:** What has been the feedback from schools, minister? What are the numbers across the system of students—

**Mr Barr:** The census did indicate an increase in enrolments, so that was an encouraging start. Feedback has been positive. We are attempting to engage with a group of students, a group of young people, for whom there has not been probably the appropriate amount of attention to their needs. The need to innovate and be flexible is clearly apparent and, as Tim indicated, the importance of drawing together the range of different stakeholders. Often, there were just information gaps, people not knowing what was out there and what was available.

A bit of a renewed emphasis on school-based apprenticeships as well has been important. I had the opportunity just a few weeks ago to see the first few in the sports area where a couple of students were teamed up with Sports Medicine ACT. That was

a fantastic new initiative, largely through sport and rec. In last year's budget there was support for, from memory, 100 additional school-based apprenticeships. A lot of them were through the department, and that has been a really encouraging process.

**THE CHAIR:** And they were all taken up?

**Mr Barr:** Tim? That is a question of detail I do not have.

**Mr McNevin:** The budget initiative that the minister refers to was in the previous ACT budget. It provided funding to support up to 100 school-based apprenticeships across ACT public schools. It is built on existing group training arrangements that enabled schools to engage school-based apprenticeships. Of those 100, all of the positions have been claimed by schools, and by that I mean schools have expressed a desire to accommodate those school-based apprenticeships. As at about March of this year, 87 of those have been taken up and recruitment activity for the remaining 13 is underway. We suspect all 100 positions will be filled in the near future.

**THE CHAIR:** So are the initiatives you have been talking about those in budget paper 4, on page 325, under the national partnership, youth attainment and transitions?

**Mr Barr:** No, the initiative I was talking about is on page 324 of budget paper 4, the youth commitment, youth attainment.

**THE CHAIR:** Which is the \$1 million you are talking about.

**Mr Barr:** Yes, that is the 1.1.

**THE CHAIR:** What is this youth attainment about?

**Mr Barr:** What does that fund?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, the quality on-the-job workplace learning.

**Mr Barr:** Sorry, you are asking about what page?

**CHAIR:** Page 325 and it says "Quality on the Job Workplace Learning".

**Mr Barr:** That is the commonwealth contribution as part of the national partnership.

**THE CHAIR:** To the overall program that you are talking about.

**Mr Barr:** Tim, do you have a little bit more detail on that one?

**Mr McNevin:** I do not have the specific breakdown for you, but that amount is made up of two components. There is an allocation to each jurisdiction under the national partnership to implement what is called MEAST; I think the acronym stands for maximising engagement of students. Under that, the ACT was required to implement three key reform areas. The first of those is the youth commitment that the chief executive referred to. The second of those is for the department to take over the responsibility of structured workplace learning in the ACT. And the third of those is

to implement a program to look at the range of alternative education programs that are currently in existence in the ACT and to examine ways in which we can provide opportunities for the young people involved in those programs to achieve a certificate II outcome which aligns those programs with the targets within the national partnership. That is the first component of that amount and that goes to the department.

The second component of that amount is to fund what is called a strategic funding pool. That strategic funding pool was established, again, through the youth attainment and transitions national partnership and it is to help the ACT as a jurisdiction to achieve the targets within the national partnership. We will be administering that strategic funding pool in partnership with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations alongside the two commonwealth tended programs that support the youth attainment and transitions national partnership, namely, the school business community partnership brokers program and the youth connections program. And, just for detail, the provider of the school business community partnership brokers program in the ACT is the Chamber of Commerce and the provider of the youth connections program in the ACT is Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Ms Bresnan, then Mr Smyth.

**MS BRESNAN:** I was going to go to another Indigenous question. This is just a general question around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Is there funding anywhere in this budget around transitioning programs for Indigenous students? That has come up as a fairly big issue in a couple of the hearings and inquiries we have been having.

**Mr Barr:** There are some ongoing initiatives.

**THE CHAIR:** And not just transitioning out of school but from primary to high school seems to be becoming quite an issue.

**Mr Barr:** Yes. This will be a test of which appropriation it was, in terms of my memory, but I am pretty sure it was 2007. There was a second appropriation around pastoral care and student welfare and there was a particular targeted Indigenous initiative. Is my memory right?

**Dr Collis:** Yes.

**Mr Barr:** It is? There we go—so far so good this afternoon.

**Dr Collis:** Yes, within the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education section we have a number of programs that are ongoing. The ones specifically related to transitions could be the aspirations program. We have three positions in the aspirations program. The aspirations program is essentially to look at the transitions of young people right through to graduation. It works actually from year 5 onwards. Currently within the aspirations program we have two of those positions filled. We have a vacancy, which we are looking to recruit towards. But currently there are 130 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students engaged in the aspirations program.

Part of that program included the scholarships for students to move on to a teaching

career. We have 10 recipients of those scholarships, which were awarded earlier this year. So the aspirations program is essentially an ongoing program that we highly value and is targeted very much at transitions. Can I say that transitions are a really keen focus of our work, and we are in the process of doing some consultation around a strategy plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. It is clear that transitions, particularly primary school to high school and high school to college, are areas that we need to continue to attend to and continue to address.

**MS BRESNAN:** Thank you. In relation to that—and I apologise; I may have actually asked this of Dr Watterston at the annual reports inquiry—has any thought been given to extending the Gugan Gulwan program to years 11 and 12? One of the things we received evidence about was that they get them to year 10 but then it is difficult to get them beyond, to year 11 and 12, particularly for students who might not necessarily fit within that sort of program but need that additional teaching to be able to get through their schooling?

**Dr Collis:** The answer is that we are continuing to have conversations with Gugan Gulwan. We are, as you are aware, funding \$35,000 into Gugan Gulwan for a literacy program. We made a commitment to review its effectiveness and to see how we were going to move forward. We are in the process of doing that. Our discussions with Gugan Gulwan have been on the basis that we wish to develop that relationship into the future.

Without going into the ins and outs of the submission that we are making for funding from DEEWR around that, we are looking at extending that program, if we can, with DEEWR funding to a full-time program. So we will have a submission in regard to that. But, regardless of whether that is successful or not, we would expect to have an ongoing relationship with Gugan Gulwan around literacy and numeracy and the engagement, development and enhancement of students. It is specifically to do with years 11 and 12. My understanding of the Gugan Gulwan client base at the moment is that it is not so much in years 11 and 12 as in the high school area and middle schooling areas.

Our focus in discussions has really been about getting the young people into years 11 and 12 because the statistics show that we are losing our young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in middle schooling, essentially—somewhere between year 6 and year 9. So we are looking at establishing a strategic partnership with Gugan Gulwan to help us with that and to trial some models around that.

**MS BRESNAN:** I understand that. The education committee specifically addressed that. I understand you want to make sure the year 10s are then able to go through to years 11 and 12. But some students do need that additional assistance to get them through, hopefully, to year 12 and completion.

**Dr Collis:** As I mentioned in regard to the aspirations program before, part of our strategic partnerships is to make sure that our services that we already offer work in concert with, in this instance, Gugan Gulwan. They are not the only strategic partnership we will probably be looking at. But we would hope that our aspirations program develops a strong relationship with Gugan to advance the targets we have about getting our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students through to graduation,

into work, employment or further training.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Minister, on page 89 of budget paper 3, I see there is an initiative for swimming and water survival skills for students of ACT primary schools. What will that \$75,000 a year achieve?

**Mr Barr:** It will be a supplement for the student support fund which is used to enable students who would not otherwise be financially able to meet the required fees to undertake a 10-day swimming program. The expectation is that the funds under the grant will be distributed to all schools on a per capita basis. There will be particular emphasis on supporting up to eight low-SES schools. They are to be specifically targeted as part of the initiative. So it is not a universal subsidy. It is a targeted subsidy for those students who are unable to afford the costs associated with a swimming program.

**MR SMYTH:** Do all students do a swimming course during primary school or is there a component every year of swimming training?

**Ms Wilks:** Currently 20 government schools undertake swimming programs.

**MR SMYTH:** Sorry, that is 20 out of how many?

**Ms Wilks:** Twenty out of 63. It is a school-based decision and some schools do it on an alternate year. The fact that it requires 10 lessons is a large component of that. I think it was last year, with the disruption to the swimming pools, a number of programs were not able to continue because of access to pools.

We are working very closely this year with a number of targeted schools, as the minister has said, to look at it in two ways. One is—and some of the schools might run, for instance, a program in year 4—to see how we can increase that so that they might then have several years involved. The second is, with schools which have never run a swimming program, to see how we can help them, not just financially but in terms of organising the curriculum et cetera to enable this to happen.

**MR SMYTH:** Is there a measure as to whether all students, say, by the end of year 6, can swim? Do we actually track the ability of our students?

**Ms Wilks:** No, we do not. That would require every school student to undertake a swimming program. What we do now require is that, when schools have swimming activities, there is a test, for want of a better word, of their ability to swim. And that is one of our management strategies around ensuring safety at those programs. So in that way, we will collect data over time around the number of students who can swim 25 and 50 metres.

**MR DOSZPOT:** As a supplementary with regard to students with a disability, has any thought been given to putting a hydrotherapy pool into Woden school?

**Mr Barr:** I know we have just rebuilt the one at Turner. I have seen that refurbished.

That looks very good.

**MR DOSZPOT:** And Black Mountain has got a very good one. I have had a number of representations from the point of view of students having to go from Malkara to Black Mountain school and the option is—and they would like—to go to Woden school but there is no hydrotherapy pool there. It is very important for some of the individuals concerned. I am just wondering what budgetary allocations have been taken into consideration for that.

**Dr Collis:** There are no plans currently to put a hydrotherapy pool at Woden. One of the issues around this—and it has been something that has been considered—is: if the nature of the students at Woden had met the demands for such a facility, it would not be well placed at Woden school.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Sorry, did you say it would not be well placed?

**Dr Collis:** It would not be well placed at Woden school.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Why is that?

**Dr Collis:** The nature of the disabilities of the students there, currently and projected into the future, are ones that do not require hydrotherapy needs. Those students have usually gone to Black Mountain because it has the special facility. In short, there is no plan, at this point in time, to do that.

I am aware of some community-based organisations which are interested in siting a hydrotherapy pool somewhere generally, which would be co-located in a community position. Those submissions have been made to me informally. But no thoughts have been made to put a facility at Woden school.

**MR SMYTH:** Is there a need, an unmet demand, for hydrotherapy pool services?

**Mr Kyburz:** Two of the schools that I look after are the Woden school and Malkara school. And there are students from the Woden school who actually use the Malkara hydrotherapy pool. They use that in the morning, I understand. I am not sure about the afternoon but they certainly use it in the morning. So there is a sharing arrangement between Woden school and Malkara school.

**MR SMYTH:** So you feel we have adequately covered it for hydrotherapy pools for students in the ACT at this time?

**Mr Kyburz:** I know that there is a sharing arrangement at this stage. I could not comment on whether it is adequate, but there is a sharing arrangement that does take place.

**MR SMYTH:** Minister, are you aware of any unmet need?

**Mr Barr:** I have had no representations on the matter noted directly to me. I am certainly aware of the need to refurbish the Turner facility. That was a priority. I am happy to consider it in the future but there is obviously no funding in this year's

budget for such a project. But if there are, I will certainly get the department to follow up on whether there is a need for a new facility. If there is then that can be considered in future budgets.

**MR DOSZPOT:** We have had representations; so I will pass those on to you.

**Mr Barr:** Thank you.

**MR SMYTH:** If we go back to the original question, minister, are you concerned that only 20 out of our 63 primary schools teach swimming?

**Mr Barr:** I have certainly indicated a desire, through this initiative and through conversations with the Royal Life Saving Society, to do what we can to increase that level of participation. There is clearly also, though, a number of students, a number of families, that pursue private swimming lessons. That is not to say that, because a school does not necessarily engage as a school, all of the students within that school are not accessing some of those programs. So you have got to be wary of that, I suppose. Would I like to see more schools participate? Yes. Will this initiative enable that? Yes. And that will be a good thing for the territory.

**THE CHAIR:** I am pleased to see that, because obviously this is also something that was in the parliamentary agreement. This, to me, is the start. That focus on the children who may not be able to afford to access swimming lessons is a first go. I do pick up Mr Smyth's point that 20 out of 63 probably is not where we should be. We have had reports recently about school swimming carnivals becoming a thing of the past. We know, at the same time, there are still children who are drowning in backyard swimming pools, in rivers, at the coast and so forth. So I take a great interest in seeing how that is pursued in coming years.

**Mr Barr:** Certainly. It is the government's view that there is an appropriate role for the government to assist those families who cannot afford to participate in these programs, through initiatives like this. I do not, however, believe it is appropriate for there to be a universal subsidy of all costs. I think, when there are large numbers of families already accessing services in a private capacity, a significant government subsidy is not warranted for those who can afford it. But for those who cannot, clearly a targeted initiative is important and I am very pleased that we have been able to deliver that in this year's budget.

**THE CHAIR:** We will see how it goes. Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Ms Wilks, in response to my question about the teacher professional development funding area, you mentioned that you are looking into the work-life balance issues. Can you tell us what mechanisms to decrease the teacher workloads and promote work-life balance are being put in place for this coming year?

**Ms Wilks:** I spoke about work-life balance in a particular context and that was in the context of teacher scholarships, not in a general context where we are looking at the additional requirements of study and how that fits into the requirement. I will hand that over to Mr Bateman, the director of HR, to answer that question.

**Mr Barr:** Whilst Mr Bateman is taking his seat, I think it would be appropriate to observe that a number of structural changes will clearly occur in the ACT system over the next few years, with the implementation of a national curriculum. That will mean that a particular workload that was previously borne by ACT teachers—admittedly, not all because the curriculum development role was shouldered in large part by a smaller and very dedicated team of staff who took it upon themselves to put in that little bit extra in curriculum development—obviously will no longer be required. We will have a national curriculum; so there will be a significant workload reduction in that area in the future. Of course, as we move to adopt a number of other national initiatives, there will be a range of resources that will be available to teachers in the ACT that will be prepared nationally.

That era, if you like, of the ACT doing everything on its own and by itself and trying to carry the load of a large education system, spreading that across a very small number of teachers, is over. We just cannot afford to continue down that path in terms of, as you have correctly identified, the workload imbalance that presents for some teachers. That is why we have been one of the early adopters of some of these national initiatives, because there are very clear benefits for a jurisdiction of our size to participate in these national initiatives.

We contribute funding largely on the MCEECDYA formula which sees the costs for new initiatives split between the commonwealth and the states and territories at a fifty-fifty ratio. The 50 per cent that is met by the states and territories is then met on a per capita basis. So the ACT contributes a relatively small amount of funding and yet benefits from all of these new national initiatives.

In terms of getting better resources, better professional development opportunities, better curriculum aids, better opportunities for our teachers through these national initiatives, it is a no-brainer for the ACT and that is why we have been an early adopter. Mr Bateman might want to add more to that.

**Mr Bateman:** Just going to work-life balance initiatives, a lot of those things are tied up in the enterprise agreement negotiations. Some of them are already in the teachers agreement, and other ones will be included in the staff agreement which is currently being negotiated—expansions around access to part-time work, increased maternity leave, grandparenting leave, access to transition to retirement programs and so on.

But also, under the current agreement, each school has a workload committee that looks at teacher workload in particular. It was a key issue for the AEU in the negotiation of the last agreement. We have set up a number of working parties coming out of that agreement to plan for the next agreement around teacher workload issues. We are working through a number of those things with the AEU at the moment and getting ready for the next agreement.

**MR DOSZPOT:** You have mentioned a number of initiatives that you are looking at. Are there any plans to increase the number of casual relief teachers and assistant teachers?

**Mr Bateman:** Casual teachers are probably not necessarily to do with work-life balance; they are a replacement—

**MR DOSZPOT:** Wouldn't they assist in allowing people to go—

**Mr Bateman:** Generally in the part-time area it is more to do with job sharing. We have done a fair bit of work around getting in place job-sharing arrangements so that, for the schools that possibly find part-time work not as palatable for their parent community, with a job-sharing arrangement, you get a number of benefits from having two people sharing a group and with replacements and so on. So it is not really increasing the casual work around those; it is how you get the job-sharing arrangements in place so you do not require—

**MR DOSZPOT:** The anecdotal evidence we have had given to us is that there are not enough relief teachers to enable people to take professional development courses. I guess that is where I am coming from.

**Mr Bateman:** I am saying that I would not have put that in what I see as the work-life balance side of things. I would agree that access to casual teachers is becoming more and more difficult. The number of people on the register is still fairly high, but schools continually tell us that there are not enough at various points in time. We would have about 800 to 900 casual teachers working in any pay period; that is quite a high number of people to maintain in that capacity.

**Mr Barr:** I would add, of course, that there were 70 new teaching positions created in last year's budget that are in schools at the moment, Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I thought you would.

**Mr Barr:** That certainly has gone some way to address some of the workload issues. When you combine that with the tasks no longer required to be performed—certainly our expectation over the next three or four years is that there will be a number of elements that used to be critical and core functions of a teacher's responsibility in the ACT that simply will no longer be required. That will lessen their workloads.

I would make a final observation that relates to the use of technology. You will see a number of initiatives here, particularly in terms of supporting the BSSS for year 11 and 12. I know from experience with many teachers that there were significant areas of multiple data entry around generating scores for year 11 and 12 students at the end of each semester. That can be simplified and streamlined through some of these ICT initiatives that will present a lot of time saving for staff—recognising, of course, that our college teachers teach for 26 fewer days than their high school and primary school counterparts in recognition of that additional marking load that falls at the end of semesters.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Does that include the automation of, say, class lists and attendance reports?

**Mr Barr:** Certainly those sorts of initiatives will assist in reducing that workload, but the predominance of the funding is around the BSSS and how they go about generating scores—year 12 certificates, tertiary entrance scores et cetera.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** You have been speaking about casual teachers. How many teachers do we have in the system at the moment who are on a short-term contract? I am aware that there are a number who have been put on these sorts of rolling contracts and end up moving out of our system because there is no certainty provided to them around their employment.

**Mr Barr:** Has everyone got that data at their fingertips or do we need to take that on notice? We will take it on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** I just note for the *Hansard* that it has been taken on notice.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair, on that, too, if I can—we seem to have a very high number of teachers on higher duties who are not on teaching duties but in an administrative capacity for the department.

**Mr Barr:** In promotional positions as in school leader Cs or Bs?

**MR DOSZPOT:** Working out of the school environment.

**Mr Barr:** Or working out of the school environment in central office, for example?

**MR DOSZPOT:** Yes.

**Mr Barr:** We can certainly provide some information on that.

**THE CHAIR:** I will again note for the *Hansard* that that question has been taken on notice. Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** I want to follow up on the number that Mr Bateman mentioned. He said there are 800 to 900 teachers per pay period that are casual?

**Mr Bateman:** Working casually. That could be from half a day or a day to closer to full time, depending on the person they are replacing.

**MR SMYTH:** Do we know what percentage of the total teaching hours for that period is taught by casual staff?

**Mr Bateman:** No, we would not.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it possible to find out?

**Mr Bateman:** The current systems would make it fairly difficult. We can give you some estimation rather than an exact figure.

**MR SMYTH:** If you could have a look at that, that would be fine.

**THE CHAIR:** Again, I note that that question has been taken on notice. I want to go to page 312, strategic indicators 4 and 6, in budget paper 4.

**Mr Barr:** Indicators 4 and 6? We anticipated the question on indicator 4.

**THE CHAIR:** It is not a surprise then. When we look at the overall student satisfaction, we have 2008 at 92 per cent. We are then dropping down to 79 and 80, noting that the 2008 result is not comparable with 2009. I first of all want to understand what the change was in the methodology.

**Mr Barr:** As I understand it, we have responded to a recommendation of the Auditor-General to change the way we report neutral responses. You are now only allowed to report, in terms of satisfaction, positive responses. Does that sum it up or is there anything you would like to add, Tracy?

**Ms Stewart:** That is quite correct. Part of the difference between the two years is in respect of that change in methodology. We had previously calculated stakeholders who were parents, students or teachers who were not satisfied with the education system and then derived a measure of those who therefore were satisfied, which in some cases were those who said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. We have changed our methodology on that, and in future will count only those who are actually positively satisfied with the system.

Another change between the two years which has impacted on the results was that previously we used to run this collection as a sample of schools. We used to sample one-third of our schools every year and collect data on the satisfaction of students, teachers, parents and carers. From last year, from 2009, we have gone to a full census: we collect satisfaction data in every school every year. That has impacted on the results as well.

**THE CHAIR:** What is the average return rate—or what was it last year?

**Ms Stewart:** It does vary, depending on which stakeholder group you are collecting from.

**Mr Barr:** Imagine our surprise there!

**THE CHAIR:** I thought that with students you would have them in the classroom and say that before they leave they have to fill out their form.

**Mr Barr:** Their satisfaction survey, yes.

**Ms Stewart:** We do have reasonably good returns from students and also from teachers. It is quite difficult to calculate a response rate for parents and carers; we are trying to come up with a methodology at the moment. It depends on whether we offer every parent the opportunity to respond or whether we ask for one parent per family or one parent per household. There is a number of different measures. Previously we have not really tackled that issue, but in the last few months we have started looking at how we might be able to work out who is responding to our parent questionnaires, whether we are getting multiple parents with one family responding and how we might measure that. That is something that we do not currently measure.

**THE CHAIR:** Just going down to strategic indicators—

**MR SMYTH:** Before you move off that, is it possible therefore to back-cast to 2008 or is it not worth—

**Ms Stewart:** Sorry, when you say back-cast to 2008—

**MR SMYTH:** Well, 2009 is the new system. Can we convert the 2008 figures?

**Ms Stewart:** To a comparable basis for 2009?

**MR SMYTH:** Yes.

**Ms Stewart:** I will have to take that on notice. I think we probably can, but I had better not say yes.

**MR SMYTH:** That is fine. Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note for the *Hansard* that that question has been taken on notice.

**Mr Whybrow:** Page 108 of last year's annual report, when this issue originally arose, shows the measures, and that was by public and high, so it is a more detailed measure—

**Mr Barr:** Primary and high, you mean?

**Mr Whybrow:** Yes, that is correct. Thank you: primary and high—with the old methodology and what the result would have been and with the new methodology and what the result is. That might be a useful point—

**MR SMYTH:** All right, thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Whybrow, what page number?

**Mr Whybrow:** Page 108 of the 2008-09 annual report.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. I want to go to strategic indicator 6. Are there similar reasons for the change in methodology?

**Ms Stewart:** Exactly the same.

**THE CHAIR:** I think we have pretty much understood what is going on there, thank you. Are there any more questions before we break for afternoon tea?

**MR SMYTH:** There are plenty of questions. I am not going to have—

**Mr Barr:** You never ask Mr Smyth that.

**MR SMYTH:** I would like to know how Mr Tardif is doing. He sat there last time

and he has been absolutely silent. You have been a picture of—

**Mr Barr:** He is a Collingwood supporter, so he is very happy.

**MR SMYTH:** Minister, recently there have been a number of incidents of violence in or near ACT schools—the stabbing at Erindale, the incident at Gold Creek. When an event like that takes place, what is the process for reviewing security at an ACT school?

**Mr Barr:** There is certainly a requirement now for a report to come forward to the director in the school region. That requirement is somewhere within 24 hours. That can come through initially verbally, and then it becomes a written report. I see those. Those are then generated to me as a written brief. The department obviously will review those particular incidents and can make recommendations from time to time in relation to particular capital works upgrades. You will have seen a number of schools in recent times where we have responded to specific incidents through increased security measures, be that on particular windows in schools protecting areas of valuable equipment or, in some other instances, where there has been—

**MR SMYTH:** We might do vandalism separately. I am more interested in incidents where violence has occurred and what the process is. When you get a report, what happens then?

**Mr Barr:** It depends on the nature of the incident. Obviously, sometimes other agencies, most particularly the police, are involved, so it depends then on what action transpires. In some instances, maybe police will press charges and so there will be a legal process that is then followed. I receive an update. I regularly ask for updates on particular incidents. Where there are issues that then effectively move into the legal system, the amount of information that becomes available to me is somewhat limited, obviously.

At other times issues are resolved, but I receive a written briefing on each incident. Then, as I said, subject to my discretion, I can seek follow-ups—as I certainly did in relation to that particular incident at Gold Creek. There were staff members who were impacted as well; I wanted to ensure that there was appropriate support put in place for those staff members and that they did make a recovery from some of the physical injuries that did occur. I was able to receive that advice from the department.

So there is a comprehensive reporting process in place. The school network leaders have a particular role to play there where an incident is quite significant, and of course the senior management of the department have a role too. I am briefed on these matters in writing.

**MR SMYTH:** Do we collect statistics on violent incidents at schools?

**Mr Barr:** We do, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** And what is the number of such incidents for the current financial year?

**Mr Barr:** The most recent data I have seen has shown a downward trend in the number of incidents. That has particularly been the case since the implementation of the safe school task force and the new code of conduct. It is not to say that all incidents of violence or behaviour have been eliminated. I think it would be only in an ideal world where that would occur.

I have been pretty consistently of the view, though, that schools have the capacity to be part of the solution rather than viewing them as part of the problem. But I think it is a given that—65,000 young people interact across 130-odd schools every day in this territory; it is unrealistic to expect that there will not be moments of friction. But by and large the data shows that since the implementation of the safe school task force and the engagement of all of the key stakeholders, that has had a positive impact. I am sure we can get some updated data.

**Ms Baird:** I have some figures which will complement what the minister has just said.

**MR SMYTH:** I am sure they will.

**Ms Baird:** In 2007-08 when the safe schools suite of policies was introduced, there were 75 what you call critical incidents, incidents involving violence. In 2008-09 that number had dropped to 29, and this year we are down to 15. So there is a definite drop in that particular type of episode that you have just mentioned.

Also backing up what the minister has just said, there is a very clear set of guidelines for the department and for schools to follow when there is an incident involving violence in schools. They are called critical incident guidelines. The principal informs the network leader or the office straightaway when they believe there has been an incident in school. The executive officer from the network leader's department then will ask for dot points. The police will generally be informed; they normally are informed. Then the dot points are developed by the school, sometimes in conjunction with the police, because the police are usually involved all the way through the process. They come to me; they go upstairs to the executive director; they go to the minister. The minister is kept informed at every single opportunity.

Once the process has been followed, the school is asked for a report on the outcomes, whether the students have been charged, whether outside agencies have been involved. And again the report goes to the minister. The minister is kept informed at every step along the way. The chain of command is very clear and the guidelines are very clear.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Just a supplementary on that: you are actually addressing violent attacks in schools with these numbers? Is that right?

**Ms Baird:** Yes.

**MR DOSZPOT:** In terms of violent attacks, the number of violent attacks between last year and this year is 75 to 29? Is that right—sorry, in reverse order—

**Ms Baird:** From 2007-08 there were 75; in 2008-09 the number had dropped to 29.

**Dr Watterston:** Could I please clarify, Mr Doszpot, that we are not saying that they

are all violent attacks; we are saying that they are critical incidents.

**THE CHAIR:** It would probably be good to put on the record the definition of a critical incident.

**Ms Baird:** A critical incident is an incident or series of incidents which result in significant disruption to a school's normal working day. Also, they may require police attendance. It also may be an emergency. The school may go into lockdown or the school may be evacuated because of a major water leak. Those are all classed as critical incidents.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can I add another category there?

**THE CHAIR:** Certainly.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can we have a figure on how many people have actually been charged over incidents at schools?

**Mr Barr:** We can take that on notice and get that information.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note for the *Hansard* that it has been taken on notice.

**Meeting adjourned from to 3.33 to 3.51 pm.**

**THE CHAIR:** We will now resume this public hearing of the Select Committee on Estimates. Mr Smyth was going to carry on with another question. We will wait for him to get back. I want to go to page 88 of budget paper No 3. We have there the second initiative, the new schools operating costs. There is a significant allocation for teaching staff, non-teaching staff and school-based management payments to the newly-constructed schools in Harrison, Tuggeranong and Gungahlin over the next four years. What is the recruitment strategy to attract and retain these staff, and will all staff be on board when the schools open?

**Mr Barr:** Initially we are about recruiting a new principal. That process I understand is now underway.

**Dr Watterston:** It is underway. Applications have closed.

**Mr Barr:** Of course, with the announcements today on school-based management reform, the new principals at the two new schools will have a much greater say in the selection of staff for their school. Obviously, the initiative here has a number of one-off establishment costs that go with equipping the new schools in various areas with various pieces of equipment that I am sure Mr Whybrow will go into in some detail in a moment.

Then there are allocations made for a range of services that are provided that go with establishing a school, so I might get Dr Watterston first to talk about the recruitment process for the principals and then Mr Whybrow to talk on the detail of the allocation of the funding.

**Dr Watterston:** The process for the two principals, both Gungahlin and Kambah, is underway, as the minister said. We anticipate a slightly elongated process in that we will be using their applications, interviewing on a first round and then a more detailed second round interview.

At this stage we have got those panels together and, as I said before, applications have closed. We anticipate having both appointments within the next month. We have been really pleasantly surprised by the amount of interest and activity around this process. At this stage, there is a lot of excitement and, as I said before, momentum being generated around these appointments. I will hand over to Mr Whybrow to talk specifically about budget allocations.

**Mr Whybrow:** Of the \$14.5 million to be provided to the three new schools, I do actually need to point out that there was funding provided in prior budgets for Gungahlin. So I will run through the total amounts that relate to each of the schools and then probably run through the detail.

In relation to the Kambah P-10 school, the \$54 million is for construction. Of the 14.5 an additional 8.003 million will be provided to that school. It primarily relates to additional staffing. Staffing is provided in two ways. It is generated through enrolments. This is the additional amount. These are for things like your principal, your office manager and a minimum of executive structure in the school.

It also funds the school consistently with previous initiatives of government such as student welfare, pastoral care and counselling services in ACT schools. It is interesting to note that obviously the Kambah P-10 school has also had a diversion of funding from the closed Urambi school; so the total cost of that would actually have been in the order of \$11 million over those four years, but there is an offsetting cost of the differential between those two schools.

Each of the schools does receive establishment costs, as the minister has said. That is for things about setting up their library, additional ICT support, and allowing the principal to customise their own school, to have their own look and feel. That is around specific elements of furniture. I should point out that the capital works program provides the vast majority of the fit-out to a school.

Harrison high school—the \$45 million: there is an additional \$5.5 million provided in that 14.5. Again, it is for those sort of things that I have mentioned in relation to the Kambah P-10 school. It is interesting to note though that while that school is being constructed, next year, 2011, existing year 6 students will stay on site and be doing their year 7; so there is continuity for those students before the school opens in 2012.

As I think I mentioned earlier, the vast majority of costs associated with Gungahlin for those additional teacher structures was provided in the 2007-2008 budget. Of that total of 14.5 over the next four years, there is only 2.2 relating to Gungahlin college. That really relates to the additional ICT support associated with the school and also an existing commitment to all our colleges, which was an additional resource to our colleges for moving forward, transitions, careers and vocational learning.

**Mr Barr:** I suppose I should just quickly add, of course, that in another output class

## PROOF

we will get to later there is a similar initiative to establish the CIT presence as part of the Gungahlin college as well.

**THE CHAIR:** I wondered whether you could give an indication of possible enrolment numbers for these schools. Do you have any idea at this stage?

**Ms Johnston:** Over the last week, I think, we have run some parent evenings. I think for Kambah—Joanne can perhaps tell you—there were over 200 parents. I think that that probably indicates a fair bit of interest. Of course, the Urambi community have had great interest in the development of this school. The students from P-5 will be transitioning over.

**Ms Garrison:** Likewise, as Jayne just said, for Kambah we held the information evening for Gungahlin college last week. We had over 450 parents and students attend that meeting. They have actually requested that we hold another one. There is great interest in Gungahlin college, but we are also thinking that the young people there are looking at other colleges too; so we are anticipating that if we get around 200 to 250 students in the first year, which will only be year 11 students, that will be a really great start. But there is incredible interest out there in Gungahlin around the college.

**Mr Barr:** I should also add that once the new principal is appointed, we are funding an office for the new principal in the Gungahlin town centre whilst the school construction is being completed.

**THE CHAIR:** And with Harrison high school?

**Mr Barr:** Harrison high—the primary school is already operating—

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Barr:** so the principal is already there.

**Ms Garrison:** Harrison has currently 48 year 6 students. I recently attended an information session for the year 6 students and their parents, discussing the option for those year 6 students to stay on in an abridged or a transition year 7 program until the new facility would be open perhaps midway through 2011 for them to transition into the new building there. But they will not be taking other year 6 or year 7 students from that area—only those who have been in the year 6 currently.

**THE CHAIR:** I understand that there are some portables being put up at Harrison primary school. Is that right?

**Mr Barr:** Yes, that is the usual practice. It has been for many years. I have heard Mr Kerlin's comments on this. He—

**THE CHAIR:** I was more wondering if that is because there is far higher demand for that school than it can cater for at this particular time, or whether it is something to do with retaining those year 6s for a while.

**Mr Barr:** I think it reflects strong population growth in the area, the emergence of

## PROOF

Franklin just across the road. I think it perhaps reflects a delay with the Catholic Education Office opening Mother Theresa. It now has opened. It is only catering for P-2 I think at this point, and they are intending to grow that school year by year.

But it is standard practice in growth areas for that initial burst of students to be accommodated in demountables. If we were to build a school with its core infrastructure to meet that peak demand, it would very quickly become empty as that initial wave went through. You would then end up with a situation that we have had in other parts of the city whereby you have over-provision of infrastructure.

We anticipate that there will be a peak in demand for Harrison. Obviously, we are going to address that through the initiative in this year's budget around starting development of the Franklin early childhood school. There will be an early childhood school in Gungahlin, recognising also that there is a need in Bonner for a new school. So there will be other places to meet that growth.

But clearly, that is where there is demand for new schools in the ACT. It is in Gungahlin and anticipating, of course, that once suburbs three and four in Molonglo have names and people live in them, we will need a primary school there. The initial residents who live in Coombs and Wright will be serviced by Duffy primary school.

**MR SESELJA:** What is the total cost of those demountables at Harrison?

**Mr Bray:** We purchased a new transportable for the preschool classroom. That was around about—

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry, Mr Bray, we might need to move you around in front of a microphone, because otherwise none of your words may be recorded.

**MR HARGREAVES:** There is always more room at the table for friends. There is no room for enemies, but there is plenty of room for friends.

**MR SMYTH:** It might not help your career prospects sitting too close to John.

**MR HARGREAVES:** No, but you will not lead a dull life, mate.

**Mr Bray:** We delivered a brand new transportable building for use as a preschool classroom to Harrison at the start of this calendar year. From memory, it would cost around about \$470,000 for that. We also then—

**MR SESELJA:** Does that include transportation costs?

**Mr Bray:** Yes, transport and establishment, connection of services and adjoining landscape treatment around it and fit-out internally. We also transferred two existing transportable buildings from other schools in the ACT, one from the Gold Creek primary school site, and the other one from the Forrest primary school site. The one from Forrest was a single classroom and the one from Gold Creek was a double classroom. In total, they cost around about \$450,000 for both of those to be relocated. I can give you exact figures. I would be happy to take that on notice and give you the exact answer, but they are the order of magnitude on that work.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note for *Hansard* that that has been taken on notice.

**MR SESELJA:** And the first demountables you referred to, is that a double classroom or a single classroom?

**Mr Bray:** The preschool classrooms require a double transportable to provide the extra support spaces. In effect, it is what we call a double transportable, but they function as a single preschool classroom.

**MR SESELJA:** Okay, so that is the square metres for—

**Mr Bray:** I would have to check to give you an exact answer on that, but I will take that on notice and get that back to you, yes.

**MR SESELJA:** Is it the size of one ordinary classroom or two ordinary classrooms?

**Mr Bray:** It is probably in the order of about 120 square metres, because a standard classroom is around about 60 square metres. Given that it is a double transportable, it will be somewhere probably in the order of 120 square metres, but I will come back with an exact figure.

**MR SESELJA:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR SMYTH:** If I can go back to Ms Garrisson, you are expecting 250 students?

**Ms Garrisson:** At this point in time, enrolments for year 11 close on 11 June; so until that time we actually are really only making a guesstimate.

**MR SMYTH:** Given the estimates committee will not have reported by 11 June, in anticipation of having a result, could you take the question on notice and provide that number to the committee?

**Mr Barr:** For all colleges or just Gungahlin?

**MR SMYTH:** Particularly for Gungahlin.

**Mr Barr:** Just for Gungahlin.

**THE CHAIR:** I will just note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR SMYTH:** Where do those students go at this stage and what effect will taking 250 students out of the larger pool have? Where do they go—Dickson?

**Ms Garrisson:** Currently, the priority enrolment area for the students in the Gungahlin suburbs—for students wishing to access a college they could go to Lake Ginninderra, Melba Copland or Dickson college. So that area was previously able to access those colleges as a priority enrolment area. The priority enrolment area for

Gungahlin college is all the suburbs in Gungahlin.

**MR SMYTH:** What does pulling 250 students out of the enrolments of Lake Ginninderra, Melba Copland or Dickson do to the student numbers in those colleges?

**Mr Barr:** My initial response to that would be that that question assumes no growth in the year 11-12 cohort in Gungahlin.

**MR SMYTH:** No, it does not.

**Mr Barr:** There would be growth, so it would not be a net 250 reduction in the other colleges because there are more students to accommodate. As I understand it, and it varies from year to year, the enrolments have split with a greater emphasis at LGC, Dickson and Melba Copland. Yes, that is right. It will clearly have some impact, but then that could be offset by enrolments within the priority enrolment areas of those colleges that had sought out-of-area enrolments in other colleges elsewhere in the city. We will not know the full impact of that until we get the final enrolment figures in June.

**MR SMYTH:** In that case I will broaden my question on notice: can we have all the college numbers?

**Mr Barr:** On notice, yes. The principals at Dickson, Lake Ginninderra and Melba Copland were certainly aware that this was coming. From my most recent conversation with those principals, LGC are obviously in partnership with the University of Canberra and Kaleen. They are looking to build up a particular educational relationship with the University of Canberra.

Dickson are looking to expand in a number of areas. They have a particular strength in international relations. I think they are looking to forge a stronger relationship with the ANU Secondary College in an attempt to get a larger proportion of students out of Lyneham high to continue on into Dickson. Melba Copland obviously have a different structure as they are a year 7 to 12 school over two campuses. They are obviously looking to retain a larger number of their year 10 students to year 11 on the campus.

**Dr Watterston:** One other variable that needs to be added into the equation is that, as I understand it, there were a small number of parents at the parent meeting at Gungahlin who were from independent schools. It will not necessarily follow that all of the first cohort are attracted from government schools.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to come back to your original question on the new schools funding. Minister, thank you for your explanation of the injection of approximately \$14.4 million of funding into the newly constructed schools. Taking that into account, and the amount of money that has been spent there, why could you not find the money to reopen Flynn school?

**Mr Barr:** There is no demand for additional schools in the north-western Belconnen region.

**MR DOSZPOT:** No demand?

**Mr Barr:** There is not. There are not the students to justify new schools in that area. The priorities for new schools in Canberra are in Gungahlin and the Molonglo valley.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Have you been listening to the community at Flynn, by any chance?

**Mr Barr:** I am aware of the calls from some members of the community in relation to re-establishing a school, but my priority is delivering schools where they are most needed, and that is clearly in Gungahlin and the Molonglo valley.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Where you think the schools are most needed. But you are not taking the community into account.

**Mr Barr:** It is where all of the enrolment demand is, as we have just heard in relation to Harrison and as we know is the case in Amaroo. We know where all the new suburbs are being rolled out and we know the number of children who will need access to schooling. The priority is clearly in Gungahlin and Molonglo.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you. If that is the case, and you make a very valid case—as you say, that is where the need is—why is it there is a case to build a \$4 million childcare centre in Flynn in place of the school if you have not got that great demand for kids who will be coming into that school-age category?

**Mr Barr:** Childcare is no longer in my portfolio responsibilities, but I am aware—

**MR DOSZPOT:** It is the same government.

**Mr Barr:** from my time as minister for children and youth, that there was an assessed need for additional childcare facilities in that part of Belconnen.

**MR DOSZPOT:** So there is demand—

**MR SESELJA:** Where do they go after childcare?

**THE CHAIR:** One at a time, please.

**Mr Barr:** Well, to—

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot is asking a question.

**MR SESELJA:** Where do they normally go after childcare?

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Seselja!

**Mr Barr:** Fraser, Charnwood, Dunlop, Latham—

**MR SESELJA:** School?

**Mr Barr:** Mount Rogers.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Anywhere but Flynn.

**Mr Barr:** Indeed, there are five schools within two kilometres of that site. All of them, with the exception of Fraser, at this point have surplus capacity.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Is your assessment similar to your assessment of what constitutes good educational directions, such as small schools are not good, then doing a backflip and saying, “No, we do need smaller schools in certain areas”? You are obviously providing a lot of support for the Hall area. How much are you going to be spending to incorporate the independent school on the Hall primary school site?

**Mr Barr:** No money at all.

**MR DOSZPOT:** No money at all?

**Mr Barr:** No. There will be no government allocation for that.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Okay.

**MR SESELJA:** Just on the Flynn community: I understand—this is in your portfolio—that part of the proposals being put forward by the community include some adult education and a number of things at a community hub. Are you aware of the proposal that the Flynn community have put forward for—

**Mr Barr:** It is not in my portfolio area, so I have no responsibility for that.

**MR SESELJA:** adult education?

**Mr Barr:** In relation to the Flynn project, no, I am not. I do not have carriage of that particular issue.

**MR SESELJA:** But even as education minister and the fact that potentially there could be some educational facilities there, you have not had an interest? You have not had any discussions with the Flynn community?

**Mr Barr:** I have not, no.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Just on that: the Flynn community have been consulting with you prior to this, have they not?

**Mr Barr:** I last met with representatives of that community just prior to the decision to close the Flynn school. Carriage of that particular government asset transferred from the education department to the Department of Territory and Municipal Services and has now been transferred to the community services area. Minister Burch has responsibility for that particular project.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, you admitted after the school closures that you have got to listen to the community more. This community has been trying to get your attention

and Minister Burch's attention, even now, with \$4 million being allocated. We will be bringing this up with Ms Burch as well. With \$4 million being allocated, why is there no logical option to spend, say, \$2 million from your area to open a school which is very much wanted by the community? Can you just give us one good reason for that?

**Mr Barr:** Because there is not sufficient student demand in the north-west Belconnen region. If we were to do so, we would detract from the enrolments of the five surrounding schools. There is no need for an additional public school in that area. The new public schools that are required in the ACT are in Gungahlin and the Molonglo valley. That remains the government's priority.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Thank you, chair. Minister, we were having a discussion before the tea break on critical incidents. Just on the Gold Creek incident, what happened with the students that were involved? Are they still at the school? What has happened in their case?

**Mr Barr:** I understand that one student was relocated.

**Ms Johnston:** One student is enrolled in another school and we are continuing to work with one student to find a suitable placement. Do you want to add anything, Joanne?

**Ms Garrisson:** Following that incident at Gold Creek, we worked very closely with the family involved. We involved a number of other agencies to negotiate with them where best we would be able to relocate those students and assessments were made with the students. One has been successfully relocated to another high school. I have been following up on that. It has been a successful transition. The other student has very complex needs and we are continuing to work with the family to find a suitable place for further education.

**MR SESELJA:** At this stage the second student is not in school?

**Ms Garrisson:** The second student had only recently arrived in the territory and had spent one day in the school. In view of the complex needs of that student, we are working with the family and with a number of agencies to find a suitable place for that student to be able to continue her education.

**MR SESELJA:** So for the other student who has been placed—you said successfully, so presumably there have been no other serious incidents of this nature—what kind of pastoral care is being undertaken to ensure that that continues?

**Ms Garrisson:** There is considerable targeted care by a number of staff in the school that the student is in. They are making contact with that student on a daily basis.

**MR SMYTH:** With regard to, say, vandalism of the schools, does Ms Baird have an equally extensive knowledge of events of vandalism? No? Mr Whybrow does. Have you got the figures, say, for the last three years?

**Mr Whybrow:** I can refer you back to a recent question on notice, which I think was provided to Mr Doszpot's office. That provided a breakdown of vandalism costs by school for 2008-09 and also provided details of the number of reported incidents in 2008-09.

I guess an interesting position here for us in the department is that we are seeing a greater number of reports going forward. In 2009, we had an increase in the number of reports, but we did not actually have an increase in the costs within the schools. We see that as schools taking more seriously reports of minor issues, there is a relationship and that, when they do make reports, they get additional support from central office in providing improvements to their infrastructure.

I guess there are some issues already. If I could refer you to budget paper 3, the capital works upgrade program identifies, I believe, \$1 million for additional security fences in schools. That has been the most significant change within our school environment to reduce school vandalism. When we have put in fences, we have had significant reductions.

**MR SESELJA:** How many schools have had those fences put in?

**Mr Whybrow:** I would have to take on notice the number of schools that have fences and the number of schools which do not have security fences around them.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that that has been taken on notice.

**MR SESELJA:** In some of those schools, in individual cases there have been very large increases and some standout figures—

**Mr Whybrow:** Yes.

**MR SESELJA:** for Melba Copland, \$92,000, and for Stromlo high up to \$57,000 in 2009. Was there any reason for those spikes? Can you talk me through some of those figures? Firstly, as to the schools' internal budget allocation for vandalism, presumably most of this is claimed on insurance. So what does that allocation go towards?

**Mr Whybrow:** There is an insurance threshold. Like any insurance policy, there is an amount that is met originally. Under the insurance arrangements for the territory, the department wears the first \$25,000. That is individual events. Within a school situation where there are large expenses, that is normally the differential, with \$25,000 being met by the department and \$5,000 being met by the school. Pointing to Melba Copland and the sort of information that we had in 2009, we have constructed security fencing at that site. We have seen a significant reduction in the costs of vandalism at that site.

**MR SESELJA:** Do we have a year-to-date figure, or a figure since that has been installed?

**Mr Whybrow:** I do not have a year-to-date figure on vandalism at that particular site. I have been looking at Melba Copland. We are talking tens of thousands of dollars in

reduction. I can get you an exact year-to-date figure for Melba Copland's vandalism costs.

**MR SESELJA:** That would be great.

**THE CHAIR:** I note that has been taken on notice.

**MR SESELJA:** Thank you. When it exceeds the insurance amount, where does the cost come from? Does it come from the schools' funds—some of the schools are carrying cash—or does it come from the education department? Where does the money come from?

**Mr Whybrow:** Like an insurance claim, we receive payment from our insurers. Within the ACT government, that, from a department point of view, works back through, I believe, Chief Minister's Department, who have a whole of ACT government insurance policy. I think the organisation is called ACTIA. They then do their own arrangements about on-passing that. We work as ACTIA being our insurance provider. We put in claims to them. Any cost above that gets reimbursed back to the department or the school, depending on who is meeting those costs.

**MR SESELJA:** How many of those incidents are reported to police?

**Mr Bray:** Whenever there is an incident at a school, it is generally normal practice that the AFP are called to attend the site as well as a glazier. That is just standard practice. What usually activates the notice is our alarm system. Our private contractor security firms are generally first to arrive on the site. They generally then assess the level of damage and the extent of possible ongoing breach until it is secured. They contact the on-call officer, who attends, again within half an hour to an hour at the worst. By that stage, usually the AFP have arrived and the glazier has arrived. They make the building secure. If they cannot, the security officer stays onsite permanently until the school opens in the morning and it is made secure.

Sometimes, if there is, like, a fire, forensics will come in with the AFP. They will usually arrive first thing in the morning and, again, our static guard stays on site until the building is handed back from the AFP.

**MR SESELJA:** But, for instance, graffiti may not trigger an alarm. So what happens in those cases? Are they reported? Are they part of these figures—cleaning up graffiti and the like?

**Mr Bray:** No. My understanding is they are not. Usually the responsibility for cleaning up graffiti is with the schools. The schools, I understand, have a standing contractor available, so if a teacher or principal arrives at the school and finds there has been graffiti they immediately contact their contractor, who comes out and has special chemicals to clean the graffiti off. They try and do that before the school opens, if they can. So there is a sort of system in place where there is a quick response, because we find that the quicker you remove the graffiti the less incentive there is for it to happen again. They find they do not get the impact that they expected.

**MR SESELJA:** So what are the costs of that? Do we know the costs of those other

acts of vandalism that are not included in these—

**Mr Bray:** No, we would not. They are costs that are recorded by the school. My understanding is that we do not capture those costs.

**Mr Whybrow:** Sorry, if I can correct you, Rodney.

**Mr Bray:** That is all right.

**Mr Whybrow:** Within the costs here we actually do pick up expenditure within schools. So the costs that are reported here will pick up those minor expenses. Our only issue will be if the school has coded them correctly. Generally we have high-quality business managers and that does seem to be the case.

**MR SESELJA:** Have there been many incidents where the acts of vandalism are committed by students at the schools?

**Mr Whybrow:** I do not have that level of detail. Commonsense would say to me yes.

**MR SESELJA:** But you are not sure?

**Mr Whybrow:** No. I do not collect that detail.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Pratty's on the loose again.

**Mr Barr:** We can always send Steve Pratt in to solve it.

**MR SMYTH:** Pratty is always keen to help.

**MR HARGREAVES:** He cleans his own stuff off, though—and everybody else's as well.

**MR SMYTH:** Mr Whybrow, were you going to table that document? I know some members have got it, but I do not think the committee has.

**Mr Whybrow:** I can. I have got the answer to that question on notice.

**Mr Barr:** Yes, I am sure we can provide that to the committee.

**Mr Whybrow:** I will just make sure I get all the pieces together.

**Mr Barr:** It is already in *Hansard*, is it not?

**MR DOSZPOT:** Or the *Canberra Times*, whichever you give it to first.

**MR HARGREAVES:** You would believe the *Canberra Times* before *Hansard*, though, wouldn't you?

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Just going back to school fencing and the security-related issues, I believe Mr Barr came out with a media release talking about \$12.6 million for capital upgrades. In fact, it is only \$4.5 million. But in that there is some mention of capital. How much of that capital upgrade referred to is dedicated to security fencing for the five schools?

**Mr Whybrow:** I refer you to budget paper 3, pages 185 and 186. The total is actually \$12.565 million and it gives a breakdown for all those things. That is where it identifies a million dollars for school security improvements. That is the program for security fences.

**MR DOSZPOT:** That would be for the five schools, we presume?

**Mr Whybrow:** That is the program in total. Without doing the detailed work, it is an estimate. They cost us around \$200,000 apiece. Some may cost us less and we can do some more.

**Mr Bray:** We have committed to do at least the following three schools: Lyneham high school, Alfred Deakin high school and Hughes primary school. If the prices for that were to come in favourably, being under the \$1 million, then we will go to another school and do another one. Basically, we have got a priority list based on the frequency of the vandalism or the attacks and we are working through that list on that basis.

Just to give you a sense of proportion, we have done about 25 schools so far with security fences. I will confirm that number, as Mark said. But we hope to keep addressing those high and medium-risk schools each year and then we will just keep working through the list.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Is Melba one of those schools that has been—

**Mr Bray:** We have already done Melba.

**Mr Whybrow:** Yes.

**Mr Bray:** We did Melba late last year, and the feedback from the principal when I spoke to him was that they had no attacks during the Christmas break, which was pretty phenomenal given that their school was being severely attacked pretty regularly up until then.

**MR DOSZPOT:** If we are looking at an onward program, how many additional schools have you got within your sights to get security fencing?

**Mr Bray:** We would see about another 20 schools. That is when we think we would really be through the worst of it. We hope that this \$1 million will actually get us about five schools, but we do not want to overpromise, so until we get some accurate figures we give three schools certainty and then our hope is we will get at least another two done with that. So that is five in the next financial year. Our hope is that we will do at least another five for each year that follows until we get through what we see as the next 20, which are what we call the medium-risk schools.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you. In relation to some of the new school announcements, the government announced \$5.3 million to expand the Red Hill primary school—on BP4, page 328—to build an additional five classrooms and improve reception, school administration and parking facilities. Presumably, this will be cheaper than constructing a new preschool at the Griffith site, which would cost about \$7.37 million? Was consideration given to using the facilities at Narrabundah school after that school was reduced? It used to be up to year 6 and it was reduced to preschool to year 2. You would think there would have been some options there.

**Mr Barr:** No, because there is childcare provision in Narrabundah now.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I am saying, before that happened, was any consideration given to that, instead of spending \$5.3 million to expand Red Hill?

**Mr Barr:** No, because the particular issues in relation to the French-Australian preschool and the range of different accommodation options emerged in the period after the decisions were taken in relation to Narrabundah, which dates back to 2006. The French-Australian preschool issues were 2008, from memory, when an extension was given, but the particular facilities that are in place now at Narrabundah have seen something along the lines of a 70 per cent enrolment. There are now more students on that campus in P-2 than there were in the entire P-6 program that was there previously. When you add in the childcare component, there has been a quadrupling of the number of young people on that site. So it has been a massive rejuvenation of public education in Narrabundah and that is a good thing.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** Just to finish, the issue of cyber bullying and the use of mobile phones at school: what is happening in that regard as part of your reforms? Is that decreasing? Is it increasing?

**Ms Johnston:** I do not think we actually have data collected specifically around cyber bullying and the use of mobile phones. The safe schools task force actually is considering the whole issue of bullying, and cyber bullying in particular, as a matter of interest across the groups who are involved in the safe schools task force.

**MR SMYTH:** All right. When is that likely to report?

**Ms Johnston:** I think we are in the process of writing to the minister to put forward some ideas and take that forward, so over the next 12 months that will be a focus for that group.

**THE CHAIR:** Is that particularly on cyber bullying or a whole range of strategies around bullying?

**Ms Johnston:** The focus of the safe schools task force conversations at the moment is around cyber bullying. We have had some expert input and that is certainly an interest

of the parents and of the independent schools as well. So that is the focus. But I will hand over to Dr Collis.

**Dr Collis:** I probably cannot add much more to that. No, we do not collect data specifically about cyber bullying at the moment. However, the partnerships with the AFP are very close and the AFP are running programs within our schools. Cyber bullying, as you would be aware, is quite a slippery customer to measure, and it is not independent of other forms of bullying. In fact, most often it morphs into face-to-face bullying or other forms of what is now termed covert bullying. So it is very hard to measure incidents and so forth. But, as Ms Johnston pointed out, this is a major focus of the work that we are doing around the safe schools task force, looking at developing a program for next year.

**THE CHAIR:** Dr Collis, do you keep data on incidents of bullying across the system? I think I have asked a question before. My understanding is that the education department does not have data from individual schools. How do you get a sense of whether it is going up or down and whether strategies or programs are effective if this information is not collected or kept or consolidated?

**Dr Collis:** The data is captured at the school level but, because of the idiosyncratic nature of bullying at school level, it is hard to actually compare one to the other. The data that is kept over time would be those suspension responses that have been caused by a bullying incident. We would collect data around that.

The actual issue about that, too, is that there may be a number of categories that led to that suspension, so trying to unravel that. I actually think that probably we often overlook the best measure of bullying in our schools because we are looking at trying to measure or count incidents. There is a whole definitional issue around bullying and so forth that we are continually working through.

The measure that I think is probably most sensitive is actually the opinion surveys around sense of safety within schools. Research says that, overwhelmingly, families and students respond from a sense of safety in their schools more from a psychological safety than a physical safety sense. One of the measures that we look at to see whether our programs are succeeding or not is whether students are telling us that they feel safe and whether parents are telling us they feel safe.

**THE CHAIR:** So that is picked up in a student survey at the school level and then it is passed on to the department?

**Dr Collis:** And it is aggregated.

**THE CHAIR:** Consolidated. Are we able to have the report on the last survey?

**Ms Johnston:** Yes. We will take that on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. I just note that that document has been taken on notice.

**MR DOSZPOT:** On the same topic, does the same apply to cyber bullying as a separate entry or keeping track of issues with cyber bullying?

**THE CHAIR:** No. It was just explained that it was not at this point but it was being talked through in the task force. I have just requested—

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can I ask why not?

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry, Mr Doszpot, if I can just follow on, I have just requested that report. Is it possible to have the previous report? I just want to get some sense of how it is trending.

**Dr Collis:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Ms Bresnan.

**MS BRESNAN:** Thank you. The Australian Education Union provided some input to the committee before they appeared before the committee. We basically got community groups to fill out a survey. One of the issues they raised as being one of their key priorities and key issues—I think this goes to additional assistance for teachers—was the increased complexity of students they are seeing coming through the public school system. One of the issues they raised in particular was in relation to mental health. I am just wondering what sort of assistance is being provided to teachers in the general public school system to deal with this increased complexity. I was not able to see anything specifically in this budget, but are there any specific programs?

**Dr Collis:** Yes, we have a partnership with the health department. The health department have funded a program, \$200,000 a year, for this year and the next year, and it is regarding, I believe, the commitment between the Greens and Labor around—

**MS BRESNAN:** Yes, I am aware of that. The thing they raised is that it is actually providing assistance to teachers to deal with the complexity of the students that they are seeing coming through. I am aware it provides education and mental health benefits to teachers for dealing with the complex nature of the students they are seeing coming through.

**Dr Collis:** If I could move down, there are two programs that we are moving through all ACT schools, not just public schools. Mind matters and kid matters are about primary prevention and promotion and early intervention. So they are about early intervention. They are about, at the school level, training teachers to understand the complexities of mental health issues and how best they can respond. But they are also about working out, with the services that are available to schools, how they can intervene.

From a school perspective, our role in mental health is very much around early intervention. Obviously, we are not a treatment group. Those frameworks are very powerful frameworks and are being evaluated with very positive details around how schools can prepare their staff, how they can prepare their community and how they can link with services that support the community.

In addition, there are some students for whom the mental illness becomes a disability, a disabling feature, and there can be targeted support for those young people in schools. The focus of that target of support, of course, would be in regard to providing the kinds of adjustments that would be needed in a classroom or in a school to provide a young person with an education. An example of that would be a young person who may have, say, early onset schizophrenia. Whilst we would not be involved in the treatment function of that, there may be particular adjustments that might need to happen in terms of monitoring the young person during breaks or something like that, which would maximise that young person to continue their education.

What happens currently in the department is that the targeted support for students with mental illness occurs when there is an ongoing need for a treatment agency. On each of these occasions, there would be a treating mental health professional who would be working with the school at the same time. So there is targeted support for the students with disabilities as well as what I have talked about with mind matters and kid matters.

**MS BRESNAN:** This is, again, something that has come out through the inquiries we have been having. Mental health was raised. They specifically raised that in the hearing, but in their submission they said it was just this overall complexity which they are seeing in terms of students from non-English-speaking backgrounds, students with increasingly complex behaviours and, as teachers, having to deal with the complexity of those students they are seeing. It was about the resource or support that is provided to teachers to be able to cope with that increased complexity, because we are seeing more of that coming through the general school population. That is one thing they have raised as an issue, having increased support for that.

**Mr Barr:** There is more support for ESL, and Trish Wilks will now talk about that.

**Ms Wilks:** This year we have provided an additional 8.4 ESL teachers across the system to support ESL students in the mainstream. We have also, as I mentioned earlier, put a large sum of money towards enabling 20 ESL teachers or potential ESL teachers to gain ESL qualifications through a scholarship, and we are running extensive professional development programs to upskill classroom teachers to understand the particular language needs of students who come from a non-ESL background.

**MS BRESNAN:** Would the additional ESL teachers be based in the public school system or would they be based—

**Ms Wilks:** The additional teachers go into the melting pot, so to speak, of mainstream ESL teachers that then work in schools.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Madam Chair?

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Thank you very much. I am awake.

**MR SMYTH:** And an ESL student.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Just to surprise you, I am. Do you want that in French or not?

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I will give it to you in French, if you do not watch it. I am interested in the relationship between the department and the Ethnic Schools Association. That was no surprise, was it?

**MR SMYTH:** They are not dating at this stage.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth, do not encourage him.

**MR HARGREAVES:** No. We understand, of course, that mainstream schooling is about teaching the languages of commerce, but there are emerging smaller languages. Bangla is one of them, for example, which is now coming out of the language of the kitchen and into the language of commerce. And I know that there is a relationship between the department of education and the ESA. I would like to have something on the record about that relationship. How do you see it sitting, where do you see it going and how are you going to respond to these emerging languages coming forward? In English, please.

**Ms Wilks:** Yes. My French probably is not as good as your French. In terms of the Ethnic Schools Association, we have a very strong relationship with the Ethnic Schools Association. I personally meet regularly with the president and the committee. We have an annual grant of around \$90,000, which supports the community language programs, because we are very aware of the importance of supporting those four language groups. At the present time, we are working extensively with the Ethnic Schools Association to ensure that their auditing and reporting procedures meet the requirements of the grant so that then the money can flow through to them.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I understand that there was, until very recently, some conflict between the department and the ESA around the actual contract itself. I understand that part of the difficulty, in fact, was that the negotiation around the contract was actually being undertaken with someone who did not have the endorsement of the ESA board anyway, and that made it very difficult for the department to progress things. Have those issues been resolved?

**Ms Wilks:** Yes, we are very aware that the negotiations were with the president of the Ethnic Schools Association at the time, when she was being replaced as president. We are now working—

**MR HARGREAVES:** That is a bit harsh, “being replaced”. That sounds like a Labor Party term.

**Ms Wilks:** with the existing committee to ensure that the new arrangements meet the requirements of the ethnic schools and meet the requirements for the disbursement of public money.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Have the contract difficulties been resolved and now everything is on an even keel a bit, or is there still some way to go yet?

**Ms Wilks:** We are still working through the financial management exercise but we are virtually at the stage where both parties have come to an agreement on the way forward.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Is there an estimated length of time when that will finally be put to bed?

**Ms Wilks:** I would expect that would be put to bed before the end of this financial year.

**MR HARGREAVES:** That is interesting, given that the funds are to be applied in this financial year, and it is a little difficult to have it resolved by the end of the financial year in which it occurs. I will be very interested to see whether it is, in fact, resolved by the end of this financial year. If it is not, I will take a bigger interest in it.

Can I acknowledge, for the record, the assistance my office has received from Mr Barr's office on this issue and the personal intervention of Lorna Clark, which I found particularly helpful. I will be keeping an eye on this one.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Hargreaves.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair—

**THE CHAIR:** I want to go back to—

**MR DOSZPOT:** I had a supplementary before I was cut off by the awakening Mr Hargreaves.

**MR HARGREAVES:** You have awoken the giant, my friend.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I am sorry.

**THE CHAIR:** A supplementary, Mr Doszpot, then I will move on to my question.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Just getting back to the disability issues that Ms Bresnan referred to, can you give us some clarification, minister, on the departmental direction to people about children with disability attending schools beyond the current normal school-leaving age? I understand that currently some of the special schools have a school-leaving age of, so-called, years 13 and 14.

**Mr Barr:** There is no formal policy to that effect but there has been a practice.

**MR DOSZPOT:** They have been allowed to do that?

**Mr Barr:** Certainly, the practice of year 13 is commonplace across the education system, effectively repeating year 12. That is commonplace across the system. Year 14 has been less of a case.

I understand, in relation to Black Mountain, for historical reasons there was the

co-location of a Koomari facility within the site at Black Mountain that had led to a post school option, effectively, to stay in that but with a transition into the Koomari program. The Koomari program no longer operates. Two things have changed. Obviously, we have raised the school-leaving age through the legislation last year to 17—some form of education, training or employment. That has increased the formal school-leaving age across all areas.

In relation to Black Mountain, the option for year 13 still remains on educational grounds. But year 14 is no longer an automatic entitlement, if you like, and there is in place now a working group at that school to look at alternative post-school options. Dr Collis, who is on that working group, might want to go into some detail in relation to progress on that but this was flagged back in 2007, from memory.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Minister, the fact that I am referring to is that parents who currently had expectations of their children staying on to year 14 have received letters to the effect that they cannot expect that, and the consultative bodies, who I presume you would have been in touch with, in some of the disability areas are recommending against any change to that. I would like to know what your assessment of that request would be and why they have not been consulted fully on this change.

**Mr Barr:** My understanding is that this decision was flagged in 2007.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Not with the people I am talking about.

**Mr Barr:** At the school, yes, but Dr Collis was going to go into some more detail.

**Dr Collis:** Sure. This is largely a couple of alignments of legislation, including the Education Act 2004, which articulates the responsibility of the department to provide 12 years of education, and the disability standards in education 2005, which talks about provision of an education service as for any other student and talks about appropriate educational adjustments. In a sense, this is about aligning an expectation of disabled young people that they access both education and their future life options, as any other student should have.

Each of the families who has enrolled in Black Mountain from 2007 for years 8, 9 and 10 were informed that there would be a process going on which would actually be looking at aligning the age but the process needed to undertake some degree of consultation. The consultation process that occurred was: a committee was set up, which had Disability ACT officers and Department of Education and Training officers, the principal of the school, the board chair of Black Mountain school and a parent of an ex-student at Black Mountain school. The DET officers included the post-school options.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can I ask why the Disability Education Advisory Council was not included?

**Dr Collis:** I would have to take that on notice. My understanding is, however, that the Disability ACT group were in consultation with all the disability groups around this and representing those views. But I would need to—

**MR DOSZPOT:** The advice we have received in a different forum—

**THE CHAIR:** That will be taken on notice.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you. The second disability-related question is in relation to the budget item about the \$1.6 million funding that has been given to government schools to implement the Shaddock review.

**Mr Barr:** No; that is not what the allocation is for.

**MR DOSZPOT:** That is what the Treasurer stated in her budget papers—\$1.6 million.

**Mr Barr:** Yes, elements of, but that is not the totality of the money.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Perhaps you can give us an explanation. What was given to us in the Assembly was \$1.6 million for the implementation of the Shaddock review on disability. I can show you the paperwork.

**Mr Barr:** I understand the point you are making. The distinction I am making is that that is an initiative at this point in time and that the implementation of the Shaddock review is not something that is just at one point in time; it is an ongoing piece of work. The budget supplementation this year in relation to additional support for students with a disability goes towards some of those recommendations within Shaddock. A lot of the Shaddock recommendations refer to cultural change and changes in practice that do not require new appropriations but require a change in the way we go about providing disability education. To directly link the two is not fair. The additional money also goes to offset some of the increase in demand for services for students—

**MR DOSZPOT:** Is this spelt out anywhere in the budget papers?

**Mr Barr:** Yes.

**Mr Whybrow:** In budget paper 3, if you look at page 69, the initiative of the \$1.6 million is clearly identified in that table as a growth initiative.

**MR DOSZPOT:** That is \$1.6 million per annum?

**Mr Whybrow:** No; it is approximately \$400,000 per annum—a total over four years of \$1.6 million. But it is identified as a growth initiative, demand related—like the new schools operational costs initiative is about growth of demand.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you; that explains part of it. The second question relating that is: why is that allocated only for government schools when the Shaddock review was across both government and non-government schools?

**Mr Barr:** Because last year's budget had an appropriation for additional money for non-government schools that carries on into the outyears.

**MR DOSZPOT:** But that was before the Shaddock review was—

**Mr Barr:** And money was earmarked within that for students with a disability in non-government schools.

**MR DOSZPOT:** So it was your ESP working?

**Mr Barr:** We determined to provide an allocation, as per our election commitment, to increase support for non-government schools for students with a disability.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Okay.

**Mr Barr:** That initiative—there is an extra \$1 million in this year's. It was \$1 million a year over that four-year period, so there is \$1 million coming in the 2010-11 financial year, as there was \$1 million provided in the 2009-10 appropriation.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can you tell us how many of the Shaddock review—

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot, could I just draw your attention to the fact that we will be going to output class 1.4, special education in public schools. We will be doing that next Friday, and we will have the appropriate officials here at that time.

We might move on. I want to go to page 321 of budget paper 4. I know that earlier we looked at the change in the satisfaction surveys and talked about the methodology behind that. I just want to go over the figures we have for the targets for 2009-10 and the estimated outcome, particularly down under "Satisfaction". We had a target of 92 per cent. It came in at 87 per cent. Underneath is the 86 per cent and it came in at 79 per cent. I am just wondering—with these satisfaction surveys, when you do not meet the target, what action do you take? What do you do with that information? I am assuming that you can collect information as to why people are not satisfied. What happens with that? How does it go through the system to address whatever the issues are?

**Dr Watterston:** I will hand over to Tracy to give an explanation in a minute, but in terms of the data, you can disaggregate it and look at each individual school; and so, because that is across the system, obviously some schools will have met the target and some have not.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes; sure.

**Dr Watterston:** So it goes to the whole picture that we create of a particular school and its performance. It would be another indicator for us to look at what processes are in place and why that level of lower satisfaction is in place. These things are not isolated. There would be a range of conditions and factors which would help create the picture for the school network leader. We have four of those network leaders that are in new positions who deal directly with this kind of data—as I said before, creating the whole picture and trying to analyse what it is within a school that is causing a less favourable response than what we want.

I cannot give you a definitive answer about if you get A, then we do B. But it goes to the heart of a whole school performance. Usually, parent satisfaction, if it is lower, would be as a result of some particular instance within the school. That is what we

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have to address. They are individualised responses, and they are responses that are taken very seriously, as I said before, as part of the whole picture. I do not know if Tracy—

**THE CHAIR:** It is not necessarily if A happens, then B; it is more about how the system takes that information.

**Mr Barr:** I might invite Jayne Johnston to talk about the school improvement framework, and this information feeds into that process.

**Ms Johnston:** We have put in place this year a school improvement framework or an enhancement of our school improvement framework which has a number of planks to take us forward. One of them, as Dr Watterston just described, is really enhancing the quality of the data that schools can use individually and that we can use at the network level to be able to identify the particular areas of focus that we need to put in place. Each school now has in place a four-year strategic plan and an annual operating plan. Those plans go to the sorts of initiatives around improving the quality of the educational environment for the kids and the quality of teaching and learning.

We would expect that over the next two, three, four, five years we will begin to see the impact of that school improvement across all schools starting to show up in both the systems data and also the individual school data. The focus on making sure that we are using evidence-based information at the individual school level but also at the system level in order to be able to target our resources and our responses is a major part of the school improvement process.

**THE CHAIR:** There was one other one at the top of that page around the percentage of year 10 students who proceed to public secondary college education. I note that the estimated outcome for 2009-10 is 87 per cent, but the target in 2010-11 is still at 85 per cent. Part of my question is: why have we not tried to be a bit more ambitious? But the other side of that is this. Obviously, these students would still be around 16 years of age or so; they would still be within that earn or learn age. Are we going to be capturing information about the other 15 per cent or whatever it ends up being and where they are—whether they are in employment or some sort of educational training program?

**Ms Johnston:** Through the youth commitment initiative that we spoke about earlier, we will be capturing that information and ensuring that—our target is perhaps not 100 per cent but 95 per cent of students in education, training or employment in those years. We will have that data.

**THE CHAIR:** And you will be breaking it down so that we have some idea of how many are in a sort of mainstream setting.

**Mr Barr:** Yes.

**Ms Johnston:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** And so forth.

**Mr Barr:** Some could be at TAFE; some could be—yes, there will be a variety of different destinations post year 10.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Ms Bresnan.

**MS BRESNAN:** I have another question on the accountability indicators. It is the early intervention indicators. Part “c” has the level of satisfaction of parents with the progress with early intervention placement. In part “a” it has got that it is 450 eligible students. Do you know how many of the parents of the 450 children actually complete the survey or send in the survey?

**Mr Barr:** We will have to take that one on notice.

**Ms Wilks:** The data that I have which partly answers your question was that in 2008-09, we had a positive satisfaction rate of 98 per cent.

**MS BRESNAN:** They have got here 90 per cent across there and “n/a”. I am wondering how many actually complete the survey.

**Ms Wilks:** Yes. I am not sure that we will be able to provide that data.

**Mr Barr:** A refreshing burst of honesty from officials. We will see what we can find.

**MS BRESNAN:** It would just be interesting to see how many actually completed the survey.

**Ms Wilks:** It would indeed.

**MS BRESNAN:** Sending it in.

**Ms Wilks:** It would indeed.

**MS BRESNAN:** It is high level, which is very good, but it would be interesting to see.

**Mr Barr:** Sure.

**THE CHAIR:** I think it does go back to the earlier discussion around that it is the parents and carers that can be the more difficult ones to get involved.

**Ms Wilks:** Yes.

**MS BRESNAN:** Are the survey results given to the parents?

**Ms Wilks:** The survey results?

**MS BRESNAN:** Yes. Do parents get access to the survey results from that survey that was sent out?

**Ms Wilks:** I would have to take that on notice, too, in terms of specifically through the early intervention programs.

**MS BRESNAN:** Okay.

**Ms Wilks:** I will take that on notice.

**MS BRESNAN:** This may be another one to take on notice. I am just wondering how the concerns which might be raised through the survey are addressed—if individual families or parents raise issues, how they are addressed or followed up?

**Ms Wilks:** The early education and the early intervention programs work very closely with the families involved to ensure that we are meeting their needs. It is not a standard program that is just rolled out. It is a program that responds to the needs of the individual students within that program—hence the high satisfaction rate.

**MS BRESNAN:** But if any particular concerns are raised, they are raised through that close relationship.

**Ms Wilks:** Indeed, yes.

**MS BRESNAN:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Hargreaves?

**MR HARGREAVES:** No, I am having too much fun listening.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth?

**MR SMYTH:** No, I will defer at this stage.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Turning to BP4, page 326, changes to appropriation—minister, can you or somebody you allocate the question to give us a bit of a precis? Without going through it line by line, can you give us an indication of why there are quite a few rollovers?

**Mr Barr:** Sure.

**Mr Whybrow:** I guess from the department's point of view this is really a bit of a change in our approach. I think it is very much a good news story. If you see those rollovers, there are positive numbers and negative numbers. What the department has done is change its approach: where there is a delay in a program, it redirects resources within the already approved existing program base to ensure that it delivers on its capital works program. That is why, for example, you would see the minus 11.408 figure, which actually means that we had budgeted to do \$11 million less work in that school infrastructure refurbishment program, offset by delays in other programs. The \$10 million, the BER, was funding that was received very much at the very end of that year. That was some opportunities for us to keep things running and deliver

programs on time. I guess the other piece of good news is this. Phil—

**Mr Barr:** Here is your moment, Phil. You have been waiting all afternoon for this. Okay, refer everyone to—which page, Phil?

**Mr Tardif:** Page 126 of budget paper 3 looks at the capital works spending by agency. You will see there that this year the department is looking at spending \$196.651 million on its capital works program, which is pretty close to its full capital works allocation for the year.

**MR HARGREAVES:** There is the old perennial accusation: you get all this money, you give it to capital works and you could not spend half of it; you only spent 60 per cent of it. So this is the way in which you are going to address that—by making sure that you have got a program which is far in excess of the actual budget that is provided for, all of which is sustainable and justifiable, and allowing yourselves the freedom to adjust that over time as you go forward? It is a breath of fresh air since I worked in the department.

**THE CHAIR:** I take that as a statement rather than a question.

**MR HARGREAVES:** That was a question.

**Mr Barr:** It certainly invites a response, though, Madam Chair.

**MR SMYTH:** It does. I take it these arrangements changed after Mr Hargreaves—

**MR HARGREAVES:** They did.

**MR SMYTH:** Therefore, things improved.

**MR HARGREAVES:** They did.

**Mr Barr:** Very harsh, Brendan.

**MR SMYTH:** You are laughing, Andrew.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I thought the minister was going to respond.

**Mr Barr:** Other than to commend the capital works area. Seriously, the normal program in DET has been in the order of \$20 million a year. To achieve nearly \$200 million is an outstanding effort. I took the opportunity to personally thank the capital works team at a function about a month or six weeks ago, and I would like to put on the public record my thanks to that team for delivering an outstanding result for ACT schools.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Hear, hear!

**MR DOSZPOT:** I thought you were going to respond to the gospel according to John

Hargreaves.

**Mr Barr:** Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to make that statement, Mr Dospot.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Notice the restraint, Mr Smyth. I am sitting here with absolute restraint.

**MR SMYTH:** That therapy is helping, is it not, John?

**MR HARGREAVES:** It is. I am still on my meds

**MR SMYTH:** Back to Mr Tardif. Have you anything more to say?

**Mr Tardif:** I am quite happy with what I have said at the moment.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Don't be so shy.

**Mr Barr:** It is an error-free game so far.

**MR SMYTH:** If you look at those numbers, though, Mr Whybrow, the \$11.408 million, what happened to that? Is that money that is then distributed into other projects?

**Mr Whybrow:** In relation to the \$11.408 million, there are already approved capital programs. If you look at the capital programs, we are not creating any programs outside the Assembly, outside government. There is an already-approved structure over a number of years in the capital works program. All we are doing within that confine is making some go quicker, whereas we have got delays in others. So in relation to that \$11.408 million—

**MR SMYTH:** How do you account for that number? Can we have a breakdown of the \$11.408 million?

**Mr Barr:** Which projects it was granted to?

**MR SMYTH:** Yes.

**Mr Whybrow:** It is done in total. You would see, in relation to those years, that is the breakdown. Where there are some minuses, there are some pluses elsewhere. So that is the detailed breakdown in the approved program structure.

**MR SMYTH:** So if I add up all the pluses here—

**Mr Whybrow:** If you add up all the pluses here, you will come to an overall total that there is still a rollover of \$7.263 million.

**MR SMYTH:** Where does that roll over to?

**Mr Whybrow:** That rolls over into 2010-11. I will point out that, within that program,

PROOF

because I think the capital works team—

**MR SMYTH:** Sorry, before you move there, though, where is that shown up in the statements, that \$7 million that is then rolled over into 2010-11?

**Mr Whybrow:** We had a starting base of \$214.821 million. We are taking off that, because we had programs for the schools infrastructure refurbishment program in that year. This relates to the rollovers from 2008-09 into 2009-10. The same things happen in relation to 2009-10 into 2010-11. We are always looking at the program in total. This was the 2009-10 program. The 2008-09 program had some delays down, some increases up. These are the adjustments to our estimated outcome position.

**MR SMYTH:** Can you provide that as a reconciliation? Is that possible? Is there more detail?

**Mr Whybrow:** I guess the only problem I am having is that it is actually the reconciliation.

**MR DOSZPOT:** I have got a supplementary on that.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** We are still on BP3, page 114. I am referring to that. How many multipurpose halls have been built under the BER?

**Mr Bray:** I will have to take that on notice, to give you an accurate number on that.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can you also tell us which schools these halls are being built at?

**Mr Bray:** Yes, certainly.

**MR SESELJA:** We must know in the vicinity. How many, roughly, are we talking about?

**Mr Bray:** No. I would need to go back and count that, to give you an accurate answer. We have the data. I just cannot give you that answer right here on the spot.

**MR SMYTH:** You have not brought that data to this estimates?

**Mr Bray:** I beg your pardon?

**MR SMYTH:** You have not brought that data, knowing the controversy that is going on in some states about this? We do not have the data—

**Mr Barr:** There is no controversy in the ACT.

**MR SMYTH:** I said “in some states”. I did not mention territories.

**Mr Barr:** You did say “states”, sorry, I accept that. I am sure we can get that information fairly quickly. The projects are on the department’s website and the

financial data is on the Procurement Solutions website. That is all publicly available.

**THE CHAIR:** Can I clarify, Mr Smyth, do you want the halls, or do you want all structures built?

**MR DOSZPOT:** And which schools?

**THE CHAIR:** So just the halls and the schools?

**Mr Barr:** Certainly, the projects by school are on the department's website right now. If your office are listening, they can go and have a look. And there are photos of each project. If they want to look at the financial data, it is there on the Procurement Solutions website.

**MR SMYTH:** Do you appear in any of the photos?

**Mr Barr:** I can tell you there are a lot of openings.

**MR SMYTH:** Between now and the election there will be a lot of openings?

**Mr Barr:** There are a lot of openings, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** So you have got to put on your hard hat and your high visibility gear?

**Mr Barr:** Yes, my hard hat will be put to good use, I am sure. Once they are open, you do not need a hard hat, do you? So, no.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair, I have got a number of supplementaries on that.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can I ask: these school halls are funded under the P21 element of the BER program, correct?

**Mr Bray:** That is right. The bulk of the funding is coming from the BER P21 project, but you probably should know that we do supplement some of the construction work from our own DET capital works programs as well, yes.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Is that evident on the website?

**Mr Bray:** Sorry?

**MR DOSZPOT:** The differentiation?

**Mr Barr:** Which elements are funded by the ACT and which elements are funded by the—

**Mr Bray:** I would say not. I think the figure that is on the website is the commonwealth-approved funding amount. Where I have to put some supplementary funding in, I do not think that is on the website. But it is always money in. It is never

money out.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Can you include that in your answer to the question?

**Mr Bray:** Yes, certainly.

**MR DOSZPOT:** You can?

**Mr Bray:** Yes.

**MR DOSZPOT:** How does the stimulus affect the bottom line of the territory?

**Mr Bray:** It is extra money, the money we get from the commonwealth, \$150 million, yes.

**MR HARGREAVES:** On that, when you have spent all this beautiful money that we have got raining down from the heavens, we actually build assets that come to the state and the territory forever, do they not?

**Mr Bray:** That is correct.

**MR HARGREAVES:** We need to understand that not only are we getting the cash benefit from the building education revolution, they are leaving behind a bunch of really nice assets, like those halls.

**Mr Barr:** Our schools get assets, yes, and many other things.

**MR HARGREAVES:** Everything else, too.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot, were you finished? I did not want you cut off. I thought you were going to another question.

**MR DOSZPOT:** No, that is fine. I am happy.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay. Mr Seselja.

**MR SESELJA:** Following on from that, there is the depreciation aspect. Obviously, with the computers in schools, there were a number of associated costs which initially states and territories had to cover, depreciation and the like. How much has that impacted on the territory?

**Mr Whybrow:** Generally, with the buildings, we have a building life of 50 years. So the depreciation will kick through over a 50-year period. It is also very important to note that the ACT was the only state or territory in the 2009-10 budget that actually provided additional support to their department to recognise the ongoing costs of the new infrastructure. They include increased electricity costs, increased cleaning costs. So in the 2009-10 budget, the ACT government provided additional funding to the department to cover those sorts of costs.

**MR SESELJA:** To what amount?

**Mr Whybrow:** If you give me one second, I will have a look through my list and I can pull that back.

**Mr Barr:** It would be in last year's budget papers, would it not?

**Mr Whybrow:** Yes.

**Mr Barr:** You just happened to have another set handy.

**MR HARGREAVES:** I used that once.

**Mr Barr:** It was very late in the night.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Madam Chair, the other supplementary I have on this matter—

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Doszpot, could you hold on for a minute? Mr Hargreaves!

**MR HARGREAVES:** You win, Madam Chair.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. If we could just get a little bit of quiet in that corner. Mr Doszpot, I think you were going to ask a supplementary.

**MR DOSZPOT:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is something you may want to—

**Mr Barr:** Mr Whybrow is about to give us that figure.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Whybrow has found his figure. Then we will go to Mr Doszpot.

**Mr Whybrow:** It is page 371 of BP4 2009-10. In 2009-10, it was \$454,000. In 2010-11, it is \$1.089 million. In 2011-12, it is \$2.019 million. In 2012-13, it is \$2.069 million.

**MR SESELJA:** And that includes the depreciation costs, or those are just the costs of cleaning and additional resources for the additional assets?

**Mr Whybrow:** That does not include depreciation. That is the additional GPA government payment for output provided to the department to meet those ongoing costs.

**MR SESELJA:** What are those depreciation costs?

**Mr Whybrow:** Those depreciation costs are the ballpark that I mentioned earlier, which is that there is \$150 million for these. Generally, they relate to improvements to our buildings that would be amortised over 50 years. I should be able to do that in my head, but I brought a calculator. It is in the order of \$3 million per annum.

**MR HARGREAVES:** How good is this bloke?

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. I have a general question. Back in 2006 there were

obviously large changes to the education system, different models of schools that were provided. We have now had the opening of a number of early childhood centres. Earlier you did mention the Melba Copland campus, which is a—

**Mr Barr:** Seven to 12 over two campuses, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** And there are a number of other models around. Some of them are taking in those last couple of years of primary school, into high school and so forth. I am just wondering how those models are going. Are they being evaluated as to whether they are meeting the needs of students? Enrolments are one way, and I note you talked about Narrabundah now being pretty much full, and that has been complemented by a childcare centre. But is there some sort of evaluation framework?

**Mr Barr:** Sure. I know from 2006 there was a view that there were all these new models. Just to clarify, P-2, early childhood, was already in place at the O'Connor cooperative school, so adding some more early childhood schools—

**THE CHAIR:** It is not so much the number of new models. It is more around we do have these models and people are coming along and enrolling in these schools. Is there some sort of evaluation around the—

**Mr Barr:** With the range of specific initiatives around early childhood education that came with a policy framework and some ongoing evaluation, there is new data available in terms of the Australian early childhood development index. There are some other specific issues in relation to early childhood that we might go to in a minute. The other new models, if you like, were middle school at Stromlo. We had middle schools elsewhere in the city, that year 6 to 8 model, and there is obviously some detailed work that led to the establishment of middle schooling in the territory prior to its introduction at Stromlo as part of the 2006 reforms.

Seven to 12 over the two campuses is probably the only new model. Michael Battenally is taking on a strong leadership role there. He is involved in the principals association in a leadership capacity and taking on that new challenge. That is probably the one I would separate from the others, as being something quite new, although for those who were around prior to the introduction of colleges, seven to 12 is not exactly—I will not claim it as my most radical innovation, Ms Hunter. Nonetheless, in the context of public schooling in the territory, it was a slightly different model. But perhaps we will start with early childhood, then talk middle school and then 7 to 12.

**Ms Johnston:** Okay, so I am going to handball to Trish Wilks, who is going to talk about the early childhood evaluation.

**Ms Wilks:** We have commissioned the Australian Catholic University to develop an evaluation framework for us to use with the early childhood schools. In terms of preschools, you would know that nationally there is a lot of work through the national quality reform agenda to bring preschools across the nation in line with all other early childhood facilities and there will be standards in place for 2012 which will be used to evaluate our preschools. Once these have been done to meet the standards, they will then be recorded on the My School website.

**Ms Stewart:** I am pleased to say that the department has recently established what we call our strategic planning committee to have a look at future planning needs for schools in the ACT. We have established the committee probably in response to changing demographics and family composition. We are finding now that traditional models of family structures and the way children are situated in families are changing quite rapidly, so we have recognised a need to take account of the different structures and particularly the growth in Canberra and population growth.

The way we are approaching that with our strategic planning committee is to have a look at the changing demographics and composition and at models across Australia and around the world for education. We have a research project underway at the moment to have a look at what other jurisdictions are doing, what is happening internationally and how that fits with our model of schools at the moment. We are just taking this on board as an exploratory exercise. I am not certainly forecasting that we might need any change, but just reviewing what we do here and how it works in the context of what is happening internationally.

**THE CHAIR:** What sort of time frame is on that research?

**Ms Stewart:** We do not have a fixed time frame for that. As I said, it is just an exploratory project to make sure that we are looking afield in terms of what others are doing and making sure that what we have here in the ACT is best practice and it meets the needs of students in the ACT. I would imagine that we will continue to do that on a regular basis.

**Dr Watterston:** Could I just add one more layer to that, feeding into that strategic committee that Tracy was talking about. We have established a process within each of our networks, and there are four networks which cover all the schools in the ACT, where we are talking about local area planning. That group of principals within that network will do two things: they will look at future needs and the models of schooling that would be applicable within their geographical area, recognising that some of those networks cross over, so they are not defined just by boundaries.

The other part to it is to look at the models of schooling that we have got in place right now and to provide pathways from the start of school right through to the end, so that people who do choose the early learning schools or choose a model that has a different transition know how they can negotiate their way through the system. While that is quite apparent to people that are in those schools, it is not always apparent to people who are looking for new schools. Part of the work to integrate our schools as one system is to plot those pathways and promote the system from beginning to end so that, no matter what school you choose or which model you are involved in, you know where you can progress with that. It does not take away the choice of parents to move in any direction they like, but, if they want to go to an early learning school, for example, here is a pathway through, and this is where your school connects with other schools within the geographical area.

We are promoting this local area planning model through the networks, so that principals have got control over the way the system evolves within their particular area.

**THE CHAIR:** Just on the early childhood centres, how are we going with enrolments? Lyons just opened recently. I am wondering with each of them how we are going with those enrolments across the board.

**Mr Barr:** Overall, a 70 per cent increase from 2009 to 2010. We can give you the breakdown of that. It is in the school census for this year, but we can give you the breakdown of enrolments. The growth is strongest in preschool, but it is flowing through each year. Last year's preschool component have moved on to kindergarten, so the expectation now on the figures we are getting is that they will be full within two years.

**Ms Stewart:** Could I just correct an earlier statement that I made in my excitement about the work we are doing and the research we are undertaking. The committee is actually the school planning committee, not the strategic planning committee—my apologies.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you.

**Mr Barr:** Which reminds me as well that I indicated earlier that there were nine schools participating in the national curriculum trial; I am advised that there are, in fact, 10; that girls grammar are now back in and there are 10.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay, thank you. Mr Seselja.

**MR SESELJA:** Minister, we had the Australian Education Union appear before the committee earlier and they were, I think, expressing some frustration at their inability to have time with you. They are finding that you are a difficult minister to access.

**Mr Barr:** I did hear that.

**MR SESELJA:** You might want to comment on that, because I would have thought that meeting with the representatives of teachers would be a pretty important thing for the education minister to do.

**Mr Barr:** Certainly.

**MR SESELJA:** Would you like to respond to what Penny Gilmour had to say?

**Mr Barr:** Indeed. I do meet regularly with the AEU. I also meet with the P&C, school principals, the Catholic Education Office and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. I have met with School Sport ACT, Forward ACT, the VET equity council and the Children's Physical Activity Foundation in relation to PE in schools. We just did a quick tally of all of the stakeholders and all the different organisations I have met with just this year and there have been 16 different organisations in the education portfolio just in the first five months. I visited 28 different schools in that period. I think there are now only 13 schools in this city I have not visited as minister. I intend to be able to visit all of those schools.

My approach is to seek advice from a broad range of stakeholders. The AEU are one of many. I, of course, have regular meetings with them, scheduled in, as I have a

regular meeting with the principals association every term, a regular meeting with the P&C every term. We have three meetings scheduled with the AEU for this year. Of course we are in contact with them on a more regular basis in relation to specific initiatives. If they want a particular meeting on a particular issue, we do our best to arrange it.

Of course I also meet and have discussions regularly with the department and with members of my staff across all of my portfolios. When you consider all of the different stakeholders across education, planning, tourism, sport and recreation, gaming and racing, if I was just to schedule a meeting with each of those peak bodies and stakeholder groups each month, that would be all I would ever do. So I cannot have monthly meetings with every stakeholder organisation.

I do endeavour to get the broadest possible range of advice, and when specific issues arise we will have more intense meetings with those organisations, so I met with the AEU much more frequently when we were negotiating EBAs for the CIT and for the school sector and I will continue to meet with them. Tomorrow morning, I am addressing the Australian Council for Education Leaders ACT branch. So I meet with a wide range of stakeholders, and the AEU are but one of many.

**MR SESELJA:** You mentioned your three meetings. That does not sound like much for a peak body. I would have thought there would be a few key groups in your portfolio—

**Mr Barr:** If the committee would like to make recommendations about how often—

**MR SESELJA:** I do not speak for the committee but to me, personally, it does not sound like much. Certainly, the AEU did not think it was much.

**Mr Barr:** So, you think I should meet with the union more often? Is that—

**MR SESELJA:** I think that key stakeholders should have regular meetings with their minister, absolutely. You mentioned your other portfolios. I think we had a gentleman representing ACT sport, and I cannot remember but I think he said that it had been 10 months since he had had a meeting with you. So in other portfolios we are seeing that peak bodies are not necessarily getting access.

**Mr Barr:** Clearly, we will address that next week. But, indeed, I saw Mr Macdonald—

**MR SESELJA:** You did mention your other portfolio commitments.

**Mr Barr:** I saw Mr Macdonald at a function on Saturday night—

**MR HARGREAVES:** Madam Chair, there did not seem to be a question in this, like, where is the shoe horn that the minister can use to get people in?

**THE CHAIR:** I think there was a—

**Mr Barr:** Just to sum up, in a city of our size peak bodies have a particular role to

play, but it is also possible for the minister of the day to be able to meet directly with relevant organisations outside of just peak bodies and I like to have the broadest possible range of advice in my portfolio areas. So, with the greatest of respect to each of the peak bodies, I will also meet directly with other stakeholders in the portfolio area. So, in the case of education, that also means the principals, the P&C, the Catholic Education Office. I have a meeting with the new director of the Association of Independent Schools in the next few weeks.

I take my portfolio responsibilities seriously, Mr Seselja. I recognise that not everyone will be able to get access to a meeting with me as soon as they possibly want. My practice in my office is that, if they cannot meet with me within a period of one to two weeks, I have one of my senior staff meet with the organisation, hopefully within seven to 10 days. We try as much as possible to resolve any issues over the phone if a face-to-face meeting is not possible.

**MR SESELJA:** How often have you met with representatives of teachers in the non-government sector in the last 12 months?

**Mr Barr:** With their industrial union, I have not—I have not had a request for a meeting—but they are represented on the Non-government Schools Education Council, so I have engaged with that council and their representative is there.

**MR SESELJA:** And you meet with that council how often?

**Mr Barr:** NGSEC, I would normally at least attend one of their meetings each year, and I meet with the chair as well, and I do the same with the Government Schools Education Council.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. We have now run out of time for this afternoon's hearing. As I mentioned at the commencement of the hearing today, there is a time frame of five working days for the return of answers to questions taken on notice at this hearing. In relation to questions given on notice, these will be accepted for three working days following today's public hearing for the Department of Education and Training. Members, please provide any questions on notice pertaining to the Department of Education and Training, output classes 1.1, public primary school education; 1.2, public high school education; and 1.3, public secondary college education, by close of business on Tuesday, 25 May 2010.

The committee will continue tomorrow with the Department of Education and Training, output class 3, CIT, CIT Solutions, and ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.

On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the Minister for Education and Training and officials for attending today, and, in advance, for responding promptly to questions taken on notice and given on notice.

**The committee adjourned at 5.31 pm.**