



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2011-2012

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2011-2012](#))

Members:

MR B SMYTH (The Chair)
MS M HUNTER (The Deputy Chair)
MR J HARGREAVES
MR J HANSON
MS C LE COUTEUR

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 27 MAY 2011

Secretary to the committee:
Ms G Concannon (Ph 620 50129)

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.

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Privilege statement

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Amended 21 January 2009

The committee met at 9 am.

Appearances:

Burch, Ms Joy, Minister for Community Services, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Women and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Community Services Directorate

Hehir, Mr Martin, Director-General

Overton-Clarke, Ms Bronwen, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Hubbard, Mr Ian, Director, Finance and Budget

Whitten, Ms Meredith, Senior Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Manikis, Mr Nic, Director, Office of Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Sheehan, Ms Maureen, Executive Director, Housing and Community Services ACT

Collett, Mr David, Senior Director, Housing and Community Services ACT

Hyland, Mr Bob, Director, Housing and Community Services ACT

THE CHAIR: Minister, we would like to welcome you and your officials here today. I need to ask you: have you read the yellow privilege card in front of you and do you understand the implications of the privilege statement?

Ms Burch: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: That is fantastic. Members, we have got a lot to get through this morning—being housing, social housing, community services, community affairs, including ageing, multicultural affairs and the status of women. If questions could be concise and, minister and officials, if answers could be directly relevant and concise, that would be good. Then we will whip through this. Just for the record, we are being broadcast, we are also being webstreamed and we are trialling Committees on Demand as well. Is it acceptable for you to continue?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: It being acceptable, we will continue. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement on the output classes listed for today?

Ms Burch: Yes, thank you, Mr Chair. I would like to thank the committee for giving us the opportunity to answer your questions and to make an opening statement on the measures and initiatives in the 2011-12 budget related to housing, community services, ageing, women and multicultural affairs—and I am able to talk through Mr Hargreaves's entrance. These are critical areas which I think it would be fair to say—

MR HARGREAVES: My mother said: "Never walk into a room. Always make an entrance."

Ms Burch: The ACT government's policies meet, if not exceed, national benchmarks. The ACT government maintains more public housing per capita than any other jurisdiction in Australia. As at June 2011, Housing ACT will have a portfolio of 11,584 properties. We are always seeking to improve the quality of public housing for our tenants and the budget provides an additional \$8 million over four years to provide energy efficiency initiatives for the housing stock.

This doubles the annual expenditure from \$2 million to \$4 million and will play an important role in the government's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The budget also allocates \$1.2 million over four years to provide additional specialist support to address the issues that cause antisocial behaviour, such as drug, alcohol and substance abuse, with a substantial proportion of the complaints received by Housing ACT relating to antisocial behaviour. This initiative will tackle an important area.

The budget also seeks to do more for our homeless and support our goal of halving homelessness by 2020, with an additional \$508,000 over four years for street to home. On top of this, there is \$150,000 for a feasibility study into the common ground model, which is a proven approach to alleviating homelessness.

Mr Chair, I see one of my key roles as also helping to build and engage our different communities. One of the best ways we consistently do this is through the Multicultural Festival. I am pleased to say that there will be an additional \$100,000 per year over the next two years for this event. The festival in 2013 will be held in the year of our centenary so I imagine that will be quite a special event.

As I said at the outset, the work undertaken in the areas being discussed today is of huge importance, and nowhere is it more addressing than those subjected to domestic violence. In this budget we are establishing a specialist accommodation and counselling intervention program for adult males who perpetrate domestic violence to effect long-term behavioural change and to reduce reoffending. The \$424,000 over four years through the Office for Women for a new family violence prevention program is an additional 1.3 over the four years that we provided last year to the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and the Canberra rape centres.

Chair, I think we will leave it there. We are happy to answer questions as we move through the different outputs. At the end of the session it is often noisy as people are disbanding, so can I say at the beginning that I want to put on record my acknowledgement of and thanks to the officials in what is now the Community Services Directorate and Housing ACT for the fabulous work that they have done over the last 12 months.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. Minister, on 381 of budget paper 4 I see that dot point 3 of your purpose is building better partnerships. Often there is criticism of public housing tenants or some of the multi-unit complexes. If I recall correctly, last year you said you spent somewhere between \$700,000 and \$800,000 on security. How much have you spent this year? What have you done to improve the sense of safety, particularly in the larger complexes, but also in terms of integration into the community?

Ms Burch: On the matter of security, Maureen Sheehan can go to that for you,

Mr Chair.

Ms Sheehan: Thank you, minister. Mr Smyth, we do a range of things to improve the security and safety of public housing tenants. Expenditure on security is only one of those things. I am unable to give you the exact figures for the year to date for 2010-11, but we can, with the agreement of the minister, take that as a question on notice.

Ms Burch: Yes.

Ms Sheehan: We have been taking some active steps to look at the effectiveness of the types of security patrols that we have been undertaking. We are moving away from the idea of static guards who do not have the ability to have that engagement with our tenants, because it is engagement with people and activity in an area that can make a space particularly safe. The approach that we are trying to move to is away from static guards and around patrols, and not at set times because, of course, anyone who might be going to do something untoward will quickly be able to work out that there are guards at particular times. If it is random patrols then that removes the risk that someone might avoid the patrol time.

So we have got the use of the security patrols but, in addition to that, we have designed the built form now and we are trying to retrofit, I suppose you would say, the existing built form to have greater engagement between tenants and for tenants with the outside community so that we have more activity going on, particularly in our multi-unit complexes. That activity in itself will deter people from coming in and creating disturbances or doing vandalism, graffiti and so on.

THE CHAIR: How do we integrate, particularly the multi-unit complexes, with the broader community because often at that interface there is angst? What proactive steps are we taking to ensure that the community understands the community at large?

Ms Sheehan: We have a very active and well-funded community engagement program. That has got a number of aspects to it. It is the building housing partnerships program which is referred to throughout the annual report. The minister has often spoken about it in the Assembly. The building housing partnerships program has a number of aspects. One is community development where we fund workers in community-based services to work with our tenants on community activity. Linked to that would be the tenant initiated grants program which specifically funds tenants with a focus on activities which enable public housing tenants to engage with the community more generally.

If I can give you an example of that, in the past the orthodoxy would have been: well, public housing tenants should engage with each other and that constitutes community activity; whereas in fact public housing tenants want to engage with everyone else in the community. One of the programs that we have funded under the tenant initiated grants is a program which is run through the Boomanulla oval. It is the Harold Crow rugby tournament for young Aboriginal children. We sponsor that. More than 80 per cent of the children that participate in that football competition are tenants in public housing. Then we are able to report on the outcomes for those children. If we did not sponsor the rugby tournament those children would not have the opportunity to participate with other kids in the community in rugby. That is just one example of the

way that we enable public housing tenants to become part of their community.

Mr Hehir: Can I just add to that?

THE CHAIR: Just before you do, Ms Porter has got a supplementary and I think Mr Coe has as well. So back to Mr Hehir and then Ms Le Couteur.

Mr Hehir: It is recognised internationally that one of the major factors that can cause problems, particularly within larger multi-unit sites or, internationally, larger estates, is where you have a very high proportion of the people within that particular accommodation area who are not in employment, education or training. They are sometimes referred to as NEETs.

One of the focuses that we have been working on—and we have a partnership with the Chief Minister’s Department and DEEWR—is to look at how we can support some public housing tenants into employment and training. It is called the home-to-work program and it is based in the Braddon-Turner postcode area. We are working with the Northside Community Service and Anglicare to support people to engage in employment, often after many years of long-term unemployment. It is something we are looking at very closely. The evaluation is being undertaken by the University of Canberra. It is a pilot project that is being rolled out to have a look at it. This is something that we are looking at very closely and potentially being able to be expanded.

Our experience is that for people sitting at home with nothing to do and not engaging effectively with the community it is a very poor outcome and leads to very poor social outcomes. So not only is there the security aspect of the community engagement broadly but also there is a very specific focus on looking at options to get people back into work and productive engagement with the community.

MS BRESNAN: I have got a supplementary on back to work.

THE CHAIR: All right. Ms Bresnan, Ms Porter, Mr Coe and Ms Le Couteur.

MS BRESNAN: Just on the home to work: pages 381 and 382 of the budget paper mention the two tenant employment programs—and you have just spoken a bit about them—in partnership with Spotless and the total facilities management contract. Have you been looking at expanding on these contracts and, obviously, having discussion with Social Ventures, who have got an involvement in this program?

Mr Hehir: The home-to-work program, as I said, is a pilot, so it is not able to be expanded on at this point in time. We will have to do the evaluation. That is one of the two. The first one mentioned there is the partnership with Spotless. Yes, we are looking to expand on it. I think in the extension of the contract with Spotless we did actually strengthen our requirements there and asked them to think more deeply about how they were going to support tenants. As we go through to the new contract on 30 June 2012, we will also, I think, seek to strengthen the requirement in the next total facilities management contracts. We see that the work being undertaken by Spotless, not just in their engagement with us but more broadly across the territory, will give many of our tenants the opportunity to engage in work.

MS BRESNAN: Obviously Spotless do the same work with public housing tenants in New South Wales.

Mr Hehir: That is right.

MS BRESNAN: Have you had discussions with the people who run the program in New South Wales?

Ms Burch: With the work program Housing ACT has funded 20 of our tenants to do training to work within that Spotless program. There are connections between the two and we are looking to enhance that in the new agreements.

MS BRESNAN: That was 20 tenants, did you say?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MS BRESNAN: And that is from the home-to-work program?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: All right. Ms Porter, Mr Coe and Ms Le Couteur.

MS PORTER: Thank you, chair. Good morning, minister; good morning, officials. On page 109 it mentions a program that has been funded—

THE CHAIR: I assume that is budget paper 3?

MS PORTER: Budget paper 3. I beg your pardon, chair. It mentions a program to provide some tenant management plans for antisocial behaviour. I think this flows on from what we were talking about. Obviously this generates considerable concern, as Mr Smyth was saying, amongst tenants and also amongst neighbours. Could you provide some extra detail?

Ms Burch: I can make some comment on that. We have a number of complaints. We track our complaints as they come through. Probably not quite half—about 40 per cent—of our complaints coming through look at disruptive or neighbourhood disputes. In any week there would be between 10 and 30 reports of antisocial behaviour. Out of a tenancy of close to 11,500 or 12,000 properties it is not significant, but it is a part of that core complaint that comes through. What we have done with this program, and Maureen Sheehan can talk a little more to it, is really work out what are those causes of antisocial behaviour. A number of our clients have complex circumstances involving their lives. It is about supporting them in their behavioural change and asking what we need to put in place for that rather than coming in from a law and order aspect. That is an important aspect, but it is about supporting individuals with complex living circumstances.

MS PORTER: Some of the—

Ms Burch: It is mental health and drug and alcohol abuse. That is what this will target,

but more—

MS HUNTER: Can I just get clear—is it brokerage; is it a person on the ground; is it getting in expert services?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Ms Sheehan: We are intending to employ three specialist staff inside Housing ACT who will be the workers inside the public support system. The intention is to be working very closely with the clinical and non-clinical alcohol and drug services in the community. It is very important that those services do not vacate the space because Housing ACT has established a program. We are proposing a consultation strategy with those services so that we can have a much richer program with a greater depth of services to our tenants.

As the minister was outlining, we do get complaints around disruptive behaviour; and, quite tragically, sometimes when we look inside what that behaviour is it is actually the sound of domestic violence occurring. What we all know about domestic violence is that it is heavily related to alcohol and substance abuse. So we can see the really endless spin-off benefits of running this program in terms of the other things that we are trying to achieve for people who are in public housing. From this program, we really are expecting a tremendous benefit to women and children who are experiencing domestic violence.

We will engage in consultation with our colleagues in ACT Health, the clinical and non-clinical services. It is quite fortuitous that a number of the specialist homelessness services funded by the Community Services Directorate also not only provide residential services for homeless people but provide residential services for people who are rehabilitating from alcohol and substance abuse. So we already have a number of substantial partnerships that we will be able to build on in the community sector, and we are quite confident that we will be able to build a very broad and a very deep program that can support our tenants and have those spin-off benefits.

THE CHAIR: All right. Mr Coe; then Ms Le Couteur; and then Ms Hunter with a new question.

MR COE: Mr Hehir mentioned earlier the term NEET, not in employment, education or training. Of the roughly 11,000 tenancies, how many would you say are in that category?

Mr Hehir: There will be a number—sorry; we can get you that figure. What we would do is remove some elements of it. We would not include the age pensioners, because they typically would not be in employment, education or training but they are probably not really required to be.

MR COE: Sure. Of working age.

Mr Hehir: Of working age? I think we have got most of that information available on the system. We just need to check which particular measures we pull out. The other one that we need to have a look at is those who might be on a disability pension. So

there is some complexity to the measurement, but I am pretty sure we can pull the information.

Ms Burch: We will bring what we can.

MR COE: Yes. Obviously, as the minister said, you do have some challenging clients. With roughly 10,000 or 11,000 tenancies and roughly only 40 property managers—that is a big job for a property manager when you are dealing with 250. I know that in the private sector they might be dealing with 75 or so each, and often those 75 do not have the same complexities that the 250 would that you are dealing with in Housing. To that end, what possible chance does Housing have to actually establish a genuine relationship with each of the tenants and address some of those issues such that you are getting genuine progress and it is not just a one-way street—not just a house for life and then a lot of other issues which come with that?

Ms Burch: Maureen Sheehan can talk to this but yes, there is—can I also correct something, Mr Chair. I think I said in the opening statement that at June 2011 we were looking at a property portfolio of 11,584. That was actually at June last year; we are proposing, looking at June this year, for it to be 11,855. So there is some growth in there. Out of that, 99 per cent plus of our tenants contribute to Canberra and are good, solid tenancies. Whilst a high proportion of our complaints sit within disruptive behaviour, I get a weekly report about the numbers of antisocial behaviour reports. They are anywhere between 10 and 30. If you look at that across the tenancy numbers of 11½ thousand that is—

MR COE: I am not talking so much about disruptive tenancies; the tenants have lots of needs so I am not just talking about disruptive clients.

Ms Burch: But your question is about how you manage and how you build those relationships—right?

MR COE: That is right.

Ms Burch: In the main our tenancies are good tenants and our housing managers have routine conversation, and in fact there are annual visits with all of our tenants, and it goes through, whether it is property maintenance issues—a number of tenants are ageing, clearly, a number of them having been tenants for 20-plus years; their needs and circumstances not only for their property but for their lifestyles will change over time. Maureen Sheehan can give quite extensive detail, and so can Martin Hehir, about those connections.

Mr Hehir: The minister is right. Certainly out of the property portfolio that a housing manager will have there will be a relatively small proportion of complex tenancies within that measure. That will vary depending on the region and the type of property that the housing manager is dealing with.

What we would say is that over the past eight years we have seen a really significant and tracked improvement in terms of our tenants' engagement with our tenancy managers. We can see that through the national housing survey, where we have gone from about 58 per cent satisfaction up to 75 per cent satisfaction in that year. One of

the major factors that contribute to that is tenant satisfaction with our tenancy managers.

While they do have an annual visit, as the minister said, often we are in conversation, either by telephone or through additional visits, with a number of our tenants. The supporting factor that we put on top is that we also have client support coordinators who are more senior housing manager positions which support the direct tenancy manager to establish a support structure around the more complex tenancies.

One of the things that we often do is actually engage or seek to support the tenant to engage with a community sector organisation to support them. They are often more comfortable working with the community sector organisation. It might be Woden Community Services, Belconnen Community Services or the YWCA. They will often support the tenant to address some of their more complex behaviours or just provide a daily contact support.

So we do try and make sure that we are efficient and effective in what we do, and we would certainly say that over time we have seen a demonstrated reportable improvement in how we engage through the tenant's perspective. But we are also quite conscious of the fact that often the tenant—they do not need additional tenancy management support; they might need additional support in the community, and the community service organisations which we fund significant amounts of money to are engaged to do that work.

Maureen might be able to give you the mechanics a bit more, but that is certainly the framework.

Ms Sheehan: Thank you, Mr Hehir. Mr Coe, if we look at what would be some of the indicators that the management of the tenancies is going well, and I think it would be reasonable to assume that if the tenancies are going well the housing managers are doing a good job and they have got a manageable portfolio, two really important indicators for us—and the private sector would feel exactly the same way about this—are what are the number of tenants you have to evict and do the tenants pay their rent.

On both of these indicators, Housing ACT tenants perform better than private sector tenants. Over 99 per cent of rent is paid by Housing ACT tenants every year. There would not be a property manager in the private sector that would not wish to have a portfolio like that. The second one is: what is the level of eviction? Housing ACT evicted fewer than 10 people last year, out of, as the minister was saying, more than 11,000 or 11,500 tenancies. So on both of those measures Housing tenants, in purely tenancy terms, are doing extremely well.

In terms of the support services, as Mr Hehir was saying—when you go beyond “Can you pay your rent and can you stay in your house?” to “Are there some other underlying problems that you have got?” the private sector does not usually look to those things. We have the partnerships with the community sector and with our colleagues in other parts of the ACT government where we can actually bring those supports in.

MR COE: The relationship is extremely important, and that is something that private

tenancy managers will stress as well. What chance do property managers have when they are managing 250 tenancies in addition to the fact that just about every tenant that I speak to says they have got a new property manager every other week, it seems, and a new regional manager every other week? There does seem to be a huge amount of churn, if not rotation, amongst property managers

Mr Hehir: There might be a bit of rotation—Maureen would probably be better able to answer that than I can—but I think for most of last year the churn within, so the turnover of staff within, Housing ACT was six per cent. That is really low.

MR COE: Amongst the 40 property managers, what is it?

Mr Hehir: Look, I would need to check that but again they were relatively stable last year.

MR COE: So you are taking that on notice?

Mr Hehir: Yes, we will take that one on notice. Maureen might have a better idea than me. At the more senior positions, the regional managers, yes we do occasionally have churn and acting opportunities which are important in terms of developing the skills of the staff in that area. But we certainly seek to, and my understanding is that we normally do, have someone within that team act up into the position where we are doing it.

It should be relatively stable in terms of their practice and their knowledge of the portfolio. The structure is that the regional manager be supported by two senior Housing people. It is normally one of those two people. Then you have the tenancy managers as the next group down. We do try and keep the structure as stable as we possibly can but this is the reality of the world. People get different jobs, people get promoted and people want to do something different. Most of us do not stay in the same job for 20 or 30 years anymore. We look at doing different things over a different time. We certainly work very hard to keep it stable. Maureen might have a better clue than me about what the actual churn rate is at the moment.

Ms Sheehan: Thank you, Mr Hehir. As I was just explaining to the minister, Housing managers come in—we do not have a mandatory qualification but for the last three or four years certainly most people come in with a degree qualification, certainly in women's services and usually in community services. Many of them come from having worked in other community services. They then receive a very high degree of training in the department. The result of this is that after a period of time they are looking for other opportunities and usually it is within the Community Services Directorate.

So we do get a level of movement within the directorate but then that is a healthy thing. For example, the reason that the housing manager in a particular portfolio might move the next year might be that they have gone down to our gateway services and they have become a team leader assessing applicants. So their skills are not lost to our client group. It is unfortunate that they cannot maintain that relationship with the individual tenancies that they were previously managing. But in terms of the overall benefit to the clients that we serve, I think that the benefits are retained within the

organisation. It is regrettable for the individual tenant who cannot see the same housing manager but it is a great thing for the client group in general.

THE CHAIR: All right, Ms Le Couteur had a supplementary to the original question; then we will go to Ms Porter.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, I did have a supplementary to the original one. I have had a number of people approach me saying that they are interested in forming community gardens in your multi-tenant units in particular. Where should they go to in terms of possible support?

Ms Burch: I am looking at the Housing officers. I know that the older persons units have all got community gardens in them. I understand that a number of the tenant-initiated grants are also based around community gardens. But I will ask Maureen to provide information on the entry point into the system.

Ms Sheehan: The first thing is that any group of tenants can make a request to have a community garden. If there is a group environment and they identify a bit of communal land they would like to have a garden on, other things being equal the answer will be yes. Those tenants might want to buy their own plants. If they are looking for a grant from Housing ACT, we do have the tenant-initiated grant program.

As the minister said, many of the grants are around gardens. Just recently, the residents of Gowrie Court, who had been in receipt over the years of different amounts for their community garden, brought in a photo album of the community garden going back 25 years. It had pictures of all the tenants that have been involved in that garden over the years. It is something well worth doing and something that we certainly support. David Collett can give you some more information about the gardens in the older persons units.

Mr Collett: I was going to add to Maureen's comments that Strathgordon is another one of the flat complexes that has had a community garden over the decades. They are very popular with the tenants. We provide a lot of support for them, including equipment, storage, assistance with plants and water.

Of course, where we have done new construction, like the aged person's accommodation that is being produced under the stimulus package, we have harvested the rainwater, both at an individual level and across the paved surfaces. In addition to the individual house water recycling facilities, we have got whole-of-complex water recycling facilities that provide water for the community gardens in the complexes that the minister referred to.

Of course, the regional community hubs that are now operating so successfully are yet another opportunity for us to harvest rainwater and provide community gardens. We have been working with the Canberra organic gardeners as well as with individual tenants to support that program.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you have any cases where people outside the tenancies actually say, "Wow, we are part of the neighbourhood, and we think that this would be a great place for a community garden," and it initiates in that way? Or has it all

been tenant initiated?

Ms Sheehan: I can honestly say that in the eight years I have been with Housing, we have not had an approach from neighbours, but we would not be averse to that sort of approach, particularly in terms of public housing tenants interacting with the whole community, not just the public housing community.

Ms Burch: Just on that, down in Tuggeranong, there is a group called Croak. I am sure most people know Croak.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, we are all aware of Croak—croak, croak!

Ms Burch: They were quite interested in the development of Kambah in terms of the environment and gardens. So they are very keen to be part of the residents, how they build their community gardens there and things like that. That is one connection that I am aware of.

Mr Collett: Another connection—

Ms Burch: How it is progressing, I am not sure, but they have certainly voiced an interest in that.

Mr Collett: Another connection is the Narrabundah multi-unit properties that we are building under the stimulus package. The Griffith/Narrabundah Residents Association asked us—positively approached us—about changing the landscape plan and the fencing to provide our tenants with better access to the community gardens, hoping that our tenants would be a source of labour and supervision for the community gardens that are already established. So there is that connection between the community and our tenants.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes; so who is best to go to?

Ms Sheehan: They can certainly contact maureen.sheehan@act.gov.au.

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A new question from Ms Hunter and then Ms Le Couteur.

MS HUNTER: Yes, I wanted to go to the priorities for 2011-12 on page 381 of budget paper 4. The second dot point talks about continuing to implement the public housing asset management strategy and so forth. I am wondering about this asset management strategy, because it was put together to cover 2003 to 2008. I am wondering what is happening as far as a refresh of that asset management strategy, or are you going to continue on with the one you have?

Ms Burch: You are right. We have done some work on our asset management plan, and that is an internal document. I think I have made comment about that before. There is also a number of internal processes within government about how we proceed with our housing stock. But we are very committed. We have, I think, a \$41 million rebuild plan or program every year.

Mr Collett: Yes.

Ms Burch: We regularly check our properties for maintenance and value as we move through. Part of our asset management plan is about what we do with our larger older buildings. As you are aware, we have put in for a territory variation for the Bega, Allawah and Currong units. We are expecting advice back from ACTPLA—

MS HUNTER: Are you going to make your strategy publicly available?

Ms Burch: Once it is done, but I think it is also on large properties that need redevelopment. This week we will be launching the national design for the Northbourne Flats, which is another serious commitment to redevelop and upgrade our asset. As all of us know, Housing ACT owns significant numbers of properties down Northbourne. Many of us also recognise that they are over half a century old and they are past refurbishment status. We need to reinvest in that.

Also, it is about mixed communities. I am quite happy for David Collett to talk more on the design aspect, but it is about ensuring that we have maintained public housing within the inner city precinct. It is also about how we have a sustainable development that is on transport routes and that we have mixed tenure. Northbourne Avenue ticks all those boxes. This is why we will start with this competition on a particular block, which will not require a territory variation. We can progress relatively quickly with that. Mr Collett?

MS HUNTER: Just before we get to Mr Collett, do you know when you might release that strategy publicly? Have you got a timing on that?

Ms Burch: When we can, Ms Hunter.

MS HUNTER: When you can? Will it be this year?

MS LE COUTEUR: Will it be this term of the Assembly?

Ms Burch: This coming financial year; that is the plan.

THE CHAIR: But isn't it odd to be doing elements when you have not got your strategy? Surely the strategy should—

Ms Burch: The overall principles of the strategy are about reinvesting in stock when we know that stock is past its use-by date. It fits within our territory plan and it fits within the Canberra social plan about transport routes being developed in mixed tenancy properties. Mr Collett? We are not thinking outside those basic principles.

Mr Collett: Yes.

MS HUNTER: I am not sure if Mr Collett has actually got to talk about the multi-unit-type strategy, but I also wanted to know about the energy efficiency strategy that has been rolled out over some years now and also been increased from \$2 million to \$4 million in the next financial year. You might need to take this on notice, but I just

want to get an idea of how many houses out of the stock have had some energy efficiency sort of measures or water efficiency measures put into them. I know that there are many dwellings or houses in the stock—apartments, whatever—that do not need these measures, because you have bought ones with higher star ratings and so forth. But I just want to get some sense of how many we have to go and what sort of cost it is going to be to get them all done.

Mr Collett: Combined with the previous question, that is a long and complex question.

MS HUNTER: Maybe we just want to go to the second one, really, because the multi-unit—

THE CHAIR: And I look forward to the simple and concise answer.

MS HUNTER: I am not sure if anyone else wants to follow up with the multi-unit strategy, but we have already seen publicly a lot about the Bega, Allawah, Currong proposal. I understand you are undertaking consultation, so I do not think we need to go into that.

Ms Burch: I think the Northbourne one is something that we can progress quite quickly. Certainly the call for that competition is coming up in the next couple of days. So that is absolutely something that is on the table now, that goes to how we (1) manage assets and (2) build on that urban development, along all the right tick boxes, which is transport routes.

Mr Collett: I was going to reinforce the minister's point by saying that, whilst we are re-examining the public housing asset management strategy in the light of the changes to the commonwealth's funding for government and also the priorities of the government across the board, we are continuing to pursue the objectives of, at the larger scale, breaking down aggregations of disadvantage that are represented by our multi-unit properties and getting better amenity and more energy efficient developments, and developments that support the broader look and feel of the city as well as the environmental issues of building along transport routes.

At the individual house level, we continue to use the same parameters to make decisions about whether stock is held, or whether it is sold and that money put back into the construction program. So the point is that whilst the asset management strategy has not been published again, those same principles continue to be pursued, and they are refined progressively. So as we have increased the energy rating for our new builds, we have let go of properties in our portfolio that have a lower energy rating. We now give more priority to the poor thermal performance of our one and two-star energy rated properties, and they are more likely to be disposed of if they cannot be brought up to an adequate standard.

It comes together in an integrated way, and that is, again, integrated with the second part of your question—that is, how the additional funds that we are now receiving, on top of the \$2 million a year that we have had over the previous years, are applied to properties. As the documented figures show, 2,567 properties in the 2009-10 financial year did receive improvements. Those improvements range from improvements in

water efficiency, the thermal performance of the building itself and the energy efficiency of the appliances and the carbon footprint, if you like, of the appliances that are being used.

Of course, the new funds will give us an opportunity to turbo-charge that program, as it were. We are yet to finalise the program for the new year, because it will be delivered largely through our total facilities management contractor, and at the moment they are finalising their construction program.

If I were to go through the sorts of numbers that we will look at as part of the expenditure of that \$4 million, we looked at increasing the number of gas-boosted solar hot-water units that we have been able to install from 131 units to 300 units. In terms of wall insulation, we have the potential to increase the amount of wall insulation we are doing from 68 properties to 150 properties. In terms of ceiling insulation, again, there is the potential to increase it from 220 to over 500 ceiling insulations. Draft sealing—moving from 436 properties sealed to 900 properties sealed. And 180 properties are getting new pelmets and window treatments. Finally, for those properties that do not have access to gas, five-star energy rated appliances, including high efficiency electric hot-water systems—200 of those properties. So there is a significant boost.

This is not only about providing environmental improvements and helping with the issues of climate change. Also, of course, we are targeting this to improve the lot of our tenants, who are likely to be those who are most affected by whatever increase we will see in energy costs.

MS HUNTER: We are very supportive of this whole program. I think that is why there has been a boost in funding. I just wanted to get some sense of how many we have done to date and how many more there are to go, because it is important that all properties are got up to a certain standard in energy and water efficiency, because of the very reasons you were talking about there.

One last thing: you were talking about your asset management plan. There is always spot purchasing, builds, sales et cetera and turnover—going in, assessing a property and seeing whether it is worth refurbishing or not. I understand all of that. Are you ensuring in all of that process that you are still keeping a salt and peppering of public housing right across Canberra and we are not selling all public housing in certain locations and moving to the further-out suburbs? That would be a really critical one for me.

Ms Burch: Our policy position has not changed on that. But Mr Hehir can talk to that.

Mr Hehir: There is always a balance. I think we have talked before with the select committee about the fact that many of our tenants will have their families and their networks actually in the outlying suburbs. So it is actually reasonable to make sure that, just as we have some in the inner city and close to the regional hubs, the shopping centres et cetera, it is also reasonable to have properties in the suburbs where often they will have grown up or they will have family networks. So we absolutely need to do that.

We certainly do not have a policy of denuding the inner north and south of public housing properties. What we will often try and do is see, on those older blocks, whether we are able to combine and perhaps increase a little bit through redevelopment. I think we have got a process in Wedge Crescent in Turner where we are doing that right now. So, just as the rest of the suburb redevelops, we will have a look at our properties and try and make sure that we do the same thing and get some really good outcomes there.

We recognise that the land is valuable, but that does not mean you have to sell it. You can think about how you use that land differently and get good value from it as well.

MS HUNTER: It is just that we have a really great history of having our public housing across the city, so it is good to retain that.

Ms Burch: Absolutely, and it needs to be so.

THE CHAIR: A new question from Ms Le Couteur. Mr Hargreaves, are you surrendering your question, as you have surrendered your chair to Ms Porter?

MR HARGREAVES: I am just sitting here malevolently, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIR: Ms Le Couteur, Ms Porter and then Mr Hanson.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand from—

MR HANSON: Can we go to members of the committee before we go to visitors, even if Mr Hargreaves does not wish to—

MR HARGREAVES: No, you surrendered yours on other things.

THE CHAIR: No, he has surrendered. We will practice the surrendering questions.

MR HANSON: A proxy, fair enough.

MS LE COUTEUR: Thank you. Page 26 of budget paper 3 talks about Housing having to make a \$1 million per annum saving via own-source revenue. Can you tell me how you are planning to do this? Are you expecting that your tenants are going to be paying more rent, which I thought did not seem to be one of the more likely outcomes? Is it going to be asset sales or what is it going to be?

Mr Hehir: No, asset sales will not provide the saving, and an increase in the revenue will not provide the saving either. As with all the savings we are being asked to have a look at, we have got some ideas. We will test those ideas with the minister and we will go to the government with those ideas. No, it will not be through that. We do anticipate—I think you will see in our revenue initiatives—an increase in the rent that we expect. There is always indexation of pensions, so there is always the routine stuff that we will get coming in. But that is not an efficiency. This is designed to have us, yet again, have a look at how we do things. I think at last year's estimates I referred to the fact that we are always doing that. We are always looking to how we can do things better and do things differently. That is what we will continue to do. We will have a

look at our processes, we will have a look at the way we do things and see whether we can find some further improvements there. But we have got some ideas which we will take to the minister.

MS HUNTER: Do you have any ideas at the moment, because we are getting close to the start of the financial year, and if you have to save \$1 million, you would want to start early.

Mr Hehir: Yes, we do have some ideas, but we will also get somebody in to have a look. Sometimes it is useful to have an external eye come and have a look at what you do. So we will do that as well.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter?

MS PORTER: Thank you, chair. On page 381 of budget paper 4, minister, it talks about finalising the construction and allocation of dwellings under the nation building and jobs plan stimulus package. Could you update us on progress and any feedback that you might have had from new tenants under that program?

Ms Burch: I will provide some opening comments and go to David Collett or Maureen Sheehan. We are certainly on track to deliver those properties. We entered into agreement for about 320 properties under the original stimulus package agreement but we will be delivering over 500 properties. As I have stated—

Mr Hehir: Sorry, minister, I will just clarify. We will be building 500 properties, 421—

Ms Burch: 421—

Mr Hehir: through the nation building.

Ms Burch: That is why Mr Hehir is always here. But a good lot of those 297 are older persons units, which we have spoken about here a number of times. I think the last couple are due to be officially launched soon. With respect to the ones that I have been to and the tenants that I have spoken to—and I am sure other members here have spoken to tenants, in another place and at another time perhaps—the people that have moved in as older tenants are completely pleased and happy with having new, purpose-built properties that are easy for them to maintain.

The first group that opened that I visited was in Curtin. I spoke to a husband there, a fellow who had moved in, and who had not realised, just by walking up the half a dozen steps to the front and back of his property, how much that had impacted on his health until he moved into this flat, purpose-built property. His health improved just by making that move. He had not realised the drain on him from where he was. He was happy where he was but this move had made a significant improvement to his personal life. David or Maureen can give an update about the number of properties and where we are with them.

Ms Sheehan: At the moment, of the 421 that will be delivered under nation building, we have completed and are in the process of tenanting 280, and that includes 57 in

stage 1 that were tenanted some time ago. The remainder of the properties will largely be finished by the end of June. The final 13 will come in in dribs and drabs until about the end of September, but the bulk of them will be completed by the end of June.

In terms of the people that have gone into the properties—and the minister has talked about older people—the money from the commonwealth was targeted at addressing homelessness, and the way in which we have addressed homelessness is by a twofold approach. One is for older people who, because of their tenancies, I think it would be fair, were at risk because the properties that the older people were living in no longer met their physical needs. So they were really at risk of not being able to live there and not being able to live safely. So we have been able to assist those people by moving them into the class C adaptable six-star energy rated properties. The benefits, as the minister has outlined, are really substantial for those people.

But the secondary benefit, which addresses homelessness, is that as the older people move out of family homes in the suburbs, distributed all over Canberra, we have families who are coming off our waiting list and out of specialist homelessness services moving in to family homes in the suburbs. So they are moving into homes near to schools, near to shops, near to transport and so on. So we are really getting a tremendous double benefit from this expenditure, which is for the older people but also for the families on the waiting list.

I am very happy to say at this stage that, of the 60 people—because, as you would understand, as the older persons units are built, the older people have to move and then we have to give a lick of paint and so on to the properties; so people are gradually coming out of homelessness services. At this stage, 60 people have come off the priority list into the public housing, and 40 of those are families coming out of specialist homelessness services.

If you think about the benefits across the entire system, they are really substantial, because it means that 60 families have moved out of the specialist homelessness services. That is 60 families that can be accommodated now in specialist homelessness services, and we will see more of that over time. So this is a tremendous opportunity to get some movement through the system, and we are really seeing that.

The families that come out of the specialist homelessness services have already been, not surprisingly, giving us great feedback on how much they appreciate the fact that they have got a home to live in. One of the things that the older people raised with us all the time, as we have our information sessions on getting them ready to make the move, is that they have all lived in their properties for 30 or 40 years. They have put up window furnishings; if some houses do not have built-in cupboards, they have got cupboards, they have got shelves—they have got all sorts of things. The question they ask us is: “Do you think the families that are moving into these houses would like us to leave that?” And the answer is, “Yes, they would.” And they are so happy and proud to be able to assist those disadvantaged families. They are not one bit worried that someone is coming to live in the house that has been their home. They are delighted to be able to provide it to another family, and they are delighted to be able to provide some extra things for those families.

MS PORTER: That is a good news story.

Ms Burch: It is. One of the stories is about a woman who moved out of a five-bedroom property, and she was genuinely pleased that she felt personally able now to give an opportunity to another family to raise their family and create a family home. And it was quite a genuine conversation with this woman.

Another aspect of some of the stimulus money, particularly the older persons, is that it has allowed us to bring another community provider into the ACT. The complex down at Conder now is being managed by Argyle Community Housing—the entire complex. So there are multiple benefits in these arrangements and investments.

MS PORTER: Thank you .

THE ACTING CHAIR (Ms Hunter): Okay, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Thanks, Madam Deputy Chair. The facilities contract is managed by Spotless, but I just wondered if you could advise whether the subcontractors to Spotless have been advised that they are not to raise their prices in the next financial year and whether they essentially have got to have a freeze on the prices that they charge to Spotless. If that is the case, who has made that direction? Is that through Spotless or has that been a direction through the ACT government?

Mr Collett: If I can take the question, we have not imposed a freeze on subcontract rates. Obviously the effectiveness and the efficiency of our program is strongly dependent upon cost control as well as quality control and the level of service that is provided to our tenants through the maintenance contracts. The majority of the work that is not done as part of the programmed planned maintenance—that component of our work forms 70 per cent of the total expenditure and is usually done on a tendered basis—is responsive maintenance, the call-outs, and that is done on a schedule of rates. So we agree up-front with the contractors about what the charge will be to go out and replace a tap or fix a light fitting.

That gives us an ability to control those costs. It means that we know that the contractors are adequately remunerated for the work that they need to do. Controlling those costs is an important part of managing the contract. Of course, Spotless deliver the service, but we are the ones who manage that contract.

The schedule of rates is important, and, of course, we look broadly at the influences on the costs to the contractors in agreeing that schedule of rates. We looked at the schedule of rates that is being achieved in New South Wales. We looked at the schedule of rates that is being paid to the same contractors who are working around Canberra, particularly in Queanbeyan. I think it would be fair to say that, generally, because we expect a higher level of service, we are paying more for our services than in some of those other jurisdictions for some of those elements. But it is a schedule of rates which is negotiated with the subcontractor group as a whole. It is not imposed upon them, but it is set in advance in order to provide certainty around programs and planning.

MR HANSON: And that is done every financial year, is it?

Mr Collett: It does not coincide with the financial year. There might be a significant increase in the materials or labour costs in the market, and that would lead to the schedule of rates being looked at again. So it does not coincide with the financial years, but it is agreed in advance. It is agreed—

MR HANSON: So Spotless has no control on that, essentially? They just simply manage those subcontracts? They do not set the schedule?

Mr Collett: No, they are involved in setting the schedule of rates. The schedule of rates is an agreement between ourselves, Spotless and the subcontractors, but it is based on a process of dialogue. It is based on comparison. It is based on the amount of time that it takes to undertake the work. So a significant amount of effort goes into understanding the cost base against which the subcontractors are working.

MR COE: I have—

MR HANSON: And has—sorry.

MR COE: I have said on a number of occasions that I am very concerned about the lack of transparency with regard to the whole maintenance of public housing properties through the contractor and subcontractor arrangements. And, in particular, the schedule of rates does seem to be of real concern to many subcontractors. I know lots of them really do feel that they are unable to provide the service they would want. When they are getting messages saying, “Increases to the rates will not be accepted,” it makes it pretty hard for them to actually put in a genuine tender application.

I also note that the biggest electrical contractor in 2010, MNI Electropark, left the ACT and left the Spotless contract and, I understand, are going broke as a result of that schedule of rates, amongst other things, of course. So there are obviously a lot of issues with the whole arrangement. Pretty much I am curious to know what the government plans to do to bring more transparency to this whole process, given that it is millions of dollars.

Ms Burch: I do not know if there is a question of transparency. What Mr Collett has just described is quite an open conversation between us on our contract arrangements with Spotless and then down to the subcontractors. Also, all our contracts and maintenances are reported. They are independently audited. I would not say that there is a lack of transparency—

MR COE: It is very hard for a member of the Assembly to get any of this information. Extremely hard.

Mr Collett: But what you have described is a process that is not unique to this contract, to this jurisdiction or to this government. In the same way that if you rang up a—

MR COE: That does not make it preferable, though.

Mr Collett: In the same way that an individual might ring up a plumber and say, “My hot-water service is leaking. Can you come out and fix it? What is it going to cost me”,

as we manage the 11½ thousand properties that are in our portfolio, we need to have an idea of what the costs are going to be. In doing so, we follow the same system as almost every other jurisdiction, and not only in public housing. The maintenance requirements for shopping centres, for schools, for military complexes is frequently done on the basis of a schedule of rates. It is a commonly acceptable, appropriate way to manage costs and to manage the level of service delivery.

MR COE: Yes, I understand that the schedule of rates is an important process, but I do think the transparency about it can be increased. You say you are having a genuine tender application, a tender process, and then you also say, “Increases to the rates will not be accepted.” How can that possibly be a genuine tender process if you are categorically ruling out accepting that and not even considering it?

Mr Hehir: Sorry, I am probably a little bit confused. We tend to tender where it is not a schedule of rates matter. If it is a schedule of rates matter, it is an application for—

Ms Burch: Fee for service.

Mr Hehir: the fee for service. So I am not quite sure they are the same thing. I would tend to regard them as distinct. So I will take David’s advice on that. I believe that the schedule of rates can be made available. David, is that correct?

Mr Collett: I do not know of any reason why it could not be. I would need to take some advice—

MR COE: In the past I have been advised that it is commercial-in-confidence.

Mr Hehir: Look, we will check that.

Ms Burch: We will take some advice, and if we can bring it back, we can. But I think the question—

MR COE: Do you understand that that is the sort of problem—

MS BRESNAN: Can I have a new question?

MR COE: That is the sort of problem—

Ms Burch: But if—

MR COE: That is the sort of problem when not even the schedule of rates—

Ms Burch: But if a subcontractor is seeking to be part of that service provision regime, they need to know what the scheduled costs are. It is not unreasonable to say, “Can you come in and do this work at this cost?” and not expect the provider to come in and then double that cost. It is about an agreement to come in and deliver that service at that price.

MR COE: I understand, but, as members of this Assembly, we are here to scrutinise, and the point of this committee process is to scrutinise the \$4.3 billion of expenditure.

When you have this area of government expenditure, which is contractor and subcontractors and there is always commercial-in-confidence, it is very hard to actually scrutinise this. We get so many problems about maintenance in public housing. I am sure the Greens are the same in terms of the complaints we get from constituents—

Ms Burch: Well, when you say a number of complaints, again, I go to the fact that we manage nearly 12,000 properties. I get letters from members of the Assembly here, the bulk of which are around antisocial behaviour and disruptive tenants and management issues. There have been and there are concerns about maintenance—absolutely. But in our agreement with Spotless, we have quite a clear and transparent and rigorous process about our expectations about when jobs will be delivered and to what standard they will be delivered at. When that is not delivered, we will be very clear with Spotless that that is not up to scratch.

MR COE: Well, it might be clear within the department, but it is certainly not clear to outsiders who are trying to scrutinise government expenditure.

Mr Hehir: Mr Coe, as I said earlier, we will take on notice the question of whether we can release the schedule of rates. If it is commercial-in-confidence, that has to be tested. We cannot just make that declaration arbitrarily. It actually has to go through a process and we need to declare why that is. So I will check to see what the case is for that. If it is commercial-in-confidence, I will provide the reasoning behind that process for you. If it is not commercial-in-confidence—

MR COE: Thank you, and the scheduled rates for the last few years would be handy as well.

Mr Hehir: If it is not commercial-in-confidence, we are happy to provide the rates.

THE CHAIR: Ms Bresnan with a new question.

MS BRESNAN: Thank you, chair. I would actually like to ask a homelessness question around the current agreement from 2008 and the targets which the ACT is to reach under that. I know that there has been discussion about a new minimum dataset and the SAAP data not going into that. Although, when I did have a look at the website, there is at least one target or category that does use SAAP data. So I am just wondering which measures the government has been measuring itself against and which targets it has achieved thus far.

Also, in regard to the minimum dataset, I know there has been talk about not using SAAP data, but there is at least one target that uses SAAP data in the new minimum dataset. What is actually happening with the use of SAAP data, when it has been noted that it will not be used? I just want to get a sense of what is actually happening there.

Mr Hehir: Sorry, Maureen will probably be able to clarify this for me. I am not sure that we are not saying that SAAP data will not be used. What we are saying is there is a new dataset. So, 1 July—

MS BRESNAN: But there has been discussion saying, because SAAP essentially is not existing—

Mr Hehir: Well—

MS BRESNAN: in itself as a program, that it would not be, but there is at least one target that used it.

Mr Hehir: That is right, so—

Ms Burch: There will be elements—

Mr Hehir: There are elements of it, and the new dataset will continue some of those measures.

Ms Burch: Yes.

Mr Hehir: So it is not that they will be abandoned. It is just that, as of 1 July, there will be a much more comprehensive and reliable dataset underway than the current SAAP process, which is not—

MS BRESNAN: But SAAP data will be used?

Mr Hehir: Well, as it goes backwards, yes.

Ms Burch: As an element of data.

Mr Hehir: As it goes backwards, but it will not be called SAAP data as of next year; it will be the new dataset.

Ms Sheehan: So, Ms Bresnan, it is called a minimum dataset, but it is actually a maxi dataset.

MS BRESNAN: Yes, I know. That is what I said.

Ms Sheehan: It is a rich dataset around homelessness measures, which will measure not just outputs but outcomes for people in homelessness services. And what will be associated with it is a client management system. So that on a quarterly basis, states and territories and the commonwealth will be able to get virtually real-time information about the services that are being delivered inside what used to be SAAP services but which we now call our specialist homelessness services.

In developing this new rich dataset, we have been very careful to make sure that, amongst other things, we can actually measure the items that we need to report on under the national partnership on homelessness and the national affordable housing agreement. So with any of the items where we were previously using the SAAP data, we will now use the new dataset. The only exception to that is—in fact, the COAG reform council has recommended this—that one of the targets was to try and measure the number of children who are homeless and who had reconnected with schooling. But, in fact, none of the existing education datasets actually can capture that

information.

So, while all of the homelessness services are committed to reconnecting children with education—and you probably know that the ACT is unique in having specialist children's workers in our family services, and they do work to reconnect children to school—because the education dataset cannot measure that—that is not a criticism of the education dataset, it is just the way it is—we will need to continue to track how children are doing through the specialist homelessness services.

MS BRESNAN: So what measures is the government using? What measures have you been looking at? What have you been measuring yourself against so far and which targets have you achieved so far?

Ms Sheehan: Thank you. The national partnership on homelessness is measuring progress against the reduction of some key targets around homelessness. I will run through what those targets are. The baseline was established in the 2006 census. If I can go to the main targets there, under the 2006 census in the ACT, the count showed 1,364 people that were homeless. Our target is to reduce that by seven per cent by 2013. That would bring us to 1,268 homeless people.

How are we progressing against that target? The short answer to that question is that the next census will measure our progress. The census will occur this year. However, the figures will not be available until 2012.

MS BRESNAN: So you do not have any progress so far? You have to wait until the next census?

Ms Sheehan: No, we do have progress but we cannot measure it through a census count. The progress that we are making can be seen through the establishment of the additional services that we established under the national partnership on homelessness, which are providing additional services to homeless people. We are quite confident that we are making progress. Those services are, importantly, the street-to-home service, which is working with rough sleepers and the youth support program. Some people might think of it as the youth foyer. It is providing 28 supported accommodation places to young people.

MS BRESNAN: I am quite aware of all those. You said that you are confident that you are reaching the targets. Do you actually have any idea that you are reaching those targets?

Ms Sheehan: One way that you approach reductions of homelessness is to provide services which you believe can assist to reduce the incidence of homelessness and to break cycles of homelessness. That is why we have established the services that we have. In terms of an absolute population count, at the moment we are simply not in a position to do the population count, but it will occur this year.

MS BRESNAN: Under the new dataset, I think it does show that Canberra has a higher rate of homelessness per 10,000 than Sydney and Melbourne—

Ms Sheehan: No, it does not.

Mr Hehir: No, it does not.

Ms Sheehan: There is a higher rate for Aboriginal and—

MS BRESNAN: Yes.

Ms Sheehan: I will run through the two other major indicators—the benchmark in the census and what we are looking to achieve. With rough sleepers, the count was that there were 82 rough sleepers in the ACT in 2006 on census night. Our target is to reduce that by 25 per cent. That would mean that we should move from 82 to 58 by 2013. Around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander homelessness, the count found that there were 124 homeless Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Our target is to reduce that by a third. That means that we should be able to reduce that to 100 or fewer by 2013.

MS BRESNAN: That data that is there on the website, is that incorrect—the figures they have there?

Ms Sheehan: I beg your pardon?

MS BRESNAN: Using, as I said, the new COAG minimum dataset, it does show—by looking at it, it does show that Canberra has a higher rate per 10,000. Are you saying that those figures are not correct? What is actually going on there?

Mr Hehir: I will need to check those figures. My understanding was that we had a rate of 41, which was the same as New South Wales and Victoria. It was—

MS BRESNAN: We were around 42, I believe.

Mr Hehir: Forty-one, 42; that would be right, I think. My apologies for being off by one. But I thought that was the same figure for New South Wales and—

MS BRESNAN: It is similar. New South Wales and Victoria are slightly less.

Mr Hehir: It might be, but it was certainly—

MS BRESNAN: By one.

Mr Hehir: By one? Okay. Given the reliability of the dataset, we probably would say that is about the same. The other side of that, which is important—I think I talked about it on a previous day this week—is that they are looking at the calculation of the methodology for collecting the data.

MS BRESNAN: Yes.

Mr Hehir: At the moment, the indication we are getting is that there will be a new baseline for the data, which will be a reduction. At the moment, I think they are saying there is an overrepresentation, an overcount, but we will wait and see what the final outcome of that is.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter has a supplementary, you have a supplementary and Mr Coe has a question.

MS BRESNAN: I have a very quick one. You have talked about some of the homelessness programs. Obviously, there is funding in this budget for the Common Ground project. What involvement have you actually had with Common Ground, with the committee that has been set up with that project? Are they going to be involved in the feasibility study?

Ms Burch: Absolutely; there was an information day just recently—last week—

MS BRESNAN: I went to it, but I am not sure what engagement they have actually had with the department in the feasibility study.

Mr Hehir: They have had engagement. I have met with them. We have met. I have had a conversation with some members of that committee since the tabling of the budget and indicated to them that we would be including them on the steering committee.

MS BRESNAN: When you say “the steering committee”, is that for the feasibility study?

Mr Hehir: Yes.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MS BRESNAN: Yes, because one of the things they have mentioned is obviously that they have access to quite a lot of pro bono work.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MS BRESNAN: Will you be making use of that?

Mr Hehir: Absolutely.

MS BRESNAN: It would obviously make the feasibility far more cost effective.

Ms Burch: That is one of the benefits of working with groups such as this. The whole notion and success behind Common Ground is that it is about a societal response to homelessness. This group has certainly taken the leadership. We have got Anglicare in there that is willing to consider contributing land. There are other providers and large companies in town. This is a great partnership. We have absolutely been involved with ongoing discussions with this group for a number of months now and this will continue through this project.

MS BRESNAN: Obviously, this does somewhat go against what the department has been sort of progressing. It does involve people from low incomes, homeless people. It does have—not a concentration of disadvantaged, but it has been extremely successful. Is there a commitment from the department to actually make sure this

happens?

Mr Hehir: There is a commitment from the department to make sure the feasibility study is—

MS BRESNAN: But it has been so successful in other states.

Mr Hehir: Yes, in principle, it is successful. I have not seen the evaluation of the data from the other states. The model—

MS BRESNAN: It is overseas as well.

Mr Hehir: That is right. The original model was actually in New York. It is actually in Times Square, from memory.

MS BRESNAN: It is.

Mr Hehir: It suits a city of significant scale and size. What we need to think about here, which is where a large part of our work will be, is what suits Canberra—

MS BRESNAN: There are two in Adelaide, which has—

Mr Hehir: That is right.

MS BRESNAN: a similar concentration to Canberra.

Mr Hehir: Well, yes, sort of. But it is two very different models.

MRS DUNNE: This is a conversation, chair.

Mr Hehir: Sorry, two very different models: one a much larger building; the second more recent one is a much smaller building—lower scale. It is actually the refurbishment of a historic building and in a very different part of town—a much more lively part of town in reality.

That will be a very useful piece of work for us to look at in terms of what are the different outcomes provided by those two different built forms, what is the different level of support, what is the different level of community engagement around them. They are the things that we are really interested in. We are very keen to make this work and that is the commitment that we will certainly be able to give. But applying the New York or the Melbourne model here would be senseless. We need to think about what will work in our community.

THE CHAIR: All right; a quick supplementary from Ms Porter, then a new question from Mr Coe.

MS PORTER: Thank you, chair. When Ms Sheehan was talking about the target groups, she mentioned the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups as being one of the target groups in this program, in the dataset. On page 382 of budget paper 4, it does mention improving services for this group being a priority. I believe that there

have been some protracted difficulties in registering the Billabong Aboriginal Development Corporation as a community housing provider. Could you provide an update on this for us.

Ms Burch: Before I go to Maureen Sheehan, we have had ongoing conversations with Billabong to ensure that they do come online with the new requirements around being part of the central intake system and the social register processes. We have a number of community providers in town. Billabong is one of those. All the other community providers have come online. They are targeted at Aboriginal housing. They manage a number of properties. We have in Housing ACT, I think it is, 1,000-plus Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants. We have put considerable effort into how we support them with housing extensions and a range of other things.

With the conversation around Billabong, it has been supporting them to make some of their business decisions, their internal business decisions, that they have sought to do, which is to separate and have an independent construct that will just manage those properties. I think we are very close now to having a resolution to that. But I hand over to Maureen Sheehan.

Ms Sheehan: Thank you, minister. Thank you, Ms Porter. The issue with Billabong was that as a corporation largely what it did was provide housing to Aboriginal people. But over the years it had provided some other services too. Most people here probably would have visited the Billabong premises at Stockdill Drive in Holt, which are owned by Housing ACT and which it head leases. It has a number of facilities there to provide community workshops and that sort of thing. Billabong wanted to make sure that in becoming registered under the housing registration it was only registering its housing operations.

In order to do that, it made a decision—it has only just made that decision—that it would, in fact, establish a new company, which would operate only its housing operations. That company has yet to be established under the Australian corporations legislation. But Billabong has, in good faith, provided the government with a great deal of evidence about the efforts that it is making to have that company registered. We have the company name and so on. So we are quite confident that that is happening.

On the basis that that company is finally registered with ASIC under the Australian corporations legislation, we will then register the new housing company under the housing legislation. When I say that, the registrar will go through the process of registering the company. Then Housing ACT will need to look at the properties which are currently head leased to Billabong. We have already had the discussions with Billabong and we will then facilitate transferring the head leases of those properties from Billabong to its new housing company.

Then we will continue to fund Billabong as the provider of a housing service. As recently as last Friday, we had a very productive meeting with Billabong. It has already provided all of its initial documentation to the housing registrar. If things keep moving apace the way they now are, we are quite confident that Billabong will become registered, that we will be able to transfer the properties to the new organisation that Billabong will continue to operate.

THE CHAIR: All right. We might go to a new question. Mr Coe; then Mr Hargreaves; then Mrs Dunne.

MR COE: I understand that in some of the new older persons units, they have got movable benches so that they can be raised or lowered to suit the height of best purpose for the tenant. However, the plumbing is not adjustable, so to that end they have to be fixed at a certain height and the plumbing remains at the same height; therefore, the bench top has to remain at the same height, thus making it in effect unmovable. Can you confirm that that is the case?

Mr Collett: I can deny that that is the case. The plumbing regulations require particularly the waste to be in a rigid pipe, so of course a rigid pipe is provided to provide connection from the waste of the sink in particular to the in-slab and underground plumbing services. The need to reposition the bench top should someone be confined to a wheelchair would mean that a plumber and a joiner would need to attend the property. But rather than the huge expense that we currently go through in taking out and throwing away the cupboards, the joinery and the plumbing fixtures, in this case we would simply be able to take out a short length of PVC pipe, lower the bench top, readjust the finishes to the walls and reconnect the plumbing fitting.

MR COE: I have been advised that actually getting that done is easier said than done, that it is not really happening and that there are quite a few tenants that are waiting for such a service.

Mr Collett: I am not aware of any tenants that are waiting on such a service. If you could provide the details, I will make sure that that is attended to quickly. The houses, as I think Ms Sheehan indicated before, not only provide a significantly improved environment for people who are moving out of larger, older and inherently less appropriate accommodation that may have been appropriate when they were much younger and raising a family but are not appropriate for older people, but also provide a very important advantage for that group as they move in—many of them are old, but some of them are young old, if I can put it that way. Some of them are in their early 60s and, unlike in their existing properties, they will be able to age in place. So not only have we got class C adaptable dwellings, but also we have embraced the notions and the principles of universal design. The corridors are wider; the doors are wider; the turning circles for a wheelchair are provided in all of the key areas.

The challenge, of course, is to get a house that suits people who are less mobile but at the same time does not look like a hospital ward—one which is still a home for individuals. A great deal of care has been given to laying out the bathrooms, for instance, so that they do not look institutional—so that they do look homely, but they do provide for adaptability. As we have said in our literature and our statements, the properties are class C adaptable. They are not class C compliant at the moment. So changes need to be made.

MR COE: Has an issue about the kitchen—the cupboard heights and also the adjustable benches—been raised at the Joint Champions Group?

Ms Burch: I think what we have said is—

Mr Collett: I will investigate that. I am not aware of it.

Ms Burch: But we are talking here—none of these matters have been raised with any of the executive here. And certainly there has been an officer, Jacquie—I forget her last name now—who has been working hand in hand with these tenants as they are transferred in and has gone through at that settling in process. We are not aware of any of this. We will certainly go back—

THE CHAIR: So you will take that on notice? Yes.

Ms Burch: But as David Collett has said, yes, that capacity is there, but it is a fairly easy remedy to fix.

MR COE: I will chat with the tenants that I have chatted with and see if they are happy for me to pass on their details.

Ms Burch: Yes, please.

THE CHAIR: All right. A supplementary to Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. With regard to this ageing in place proposal, where, as I understand it, properties are acquired and redeveloped, knocked down and rebuilt with townhouse-type developments—some of the older ones I have in my mind are in Farrer, for example, in Lambrigg Street. What I am interested in knowing is: how many people have actually transitioned from their previous dwellings into their accommodation, and what sorts of dwellings did they come out of? I am interested to see what effect the policy has on releasing properties for other people on the waiting list.

Ms Sheehan: Thank you, Mr Hargreaves. In making the offer of the new properties—bearing in mind all of the things that we were trying to satisfy, primarily that we needed to do something around homelessness—it was very important for us that, in making the first offer, we prioritised older people moving out of larger properties. We were looking for four and five-bedroom properties. They also needed to have mobility issues which required the older persons accommodation, but we were trying to get larger properties for larger families, because we do have quite a number of large families on the priority list and it has been hard for us to find properties for those families.

I can confirm this number for you, but in the initial expressions of interest—and we got 350 people who expressed an interest—disappointingly, we were only able to achieve less than 10 four and five-bedroom properties. However, we did get a few less than 10 four and five-bedroom properties, and I will be able to give an exact number to you of how many that was.

Almost all of the rest of the older people came out of three-bedroom properties. So it is not four and five bedrooms, but a three bedroom is a good size family home. We are also instituting a project of providing substantial additions to 13 of those properties, so that we can provide those to larger families who are on the waiting list.

The minister is just referring me to the fact that we only have 173 properties in the whole of the housing stock that are five bedrooms or more, so I suppose it is a bit churlish of me to say that it is disappointing that we only got a few less than 10.

So we have got largely three-bedroom properties from older tenants that are downsizing. We are housing families in the three-bedroom properties. We have got a modest extension program. And in addition to that, we are making sure that—the other thing I should say is that the properties that are coming back from the older people, perhaps not surprisingly, are in excellent condition. The average cost of bringing that property up to a very good standard indeed so that the families can move in has been much less than we thought. We can provide that figure—bearing in mind, as I was describing to the committee before, that the properties are coming back in tranches as older people move. But at this stage the costs are well under \$3,000 per property to bring them up to standard.

MR HARGREAVES: And the time lag from vacancy to re-occupation?

Ms Sheehan: What we have done—and the older people are happy with this time frame—is that from the time that the older person gets the keys to their new property, we like them to be out completely within two weeks. They are quite happy with that. So bearing in mind that they have known that they are selected, they have been on a walk through the site, and they have chosen the colour scheme for tiles, carpet, benches and so on, they have really, if they wanted to—and many of them have—started preparing for the move many months in advance. Part of the work of the housing transition team is to engage removalists and to assist in any way with the move. So people have got many months to plan the move. And then, from the time that they actually get the keys of the door to the new property, we are still giving them two weeks for the move. As I said, they are quite happy with that.

MR HARGREAVES: The policy is aimed at keeping people in their social networks?

Ms Sheehan: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: Their own suburbs. I am aware that it is sometimes impossible to house people in exactly the same suburb or exactly the same part of the suburb.

Ms Sheehan: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: What proportion, though, have you been successful in housing in the suburbs or regions?

Ms Sheehan: Mr Hargreaves, it was one of our requirements, in sorting through the expressions of interest, that the applicant had to come from that suburb or within a couple of suburbs. In the land that was made available for us for construction, there were only two sites made available on the north side. One was at Florey and one was at Macquarie. The result of that was that people who lived on the north side had fewer properties to apply for.

But given that we were assessing the needs of an older person, and particularly seeing

what were their needs around modifications to properties and any age-related mobility issues—if we were not able to identify a property on the north side for the tenant, we started looking for another property which would suit their needs on the north side. That has been one of the benefits of the process: not only have we been able to move people who need to move into new properties, but we have had the opportunity to look at the needs of a group of people who never before have presented themselves to us saying that they have got a mobility issue and they need to move. So we have identified more people and we are moving them, as we can, into properties that meet their needs. On the south side, with so many more properties available—with six sites available on the south side—

MR HARGREAVES: Where are they?

Ms Sheehan: Curtin, as the minister said, was the first one. We have Kambah, Rivett, Chapman, Conder and Bonython.

Ms Burch: Can I just say that on one—I am not quite sure if it was Bonython or Conder—there have been one or two people move from the north side but they have chosen to move because that is where their families are.

MR HARGREAVES: Okay.

Ms Burch: It is about those connections and networks, whether it is social, health or transport. That has been able to be facilitated. In many ways, the benefit is that they are much closer to their children and grandchildren, and that is a great benefit to them.

MR HARGREAVES: And the access to public transport is a feature?

Ms Burch: Absolutely.

MR HARGREAVES: In the criteria?

Ms Sheehan: Yes. And that was a feature in the identification of the community facility site. The minister was saying that the Conder site would be managed by Argyle Community Housing organisation. The Conder site is a particularly good example of location, with lots of services, including shopping centres, public transport and the club. The club, I understand, is particularly popular with the people that have moved.

MR HARGREAVES: My last question is: what proportion of those properties is managed by public housing and what is managed by the community housing sector?

Ms Burch: At the moment, Conder has been transferred over to management by Conder. That was done. The tenants that were moving in there were certainly all written to and approached, and are comfortable with that transfer from being managed from Housing ACT into Conder.

Mr Hehir: There is also, of course, Gungaharra, which is a community house in Canberra, and the Salvation Army at Narrabundah.

Ms Sheehan: Yes—

MR HARGREAVES: So a quarter?

Mr Hehir: And there are a smaller number of properties from existing community housing where we did dual occupancies.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Chairman, could I just ask a couple of quick questions about the Florey development? Mr Collett, what is the time frame for the build? When did it start? And it is close to completion, but when is it going to be completed?

Mr Collett: It is due to be completed by 30 June, and we are hoping to have the tenants moved in by that stage.

MRS DUNNE: And when did it start?

Mr Collett: It started in 2010. I would need to check the month that it started.

MRS DUNNE: How many units are there?

Mr Collett: In Florey—

Ms Burch: It is 34.

Mr Collett: There are 34 units.

MRS DUNNE: I just noticed in the last couple of weeks that there is a collection of paling fences that have gone up that are facing the street. My understanding was that it was a no-no in terms of urban design these days to have large lengths of paling fence on the street frontage. How did that come about?

Mr Collett: It is always a balance, particularly in these multi-unit sites, around creating the private open space that people need adjacent to their dwelling, which is so important in terms of providing spaces for pets and for gardening, with the need to present well to the street. My expectation is that there is more landscaping to go in and that will further soften those fences. Of course, the plans were reviewed by the ACT Planning and Land Authority, as well as an independent social planner, as part of the design process. They have all been approved for construction.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. So pets are allowed?

Mr Collett: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: The other issue there is that all of the units have evacuator tube hot-water systems on the roof. All of the roofs are sloping. There are very few of the roofs that actually slope appropriately, so almost all of the evacuator tubes have had to go up on—

Mr Collett: Stands?

MRS DUNNE: Stands. Did we not think about this when we were building it? All of these buildings have sloping roofs. Why were they not sloping to the north so that we could avoid the stands, which make the whole roof line look a bit unsightly?

Mr Collett: The configuration of the units was in order to maximise the yield on the site to get appropriate frontage to balance the need to get front doors and some views along the main living areas, as well as the car accommodation. Of course, in these units the car accommodation is suitable for a disabled fitted car—so it is wider than a standard carport or garage. There were a number of constraints on the site. We also were able to leverage a significant increase over what we were funded for as to what we finally agreed with the commonwealth to build—almost an additional 200 units—by making sure that we were very cost-effective in terms of the design.

In times gone past there was not the same commitment to providing sustainability. Water tanks were hidden and solar hot-water units were an embarrassment. Community values have changed. Seeing a solar hot-water unit is almost a badge of honour now, rather than being something unsightly. We were aware that the solar hot-water units would go on stands. We thought that was a reasonable part of the environment.

MRS DUNNE: So it was planned to put them on the stands?

Mr Collett: We understood at the outset that we would have to provide stands for the solar hot water—

MRS DUNNE: So you did not think to configure the roof slope so that the roof slope faced to the north?

Mr Collett: To put significantly more costs into the design and the construction of the roof at the cost of providing residential units in order to avoid the solar hot-water units being seen—

MRS DUNNE: You cannot avoid them being seen. The question is: 90 per cent of them are sticking up on stands. It does not seem to show very much planning when you go in and say, “Well, we need to configure our roof space so that we can put on solar hot-water systems.” It would seem to me that it is not beyond the wit of the architects to design the roof space so that the roof slopes north and they can put them flush on the roof. If you can do it with one or two of them, why can you not do it with the lot?

Mr Collett: I take your comment.

MRS DUNNE: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: A quick supplementary and then I have just got a couple on the financials.

MS BRESNAN: It is on that issue that you mentioned about ageing and placement. People who might have a disability that is going to worsen over time—when you put them into a property, do you take that into consideration?

Ms Whitten: We absolutely do take that into consideration. You might have been there, Ms Bresnan, when the very first property constructed under nation building in stage 1, launched by then Minister Plibersek, was a four-bedroom house in Narrabundah. It actually went to the mother of a child with a very serious disability. Although her children were small, she went to that property because that was the property that would be needed as that child was bigger. That is the approach that we always try to take.

MS BRESNAN: Sure. Does it apply to people that go into existing properties as well—those properties that might not be new?

Mr Hehir: Where possible. It is not always possible for us to have a class C adaptable property ready to go. As part of the allocation process we will have a look at the issues identified by the applicant. Where we can find an appropriate property, it can be done. Our constraint is what property is going to become available and when.

MS BRESNAN: I just know someone who has contacted me recently where they have a condition that is going to worsen over time and they are in a property where they cannot use the bathroom. Obviously you have got limited properties, but do you provide a time frame to make sure they can get into a property that is going to be suitable for them?

Mr Hehir: Again, it will not be time frame because it will depend on the timing of other people coming out. There are a range of measures that we would normally do. We also have an annual program for adaption within existing properties. While that property itself may not be suitable at that point in time, it might be able to be adapted at a reasonable cost.

MS BRESNAN: With the constituent I do not think the bathroom can be adapted, so they cannot use the bathroom.

Mr Hehir: That would be something that we would hopefully keep an eye on and do a transfer of property at the time, or potentially leading up to it, depending on whether they are able to do a swap, if that makes sense.

MS BRESNAN: Yes.

Mr Hehir: We certainly keep an eye on it. There are a number of different options, depending on the circumstances around the physical property and the physical needs.

Ms Burch: Can I just add to that? We do that as and when we can. I know that a young fellow who was having difficulty with his current property will move into a property that an older person has used, who has moved into one of the older persons units. We know that it is always a challenge and, as we can, we do. Just on the older persons units, there are a number—about half a dozen—of three-bedroom units on those sites, so they can have a carer come in as well. We are trying to put that mix into our stock as we move through.

MS BRESNAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, on page 391, the cash and cash equivalents under your current assets jumped by—

MS PORTER: Is this budget paper 4, chair?

THE CHAIR: Yes, budget paper 4. What is the reason for the jump? Why are we holding such a large amount in cash and cash equivalents? Why are they not held in investments where they might get a better return?

Ms Sheehan: Mr Smyth, the reason for that was that in the original planning for nation building we were going to be transferring a number of properties, and will transfer properties, to the community sector. All of that was reflected in the initial amounts. We initially held about \$20 million, which would be in properties to be transferred to the community sector. That program is—

Mr Hehir: I think the question was around the cash and cash equivalents.

THE CHAIR: Yes, it is the cash and cash equivalents which do not normally—

Mr Hehir: My understanding—and we can confirm this, Mr Chair—is that the original intent at the time of the budget was that all of the construction would have been completed before 30 June. Not all of it will be completed before 30 June, so we are holding some additional cash reserves over and above what we had anticipated, largely around final payments for the construction—

THE CHAIR: Will you be holding them through to 30 June next year?

Mr Hehir: No, I would need to have a look and see what that—

Ms Sheehan: That is the transfer issue.

Ms Hehir: Is that the transfer issue? Bob might be able to give me an answer on this. Certainly, that is the anticipated estimated outcome.

Mr Hyland: We are actually transforming from a purchase regime to a construction regime. The construction regime requires us to hold more cash on hand to meet the construction payment commitments, as well as the rollout of the nation building properties. To be conservative we had to make sure that we held sufficient cash to meet our construction commitments.

THE CHAIR: But you seem to be holding it over at least for the next 12 months. The decrease from the outcome this year to next year is only \$3 million. Surely some of that money would be better off in investments that deliver you a greater—

Mr Hehir: I think those are the cash equivalents. They are investments, but they are able to be converted back to cash quite quickly. My understanding is they are actually held in investments.

Mr Hyland: They are all held in interest earning accounts.

THE CHAIR: Okay. On page 393, the increase-decrease in asset revaluation reserve surpluses—we start the year with \$202 million, it drops to \$54 million but then it bounces back to \$221 million. What is going on there?

Mr Hyland: That is the movement in the asset revaluation reserve as a result of the capital program, which is the buying and selling of assets, and then through the annual revaluation of the portfolio.

THE CHAIR: So why does it drop by 75 per cent and then increase by 75 per cent—a threefold increase?

Mr Hyland: This is based on budget movement. We have an estimated outcome for our valuation. That valuation comes in subsequently. We get a revised value for what the portfolio does and then we do another revaluation each year. So there are reductions as we sell properties and there are movements as we revalue them.

Mr Hehir: So this is the net impact. What it would reflect is probably a slower growth in our capital asset than we had anticipated—it would be the large part of it—or slightly fewer holdings at the end. We originally anticipated that it would be about 11,900. We will be a few properties short of that, so that will be a factor for us. As I said, there are a number of things there where we anticipated construction to be completed before the year. Unfortunately, it was quite a wet season and we got delayed a number of months, which has put us slightly beyond 30 June.

My understanding is that the increase/decrease in the asset revaluation reserve surplus is a historic projection. This year it has not gone up. When you look at our estimated outcome, you find that it has not gone up as much as we anticipated. We have not felt the need to necessarily change our projection for the outyears, though. We are not sure that it is going to be a sustained movement.

THE CHAIR: That is fine.

Meeting adjourned from 10.44 to 11.03 am.

THE CHAIR: Minister, thank you for returning to look at output classes 3.1 and 3.2, community services and community affairs. I notice on page 355 of budget paper 4 that the government payment for output class 3.1 has dropped from an expected outcome of \$11.8 million to \$10.6 million for the coming year. Why is that so?

Ms Burch: Sorry, what page was that?

THE CHAIR: Budget paper 4, 355. The entire output has dropped from an expected outcome this year of \$18 million to \$17.2 million. What is the explanation for that?

Mr Hehir: I think I will let Ian answer it.

Mr Hubbard: Thanks, Mr Smyth. That essentially is a combination of things coming in and out, as you would expect. It is really reflected in the amount—the government payments going from \$11.897 million to \$10.68 million, as you were saying. The

biggest actual movement there is the transfer of a function from the department, which was DVCS, Domestic Violence—

MS HUNTER: Crisis Service.

Mr Hubbard: That is the one—to Housing ACT. So you will actually see a similar transaction coming in to Housing ACT that reflects that movement. So that is the biggest change downwards for that amount. There are a couple of other things that actually go into that output, which is the upgrade of childcare facilities, which we talked about earlier in the week, and also some additional rent coming in from the regional community facilities. So there is \$1.7 million essentially going out.

THE CHAIR: Could we have a written reconciliation of those numbers, please?

Mr Hubbard: If you like.

THE CHAIR: Where is the efficiency dividend coming from in this output class? What will you be seeking to take out of the class and how much is it?

Mr Hehir: We have not allocated down to output class at this point. This is where we are doing it across the board. We will have a look. We will take our proposal to the minister and then the government on how we are doing it. At this point it may be pro rata-ed across. Ian will tell you whether he has done that. At this point we have not decided around output class or not.

THE CHAIR: All right. Ms Hunter with a new question.

MS HUNTER: Certainly. Have we moved from the first output?

THE CHAIR: Let us spend—

MS HUNTER: Unless anyone had an overall question?

THE CHAIR: Let us spend the next 40 minutes on output 3.1 or general questions, and then we will go to 3.2.

MS HUNTER: I will go with one, and it is around noting in ACTCOSS's budget submission that they call for government to ensure all community sector funding contracts include resources for staff training and development, evaluation, administrative support and supervision. Can you expand or provide detail on whether contracts are going to include these specific provisions to ensure staff are well managed and programs are able to capture a good evidence base?

You may well say that the money that you give to these organisations should cover all of those things. But I think that there have been some issues where it has not been able to adequately cover those areas. One that I would particularly mention is things like evaluation and evaluation of programs.

Mr Hehir: The funding at the moment is indexed, as I think is identified in BP3, across the service funding agreements. There are a number of areas where we also

fund quite specifically for that. My recollection is that we actually fund ACTCOSS to do a number of training and development functions for the sector. If they are identifying that that is not an efficient way to do it, we could perhaps have a look at how we reallocate that. But I have not personally—

MS HUNTER: I think it is more about other organisations having the ability to be able to pay for training and then also to backfill positions while people can be released to do professional development or training. I do not think it is because ACTCOSS is not performing its role under that particular contract.

Ms Burch: I think it is relevant to note that we CPI increase funding to community organisations. All community organisations know their obligations regarding their service provision and also around staff retention and support. They are internal decisions that are made. I think it is worth pointing out that we do fund, in recognition of supporting the sector broadly, organisations such as ACTCOSS for training and government support. There are probably other arrangements.

I do not know whether Mr Hehir or Ms Overton-Clarke—who may talk today, unlike last week—can make some comment about those additional supports into the sector for that. For example, we made mention when we were talking on disability that we provide significant training opportunities to disability support workers, whether they are in the non-government sector or the government sector. I do not know whether Ms Overton-Clarke has a comment to make.

Ms Overton-Clarke: The only additional point I was going to make is that, of course, at the moment we fund for outputs; we do not actually fund for inputs. So how an organisation chooses to allocate those moneys is essentially up to them. We have, as you know, as part of the equal remuneration case, now got much more information on things like salaries in organisations. But to date we really did not have such a strong idea on that.

The other point is, as the minister said, on Monday we had a long discussion about an outcomes-based purchasing framework. Certainly in that we will be moving to outcomes as well as certain outputs. I suppose the general point is that organisations are very clear with us that they are independent entities. They do not necessarily want us to know everything—the sources of where they get all their moneys from and what they spend their moneys on—and that is entirely appropriate.

MS HUNTER: Okay. There are just a couple under the accountability indicators. It is interesting across not just this directorate but all directorates that, when there is a target of, for instance, 85 per cent satisfaction with whatever, the exact figure seems to appear in the outcome. I find that quite extraordinary. But, anyway, it is not just for this directorate; it is just a general comment.

Mr Hehir: At this point most of them are still estimated outcomes—

MS HUNTER: Right, yes, but still—

Mr Hehir: which is where we would be saying, “Well that was our target, that’s our estimate at the moment,” unless we have got some indication otherwise. Where they

vary, they are probably more likely to be—

Ms Burch: And I think the annual report provides that.

MS HUNTER: We will be following that, but it is an interesting one. I know about the joint community government reference group, of course, but I wanted to know about the community resource subcommittee. What is that subcommittee about? Can someone tell me? It is under accountability indicator a, partnerships.

Ms Burch: On page 360, so 3.1a?

MS HUNTER: Page 360, that is right; it is the first one. It talks about the number of partnership forums for the community.

Mr Hehir: And which one are you looking at? The community recovery subcommittee?

MS HUNTER: The community recovery subcommittee.

Mr Hehir: The community recovery subcommittee is one of the formal responsibilities we have under the emergency response plan. That is not the proper title, but that is the substance of it. We chair that; that is our responsibility. We engage with both other government departments and the community sector around that. So the organisations, off the top of my head, will be organisations such as Red Cross, some mental health organisations—

MS HUNTER: I know the plan you mean, now, so I understand what that one is. And the number of community capacity building projects. There was a target of 15. You have an estimated outcome of 15. What sorts of projects were the grants given to? It talks about strengthening capacity, sustainability and so forth. Can we get a bit of a flavour—you do not need to go through all 15—a bit of an idea about that?

MRS DUNNE: I would actually like all 15 on notice.

MS HUNTER: You would like all 15 on notice?

MRS DUNNE: But we can do it on notice, yes.

MS HUNTER: Sorry, Ms Whitten—

THE CHAIR: I feel a supplementary coming on.

MS HUNTER: It would be great to have all of them on notice, but would you be able to give us a bit of a flavour of what those projects or those grants were for?

Ms Whitten: Those projects relate to the CSIG program—the community support and infrastructure grants program. The 15 projects are an average of the number of grants that we have funded over the last couple of years in relation to the community support aspect of that particular program. We can provide you on notice with the detail of those grants that we have funded in this financial year.

MRS DUNNE: So you said, Ms Whitten, that you provided on average 15 community support grants. What are the infrastructure grants, and where do we find those?

Ms Whitten: They are also part of that same grant program. There are three parts to the grants program, and the capital works part of the program is not included in the indicator.

MRS DUNNE: So perhaps on notice if you could give us a breakdown of the whole program, not just the 15.

Ms Burch: Community support, yes. Do we report those in the annual reports as well?

Ms Whitten: Yes we do, minister.

Ms Burch: But we can provide that to the committee.

Ms Whitten: The current grant program is available on our website at the moment as well in terms of all of those grants.

Ms Burch: Just this year we have targeted supporting the childcare sector for this current round. There is \$10,000 to support the childcare sector in moving towards the framework as well. Last year we made some targeted activities and grants to support organisations who were managing the community hubs with some goods to support their management.

MS HUNTER: So does that mean that the \$10,000 that will be of assistance to childcare centres is actually part of the infrastructure grants program; it was not an add-on?

Ms Burch: No, it was always put out as part of the community support infrastructure grant. Similar to what we did—

MS HUNTER: So it is not new money; it is actually just that you are targeting that program?

Ms Burch: That is right, as we did last year to support those organisations in the community hubs.

Ms Whitten: Last year \$200,000 was allocated from the CSIG program for regional community hubs. In the financial year 2011-12 \$200,000 has been allocated to the childcare sector.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, with a new question, and then Ms Bresnan.

MR HANSON: On budget paper 4, page 355, under the output description 3.1, it talks about management support for community facilities. I am just wondering if you could identify which community facilities they are that are being provided with

management support and how much that is as a proportion of the outputs provision.

Ms Sheehan: I am sorry, Mr Hanson, which—

Ms Burch: So you are looking at output 3.1?

MR HANSON: Yes. So it talks about management of community facilities, and I want to know what those facilities are and how much is provided to support the management of those facilities.

Ms Sheehan: The Community Services Directorate is responsible for most of the community facilities that the committee members would be aware of—the regional community centres such as Woden, Belconnen and so on and most recently the surplus schools that were converted into the hubs, the halls and so on and then a range of childcare facilities, which the committee was informed about in the earlier estimates hearing.

MR HANSON: Could you on notice provide a list of those facilities and just the amount provisioned against them?

Ms Sheehan: We certainly can, Mr Hanson. We have a list of all of those facilities and the funding that they received in the annual report, but we can certainly provide that to you again.

MR HANSON: Thank you very much. Then if I go to the next one. There is a range of concessions. Can you just give me a bit of an update on what those concessions are?

Ms Burch: Our community concessions program—Ms Whitten can talk to that, but the concessions are extensive. They are energy concessions, taxi concessions, spectacle concessions, for example. I do not have the list in front of me. Ms Whitten can talk to that.

Mr Hehir: The only thing I would say at the start is that this is the administration of those concessions. A lot of those concessions actually show up in territorial, which is quite a large sum of money, so this is the administration.

MRS DUNNE: So the quantum of the money and how that is divvied up would be handy.

Ms Sheehan: I will start with quantum of money. It is in the order of about \$32 million of territorial expenses, and it will be in the budget papers. In terms of the range of the concessions, as the minister has indicated, in this budget there is a utility concession that is identified in budget paper 3, there is the energy concession, there is the water concession. There is a range of concessions; it is quite an extensive list. What might be more helpful for the committee is to actually table the list of concessions.

MR HANSON: Yes, that would be good. I am interested in what that list is, who is eligible, how they become eligible and the total amount. Let us say it is the energy

concession: how do you become eligible for that, what is the total amount of the provision and then what is the maximum amount of that individual concession?

Mr Hehir: We can certainly do that. Just at the top of page 365 under “Payment for expenses on behalf of the territory”, you will see the full quantum there, including the adjustments—

MRS DUNNE: So that is the \$37 million?

Mr Hehir: Yes, that is right.

MR HANSON: Is that different from benefits that are paid? So there are concessions, and are benefits paid or is that—

Mr Hehir: The benefits tend to be the Australian government rather than us.

MR HANSON: So they are more commonwealth. So we just have the concessions.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, I just wanted to follow up a matter, if I could, Mr Chair, because I was not quite clear on something Ms Whitten said. Ms Whitten, you referred to the initiative this year, the \$100-odd a year this year. But you also said that there was an energy concession and a utility concession. How are they different? How are the energy and utility concessions different from the initiative from this year?

Ms Whitten: The energy concession has been in place since 2004, and that is about a rebate to people on low incomes in relation to their cost of energy. On page 108 of budget paper 3 there is a reference to the utility concession and that would—

Ms Burch: So it is an increased amount.

Ms Whitten: Yes, it is an increased amount, an increased amount of \$31 per annum for people for energy concessions in addition to a \$50 amount increase for a utility concession.

Ms Sheehan: Sorry, I will just clarify that. The energy increased amount is \$51, and the utility is a new \$80 amount. So the total amount is \$131.33.

MS HUNTER: I am glad you did clarify that because I was getting a bit concerned for a moment.

Ms Sheehan: We usually do it the opposite way around—I usually get the detail completely wrong and Meredith gets it right.

MRS DUNNE: So what we are seeing on page 365 under the expenses on behalf of the territory is the budget sum, and then there is \$193,000 and \$2 million and some other adjustments—which somebody might like to explain—which will get us to this year’s budgeted amount? The things that are headed “2011-012 budget policy adjustments” include \$193,000 for energy concessions?

Mr Hehir: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And \$2 million for utilities. What is the distinction between “energy” and “utilities”?

Mr Hehir: I think “utilities” is intended to cover all of the potential. I think it is meant to include water as well. We are just using a particular mechanism to make sure we have got the broadest reach. That is probably worth explaining.

MRS DUNNE: Yes.

Mr Hehir: The number of people eligible for water concessions is significantly less than the amount of people who are actually eligible for energy concessions. A large part of that is because often people who are eligible for the concessions are renters and their landlord may be paying the water bill rather than them. Therefore, they are not entitled to any water concession.

What we are trying to do is to maximise the concession availability. So we are choosing to pay it through the energy concession, which has a much broader reach. I think it is about 25,000 households who can actually access it. So that is why we have gone for a utility concession—to try and maximise the reach of people who are able to claim it.

Ms Burch: So it is about putting as much as we can into—

MRS DUNNE: No, it does not make sense, I am sorry. I think we changed from “energy” to “utilities” halfway through that sentence, Mr Hehir.

Ms Burch: So if I can add to the confusion or clarification—there is an energy concession which goes out to 25,000 households. In this budget is an increase in that allocation.

MRS DUNNE: Of \$193,000?

Mr Hehir: Yes.

Ms Burch: Yes. And on top of that, in recognising that utilities—water and energy—costs are increasing, the mechanism we have chosen to provide additional support to as many households as we can without creating another stream is going through those that are eligible for the energy concessions. They will get additional money which we have tagged as a utility concession.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. I suppose—

Ms Burch: So there are \$131,000 extra going into 25,000 households to support energy and water costs.

MRS DUNNE: So another 25,000?

Ms Burch: Clear as mustard now, Mrs Dunne?

MRS DUNNE: No, but I will work on it. Also, in setting out the \$37 million base figure, could we have that broken up into where that money goes?

Mr Hehir: We will set it out, yes.

MRS DUNNE: The other question is: is that capped?

Mr Hehir: No. It is territorial.

MRS DUNNE: If we get to May and you have run out of money?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: All right, okay.

Mr Hehir: It is territorial.

MS HUNTER: I had a follow-up on it around the indexation. This money came in because the previous concession had been falling behind the demand out there. Can you explain what indexation will be put on this to ensure that it will be keeping up?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Twelve per cent, in line with New South Wales energy cost rises.

MS HUNTER: Twelve per cent per year?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: That is a commitment, is it, minister, that this will be indexed into the future?

Ms Burch: There is a commitment that we will reflect, through concessions where we can, those increasing costs. But this is also partnered with the additional investment through Housing and DECCEW into those points of users—into the households—to reduce costs as well. So we are providing additional moneys into the cost of utilities, water and energy, but we are also providing relief and efficient products. We know that if we put different improvements into energy efficient products, that equates to real dollar improvements. I did have a piece of paper there but I will—

MS HUNTER: Which is great, but I want to know the indexation on this. I think that is all good as a suite of programs.

Mr Hehir: We can certainly do that. We can provide that figure. If you have a look just at the utility concession increase, you will see that is in excess of that percentage. If you go from \$2 million to \$2.05 million—my understanding is that the indexing is built in at the higher rate discussed. But we can break that down for you and provide those figures. Would you like those for the outyears of the budget?

MS HUNTER: Yes, that would be great.

MRS DUNNE: And if you could confirm your understanding, that would be handy.

THE CHAIR: Members, we will spend until about a quarter to on this area and then we might go to 3.2. We will have, say, 15 minutes for ageing, 15 minutes for multicultural and 15 minutes for the Office for Women. I understand that Ms Bresnan, as shadow, has offered her question to her leader, Ms Hunter; and then Mrs Dunne.

MS BRESNAN: I am not actually shadow.

MS PORTER: I do have a question in this area too. You were talking about the community hubs before, minister. If this question has been answered before when I have not been here, that is fine, but please answer it if it has not. When you look at budget paper 4, page 365, there is \$3 million provided, as we have probably heard before. What is that \$3 million going to specifically for the hub? Also, when will the Forde community centre be completed and what facilities will that give to the community?

Ms Burch: Are you referring to the Flynn community hub?

MS PORTER: Flynn, yes.

Ms Burch: We have put \$4 million into this.

MS PORTER: I thought it was three.

Ms Burch: Three million dollars this year and \$1 million next year, and that is to carry on the work that we have commenced. Alkira and Gumnut childcare services will move into an area within the Flynn building, but we need to make that into our broader community hub. So this work is about completing Flynn as a multigenerational community hub, which will include that childcare service but will also allow the development of office space for various service providers, a community meeting space. Those decisions—I think we mentioned it earlier this week, about the users and what that form will look like—will be part of some work over this year, and certainly in close consultation with the community group and the broader Belconnen group, about what is the best mix of services there.

Mr Hehir: I would like to clarify that there is actually \$1 million in the 2011-12 budget and \$3 million in the 2012-13 budget, so the total funding is \$4 million for the expansion—

Ms Burch: It is the other way around, is it?

Mr Hehir: Yes. And there is a rollover, which we talked about on Wednesday, I think, of the \$2 million.

MS PORTER: And Forde?

Ms Sheehan: Forde is a development, Ms Porter, that forms part of a private sector construction program. So when that program is finished, we will have the Forde program delivered to us. Until the private construction catches up with us, that needs

to continue to be rolled over.

Mr Hehir: As part of the development, the joint venture offered community space in their local neighbourhood centre. The funding that is rolled over reflects the fit-out costs, but we cannot do the fit-out until they have actually delivered the space. That is something they thought they would have had completed much earlier. We continue to roll it over while we await the—

MRS DUNNE: It is a very modest fit-out.

Mr Hehir: It is not a huge space. But we will keep an eye on it.

Mr Collett: It is closer in scale to the neighbourhood halls that we have than to a full-scale regional hub. As Mr Hehir indicated, it is a facility that is provided as part of the offer from the joint venture partners for the neighbourhood that they are building. So they see it very much as supporting their residential sales program. It is integrated with a cafe and a convenience store—a little neighbourhood shopping centre. But it will be an important—

MS PORTER: It will be something like a meeting space?

Mr Hehir: Yes, it will be more like one of the neighbourhood halls.

THE CHAIR: Like Nellie hall rather than—

Mr Collett: So it is like the furniture, Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, an urn.

MS PORTER: One hopes so!

Mr Collett: Some initial teabags!

MS PORTER: I look forward to looking at it when it is furnished.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, it must be your turn.

MRS DUNNE: This is really a question on notice. Could I ask, on behalf of the committee, for a breakdown of the programs under this output class and the money that is allocated to each of those because it covers quite a diverse range of things? We have already asked for a list of the infrastructure that you have and those sorts of things. I think it is very important to get an idea of what the money is being allocated to.

Mr Hehir: Yes. I am not sure whether Ian has pre-prepared that but we can certainly check that.

MRS DUNNE: No, just take it on notice.

THE CHAIR: Ian is always pre-prepared. I would be shocked if he wasn't!

MRS DUNNE: No, it is quicker to take it on notice.

Ms Overton-Clarke: That is 3.1?

MRS DUNNE: Yes.

MS HUNTER: I was just wondering about our community hubs. How many have we now set up and are they fully tenanted? How are they going?

Ms Burch: They are doing well; that is my understanding. Certainly, for the Holt community hub, all works have been completed. I think Mary Porter opened that in February this year and a number of tenants have moved in. Sexual health and family planning are about to or are soon to move in; that is my understanding.

MS PORTER: To Holt?

Ms Burch: To Holt. So Carers ACT, Anglicare, Sharing Places and the National Brain Injury Foundation are occupying their tenancies there. In the Weston hub, all works are completed and all tenants have occupied that space. I can give you a list of who those tenants are: Good Environmental Choice Australia, Toora Women, CASE, Beryl Women's, Environmental Assurance, Parentline, the Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools, Australia 21, ACTCOSS, the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre, Woden services and Woden Weston Family Day Care. So there are a number there.

At the Chifley health and wellbeing hub, all works have been completed. Mr Collett might make some comment about the additional car parking there, but the work was completed and most of the tenants have moved in: Autism Aspergers, Australian Diabetes Educators Association, the YMCA, Nutrition Australia, Australian Breast Feeding Association, the Australian Council of State School Organisations, SIDS and Kids, Neurospace, the Warehouse Circus, the Asthma Foundation, and I think the Mental Health Foundation is earmarked to move in in the not-too-distant future.

MS HUNTER: I have been out there and car parking is a bit of an issue. What is proposed there?

Mr Collett: What aspect of the car parking?

MS HUNTER: There are a lot of organisations moving into these hubs. Is the car parking just not sufficient for the number of organisations moving in there?

Ms Burch: We have put additional parking in there. For Chifley in particular we have put in additional.

Mr Collett: Clearly, the demand for car parking, with the new community service organisations, is significantly higher than when it was a primary school. We came back to the centres, and in particular Chifley but I think most of the centres, with additional car parking or supplementary budget funding for that. We have yet to evaluate how effective that supplementary car parking is going to be, but we are hopeful that that will be adequate.

MS HUNTER: I understand that another issue, of course, was that many of these former schools were built a long time ago. So the electricity connection just was not going to cut it in 2010-11 and so forth. Was that a bit of an obstacle to get over, Mr Collett, or was it pretty straightforward?

Mr Collett: It was a timing issue. Actew are under a reasonable amount of pressure in terms of connections to new subdivisions and demands of new commercial buildings being built around Canberra. It is good for the economy but there was a bit of a boom and that put a lot of pressure on Actew. Most of the regional community hubs were in need of a new substation because the power consumption level was significantly greater, in the order of 100 per cent greater, and programming that work and getting Actew to attend to it was a bit of a challenge. There were some short delays in terms of delivery, but that has now been satisfactorily overcome.

MS HUNTER: So the hubs are pretty much finished except for Flynn?

Ms Burch: Cook has been occupied for some time; Rivett, Mount Neighbour, and the community halls are in place; in Village Creek, the loan equipment service has been completed. To me, one of the disappointing things about Flynn is that these other sites have been converted into very active, positive places generating a lot of community interest and engagement. We are still getting there with Flynn, so it is a disappointment for me.

MS HUNTER: Can we have a list of those that you read out?

Ms Burch: You certainly can.

MS HUNTER: That would be great.

Ms Porter: Does that include Hall?

Ms Burch: Yes, it does. In Hall, we have had the headmaster's cottage and the pavilion there, and that refurbishment has been completed and is available for use.

MS HUNTER: Is it your department, minister, that is talking to the Hall progress association about the former school site and programs that can be run there? What is happening there? Where are you up to in discussions?

Mr Collett: Yes, we are working closely with the Flynn progress association.

Ms Burch: Hall?

Mr Collett: Sorry, a Freudian slip there! We are working closely with Hall—

THE CHAIR: How closely exactly are you working with the Flynn community group, Mr Collett?

Mr Collett: I will take that question next but I will focus, after that slip, on Hall. We are working closely with the Hall progress association. They were one of the more

progressive groups. Whilst they understood that change was necessary, they were keen to see that the site continued to provide an attractor for Hall and a positive contribution to the local community there. They have a broad range of uses they would like to discuss with us. That work has been done. We are doing a bit more conservation work. We are talking with Education to clarify the roll of the preschool and their intentions, and the possibility of moving that preschool operation in order to get the most effective use of the site.

MS HUNTER: And to take some of the buildings off the site, I understand—some of the old demountables?

Mr Collett: That is right. That will be part of the redevelopment of the entire site. But we will do a master plan that looks not only at the physical site but also at the use of the space and what is going to be retained. The headmaster's cottage work was particularly successful and is an active part of the heritage interpretation that is used by schools throughout the ACT. It is probably coming under a lot of pressure, so making some more space available would be very useful.

THE CHAIR: All right. Mrs Dunne, a new question?

MRS DUNNE: Yes. The initiative of the family violence prevention program—does this come under this output class?

Ms Sheehan: No; it comes under 3.2.

MRS DUNNE: Okay; I will wait.

THE CHAIR: We will move to 3.2.

MRS DUNNE: We will move to 3.2, so you can answer the question now.

MR HARGREAVES: You thought you had got off.

MRS DUNNE: What I wanted to know was—this is essentially one staff member, it seems. Is there any capital money associated with this?

Mr Hehir: No, there is not. We would anticipate that this would likely be delivered through an existing provider who has access to a number of Housing ACT properties, and there are a number of potential providers who do have access to Housing ACT properties. That is the mechanism we would choose the accommodation part through.

MRS DUNNE: I am presuming that what you see is that if someone, for instance, has a domestic violence order out against them they are prevented from re-entering the family home but they do actually need somewhere to stay. I am presuming the initiative is bringing some of these people together.

Mr Hehir: This is actually quite a specific model. One of the issues, and this has been confirmed through DVCS, is that there are some people who commit domestic violence in a serial fashion in terms of having a number of different partners. Figures of six, seven or eight partners are not necessarily uncommon for some endemic

perpetrators of domestic violence.

MS PORTER: One at a time, one presumes?

Mr Hehir: Normally, but not always.

MRS DUNNE: They are not serial monogamists either.

Mr Hehir: This program is based—in a small way, admittedly—on a model done in Western Australia, which is based on a model from Israel. It is really looking at working with some high repetition—

MRS DUNNE: Frequent flyers?

Mr Hehir: frequent participants to try to change their behaviour. One of the issues that we look at here is that—domestic violence is unacceptable in any circumstance. What we see is the capacity of one male to influence and their impact on a number of women over a number of years but also the impact they have on the children within those households—and often there are children in those households—where those children grow up seeing domestic violence as part and parcel of life. The young boys within those households see it as a norm and often can become perpetrators themselves. What we are trying to do is intervene and break that cycle where we can. This is a small start. We will need to have a look at this model and see where it needs to go in the future, but this is looking initially at quite high repetition offenders to start with.

Ms Burch: Could I just add that within the community service sector space—and your earlier comment about the need for accommodation last year. I think it was last year, or perhaps the year before, that we implemented stay safe at home where a woman was experiencing domestic violence as a public housing tenant. We now have the women in the family stay in place and we remove the perpetrator, but we recognise that they need accommodation and support so alternative arrangements are made under that program as well.

MRS DUNNE: Do you have a provider in mind at this stage, Mr Hehir?

Mr Hehir: This is something I suspect will go through a select process, with not a single select. There are a number of people I think could well do this, but we will have a look at that as part of the process.

MRS DUNNE: What is the time line for setting it up?

Mr Hehir: I do not have an exact time frame, but Meredith might have an indication.

Ms Whitten: We are starting to scope that particular procurement at the moment, so we would be hoping to be able to go out to tender or to a select process midyear.

Ms Burch: Yes. It is certainly my interest to move quickly on it.

MRS DUNNE: I will watch it with interest.

THE CHAIR: All right. Ms Hunter has a supplementary; then we might work in reverse. There are three areas in this output class, members; use your time wisely. Mr Doszpot and Ms Bresnan; then Mr Hanson.

MS HUNTER: There is \$100,000 per annum, particularly in that first year, and then there is just the indexation. How many offenders do you think it will be able to assist?

Mr Hehir: That is what we are going to have to have a look at. That will be part of the tender process in terms of people identifying their capacity and how many people they can work with within that funding. Part of it—I think we will just have to see over time the complexity and the intensity of the work required. I do not think that we have huge expectations in terms of a high volume. I expect it will be quite a small number of people to start with, and we will have a look at the impact of that over time. Even in WA it is quite a small number of people who are worked with at any point in time.

MS HUNTER: How would these offenders be identified? Through contact with police? Where care and protection may have had contact with families?

Mr Hehir: There are a number of potential mechanisms. We will probably want to talk to the courts about this process as well. They may see this as an alternative in terms of an option or not; that will be up to them. But we would certainly want to have that as something that they are thinking about. There would be a number of organisations who would be aware of people. DVCS is very aware, given their work. Canberra Rape Crisis Centre would probably be very aware. Some of the men's support organisations would also be aware. And the police would absolutely be aware. So we would anticipate across a range of information providers.

Ms Whitten: And we would probably work with the family violence intervention program, which incorporates a lot of those organisations anyway.

THE CHAIR: All right. Mr Doszpot with a new question; then Ms Bresnan and Mr Hanson.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. Turning to BP4, page 348, under "Priorities", approximately the tenth point down the page is "completing the ACT Languages Policy as foreshadowed in the *Multicultural Strategy 2010-2013*". Minister, can you just elaborate on what is the situation with the whole-of-government language policy?

Ms Burch: We have put out a discussion paper. Certainly there has been significant interest across the community on this language policy. We support the Ethnic Schools Association. We support language development and language in Canberra being a bilingual community—as we can. Our language policy is certainly part and parcel of that. Mr Manikis can give an update about where we are at.

Mr Manikis: With the development of an ACT language policy, as the minister has rightly pointed out, this has been subject to quite extensive and comprehensive community consultation over the last little while. What we have got at the moment is 30-odd submissions from the community—quite substantial submissions—that came

about in response to a discussion paper that the minister released to the community late last year. We are now finalising and having a look at those responses and drafting the first cut of the ACT languages policy, which we anticipate will go to government for consideration in the not too distant future.

MR DOSZPOT: Are you saying that the priority to meet the 2011-12 deadline will be met?

Mr Manikis: It will certainly be met.

MR DOSZPOT: In the language policy strategy, one objective is that by 2012 all year 3 to year 8 students in ACT government schools will study a language other than English.

Mr Manikis: That is an Education and Training Directorate outcome or objective.

Ms Burch: That is certainly what they have brought to this discussion. That is showing their commitment. I cannot speak for that directorate, but that is certainly what they have brought to the discussion—their commitment to have that.

MRS DUNNE: Who has primary carriage of the languages policy? Is it education or is it your area, Mr Manikis?

Mr Manikis: It is my area, but I can say that it is a whole-of-government document. There will be contributions coming from all directorates, or most directorates. For example, languages in terms of productive diversity will have an expectation that they will have some input from the Economic Development Directorate. You have just pointed out the Education and Training Directorate's contribution. All directorates have a responsibility for providing access to services and programs, and English language assistance, through interpreter cards and what have you. So there is all that. It will be a broad-ranging language policy—I understand one of the first jurisdictions to broaden out from the traditional, what we have seen in the past, in limiting or confining language policy to just interpreting, translating and access to services.

MR DOSZPOT: Just coming back to the 30 submissions you say you are looking at at the moment, what is the context of those 30 submissions and what are you looking at achieving out of those submissions?

Mr Manikis: What we want to make sure is—the way we develop our high-level policy documents is that we try to take into account views and comments that are made by the community, and we take into account and try to accommodate directions that are provided by all sectors, whether they are the users of our services or the academics in the community. We have got submissions from all types of organisations that have come in. What we are trying to do is come to a policy which is informed by most of those views, or all of those views, and make decisions where there are contradictions or competing views.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay. I am not sure whether we are getting the messages as far as the language policy itself is concerned. Are you looking at introducing new languages in addition to what currently are being looked at? Is that part of the submissions that

you are looking at?

Mr Manikis: It is, as I said, a very broad policy which will take into account government's position on—that it is mandatory, for example, to use interpreter cards and interpreters. That will be a statement that will be there as a message not just for service providers but also for the community. It will be a clear statement. The valuing of second languages in the context of economic development and productive diversity will be something that government will be considering putting an underline under—really highlighting and putting a light on its importance. It is a document that will look at various aspects of language and its function.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. In that context, are you looking at this purely from a multicultural point of view or are you looking at this in conjunction with the department of education? Is there any commonality between what you are doing and what is happening—

Mr Manikis: As I have mentioned—

Ms Burch: This is a whole-of-government language policy.

Mr Manikis: Whole-of-government, and it will be the Economic Development Directorate as well and how they will utilise the wealth of skills that are available in our community to advance the ACT's economic prosperity.

MR DOSZPOT: We will put some questions on notice regarding this to give you a little more time to have a look at the question. One of the other things that I can ask in that regard is this: you mentioned ethnic schools. The ethnic schools funding at the moment—can you elaborate on that, what that is?

Mr Manikis: The funding at the moment is that they have—with the ethnic schools themselves, there are 40-odd schools. I think 37 of those are members of their peak organisation. I would like to stress the fact that not all of them are members. Having made that point, \$90,000 is distributed by the peak organisation to the 37 schools. On top of that, we have increased assistance to the peak body from \$20,000 to \$40,000 by way of assisting them to operate and cover their administrative costs. We have done that; they have received that. So they have had a 100 per cent increase in this financial year.

We also got a community languages grants program; we are in the process of distributing 2010-11 funding to each of the 40-odd schools to assist them to operate as well. Not only that, we have negotiated, together with Education and Training, to make professional development for community language teachers available free of charge for a limited number of sessions throughout the year to increase the skills of teachers at those schools at the weekends. As well as that, we are very mindful of the fact that a lot of these schools pay top dollar for rent out there in the community, so when they hire places to conduct classes, they choose to pay—it is up to them, of course, but we are trying to help them there.

MR DOSZPOT: So you do not cover any rental subsidy at all?

Mr Manikis: We do through the grants program to a limited amount, but we are talking thousands of dollars for some schools throughout the year. What Education and Training have come up with is to offer the schools the opportunity to move into some of the education facilities, the schools, free of charge to assist this sector to divert its limited funding for some of these schools to the front end, to the pointy end.

MR DOSZPOT: Has that been made available to—how many of these schools?

Mr Manikis: At the moment—this has come over the last month or two, so it is still subject to negotiations.

MR DOSZPOT: Can you give us a list of schools that will take up the advantage of that offer?

Mr Manikis: I will discuss it with Education and Training.

Ms Burch: We will get back to you with what we can. Whilst the offer is there, some schools may not take up the offer; so—

MR DOSZPOT: No, I understand that, but I will—

Ms Burch: The other, I think, element of the new arrangements for the Ethnic Schools Association is combining both DHCS funds and DET funds into a single contract. It is in the budget papers. DET funding has been transferred to us. That process in itself will make things a bit easier for the Ethnic Schools Association.

MRS DUNNE: So is the DHCS funding in education—

THE CHAIR: We need to move on; very quickly, please.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, just a quick follow-up.

MR DOSZPOT: But I have another question.

THE CHAIR: We will come back to you.

MRS DUNNE: There is the DHCS funding and the education funding for ethnic schools. In addition to that, there is the ethnic schools grants program.

Mr Manikis: The language grants program, that is right.

MRS DUNNE: The language grants program.

Mr Manikis: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Do they go exclusively to ethnic schools?

Mr Manikis: Yes, traditionally that goes direct to the schools. They put their hands up once a year and say: “Look, we need extra textbooks. We need to support a teacher or we need some assistance to rent.” We send that out direct and it is not huge

amounts. We are talking \$500,000. It is a small grants program.

MRS DUNNE: So what is the quantum for the ethnic schools?

Mr Manikis: It is \$65,000. It has gone up almost 10 per cent in the last year. It was \$60,000; it has gone up to \$65,000.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the per capita funding for students?

Mr Manikis: Per capita funding for students—this is, of course, the trap that we can all fall into. Per capita funding for us is around \$80 a head. That is combining all the resources that government, all directorates, provide to community language schools.

MR DOSZPOT: It was \$40 according to figures I had last year.

Mr Manikis: That is right.

THE CHAIR: We will come back to you, Mr Doszpot. We need to move on to a new question from Ms Bresnan.

MS BRESNAN: Thank you. My question is in relation to strategic objective 6, which is on BP4, page 352. It is about promoting and increasing participation in community life by Canberrans. The Multicultural Festival is listed as the key part that achieves this participation by groups. I am wondering if the government has actually done any analysis in terms of promoting increased participation of what ongoing impacts the Multicultural Festival has. Obviously, it is a one-off event. I am also wondering particularly about groups who might not actually have active participation in this festival. That includes new arrivals, young people from refugee backgrounds and older people.

Mr Manikis: The first comment I would make is that with the festival, participation, either actively or passively, through an audience or having a stall or having a performance, does reach quite extensively into the community. We have large crowds there. When we talk about it as a one-off event, whilst it is a one-off event at the pointy end, there is a lot of activity from what I understand in the community leading up to it. It intensifies from about six months out leading into it.

That includes groups getting together, practicing, rehearsing, making costumes—all that sort of thing. We can talk about their contributions to combating social isolation and all the rest of it, particularly when we talk about where we encourage groups like Multicultural Youth Services and Companion House. We try to encourage the migrant and refugee settlement support service to participate as well in this way. We do try to reach in. As far as an evaluation about the extent of that, we do surveying about the event itself but we have not—the questions in those surveys do not give us answers to the question that you asked.

MS BRESNAN: I take your point; there is all that other activity that goes on leading up to it and even after. But if this is the key part of achieving this particular—I mean, it is more than just about this.

Ms Burch: It is a key but the work goes on all year through our various multicultural grants. There are the radio grants, the language grants, general activity grants. There—

MS BRESNAN: Those things are not actually—nothing else is actually listed here.

Ms Burch: Measured in here.

MS BRESNAN: That is the only thing that is measured.

Ms Burch: We report them in the annual reports. That is my understanding.

MS BRESNAN: No.

Ms Burch: But there is an ongoing conversation across the community at a number of levels. The Canberra Multicultural Community Forum is again part of that. It is just about how we support different activities—whether it is the Chinese senior directory that provides that connection and communication across a whole range of community groups and age groups. Last year we have committed—we moved the Centre for Multicultural Youth into the Notaras centre and that funding continues. There is a Multicultural Youth Network that we have supported. Whilst it may not be reflected in here in part—I think Mr Hehir has just found something else.

Mr Hehir: At the moment, you are looking for a strategic indicator?

MS BRESNAN: Yes and I realise there are those other things in there but I guess that this is one of the particular indicators for this area. Also, you have listed all these things you do but there is also—I am just wondering in terms of promoting some interfaith and religious understanding as well, what work that you do around that.

Also, there have been a couple—just in relation to the Multicultural Festival, a couple of groups have said that they do not necessarily feel comfortable participating in an event like that. One of the reasons is because alcohol is served there. There are some groups, because they might have some religious association, that do not feel comfortable performing there as well because of the religious significance of the dances. I am just wondering what you do to actually encourage these groups to be—perhaps it is about expanding this particular objective as well.

Mr Manikis: If a group has issues, and I understand there are cultural issues in relation to alcohol being present—the issue there for us is whether we ban alcohol or not to ensure that we get 100 per cent—

MS BRESNAN: But that is not what I am suggesting. It is actually about—this is one event you do; so that is not what I am suggesting, but what are the other things you do to achieve this?

Mr Manikis: We do have other—and I was going on to say this—events that we either support or put on. Last year, or at the beginning of this year, the minister hosted the global cricket challenge, which encouraged the Muslim community, particularly the youth, to come out and spend a day up at Hackett, I think it was, at the ovals. We

had about 100 children turn up for the day. It was a great day. The parents turned up and the leadership from each of the five or six community groups. The Muslim Advisory Council members turned up as well as some children from the mainstream schools. They turned up as well. So that is one example.

The other example is our support, again, of the Muslim community with its Eid Festival. The first one, the inaugural one, they put on here late last year on the lawns of Parliament House. I thought that was fantastic. It attracted 3,000 to 5,000 people. The police were the big sponsors of that one. I must say that as a group, the Muslim community in our community are very active. Their invitation lists are very wide and broad. They try to engage with the broader community through the events that they initiate throughout the year.

So there are not just these signature events that we might sponsor, support or initiate. There are also those groups you talk about that may not be comfortable in the festival. They do have opportunities throughout the year, whether it is through national days, through their diplomatic missions or opening a mosque for the day where they invite the broader community to attend. So they have many opportunities as well throughout the year.

MS BRESNAN: Sure, thanks.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary on that. It is further to Ms Bresnan's question and your answer regarding the festival that was sponsored by the police. Minister, did you give any directions that would prohibit other members of this Assembly speaking at that function?

Ms Burch: There was no instruction from me. I know a number of people go. We go. We go to lots of events to show our support for community groups, and that is a good thing.

MR DOSZPOT: I will leave that question on notice if you care to give that a bit of attention. We are a little bit concerned about the fact that Ms Bresnan and myself were both invited, then disinvited in the—

Ms Burch: Invited and disinvited?

MR DOSZPOT: Correct, from speaking at that function.

MS BRESNAN: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Anyway, I will leave that to you to consider. Can I get back to my other supplementary?

THE CHAIR: No, Mr Hanson has got the next question.

MS BRESNAN: No, Mr Hehir was just about to say something.

Ms Burch: It was not—look, I have no memory of disinviting anybody to speak but it was not our event. I was a guest there, as were you a guest there.

MR DOSZPOT: Correct. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: All right, Ms Bresnan, you are done?

MS BRESNAN: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr Hanson, a new question?

MR HANSON: I will defer my question to Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: Thank you, Mr Hanson.

THE CHAIR: All right, Mrs Dunne then Ms Porter, Ms Le Couteur, Ms Hunter.

MRS DUNNE: I wanted to go to the accountability indicator e on page 361. This relates to the number of contacts made with the Women's Information and Referral Centre. The figure is static. The target and the outcome are 10,000. I asked about this last year and in answer to a question on notice the minister told me that in 2009-10, there had been 11,251 contacts with the Women's Information and Referral Centre. I was told that in the following years the trend was expected to be upwards. If the trend was upwards from 11,251, why are the targets 10,000?

Ms Burch: Thank you, Mrs Dunne. Ms Whitten will respond.

Ms Whitten: My understanding is that that was correct. In terms of making a change to the measure in the budget papers, that is something that we will pick up for the next budget paper.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, what is the estimate? If the estimated outcome is 10,000—

Ms Whitten: I think Mr Hehir has responded to this question previously—not this particular question—in terms of what is in the budget papers. It is an estimated outcome. It is highly likely that the actual outcome, which will be reported in the annual report, will be higher than the 10,000.

MRS DUNNE: But you told us last year in answer to questions on notice that it was 11,251 trending upwards; so why is the target for next year still 10,000? Why was the target for this year 10,000 if you knew that it was trending up last year and why does it continue to be 10,000? Or is it not trending upwards? These two figures cannot exist in the same universe together and—

Mr Hehir: Look, Mrs Dunne, I think the only answer is that we probably have not paid enough attention to that particular measure and we will make sure we do.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, good. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Thank you, chair. Minister, going back to multicultural affairs, budget

paper 4, page 364, talks about enhancements to the Multicultural Festival. I am wondering what those enhancements might be. I had another question, but I will wait to see if I have any time when other members have had a chance.

Ms Burch: We have \$100,000 over the next two years for the Multicultural Festival. The one in 2013 allows us to celebrate, as we ought, our centenary year. Certainly, I do not think there was anyone who could have gone to this year's festival and not recognised that it was very successful. The police have given us a figure of over 200,000 people. That was their estimate. There was certainly a good turnout. We reconfigured the program to attract more people on the Sunday. There was more food and activities and that was a great success.

This is about how we expand—how do we expand the footprint? Whilst there was a high satisfaction rate, from personal experience and comments, this is about: how do we expand our footprint? We had a great sanctuary area, but can we have another sanctuary area? This money is to look at how we can expand and accommodate those additional to make it a more functional environment as well. Nic Manikis has already been hard at work on engineering next year's festival. I am sure you have, Mr Manikis.

Mr Manikis: I have. Thank you, minister. I will just add a little bit more to that. We do a pretty robust survey each year. What we found this time round was that people come forward with the good things but they also come forward with areas for improvement. The festival as we saw it in 2011 was the culmination of taking on board, over the previous 15 years, and paying attention to what people saw as improvements. One of the things that people have said to us this time round is that it is just getting too crowded. In terms of comfort levels, for families and particularly—

Ms Burch: It is a victim of success in many ways.

Mr Manikis: Yes. What they want to see is the footprint spread out a bit more.

MS HUNTER: Didn't we try that in a previous year—going down into Glebe Park? There were issues with that in itself.

Mr Manikis: We did.

Ms Burch: Yes. That was the wrong stretch of a footprint. This year we stretched into London Circuit a little bit because we had the Indigenous showcase. But that corridor was not, in our view, utilised as much as a connect. There are some stretch points without going down to Glebe Park.

Mr Manikis: Certainly, and Glebe Park was very expensive—

MS HUNTER: It was. That was the year of the blow-out.

Ms Burch: Yes.

Mr Manikis: and isolated the stall holders as well down there. The crowd did not get down there until late on Saturday afternoon, which did not do the stall holders much good, given they had been sitting there since 10 o'clock in the morning. So there are

those issues down there.

Keeping Glebe Park to one side, there is the opportunity to do a few clever things down London Circuit, as well as Akuna Street—closing that off down to the traffic lights in front of Glebe Park there on the corner and pushing the Akuna stage across the road so we can utilise Akuna Street. We can spread it out a bit. We can take out every second store and thin it out a bit. We can pay much more attention and provide more assistance to the logistics officer, working together with the local businesses, to make sure that for 2012, and particularly leading into 2013, we have got a footprint that is functional and comfortable for kids, mums with prams and families generally.

MRS DUNNE: And probably more poffertjes stalls to cut down on the queue.

Mr Manikis: I am sorry?

Mr Hehir: There were a couple of stalls with queues. The gozleme stall seemed to be pretty popular too.

Ms Burch: Whilst we welcome having a problem such as this, having to accommodate such growth in the festival, it is a successful weekend and we want to build on that. Certainly, the number of community stalls and communities that are engaged—building on your earlier comment—increases every year. Having the Indigenous showcase this year was a great success for us. Talking with Katrina from the NAIDOC committee, it was very successful for them as well in terms of broadening their openness and participation from broader Canberra into that traditional space.

MR HANSON: A supplementary?

THE CHAIR: No, we are going to move on. A new question from Ms Le Couteur and then Ms Hunter and then if we can we will get back to—

MS LE COUTEUR: It was going to be a new question. It is really a supplementary, though. First off, I am particularly interested in your liaison person with business for the Multicultural Festival. Can you tell me more about that? It would seem to have been one of the issues this year, that we constructed these barriers.

Mr Manikis: We have been constructing stalls there since 1997 and businesses have changed as well year in year out. So we have different personalities to deal with as well. We try to build structures away from shopfronts. We have reconfigured stalls to go down the middle so we are not in front of shopfronts. We have also asked our provider to make sure that the flaps on the sides are lifted up so you can see through until the final. We have had several meetings with the business community and the retail community. There is a difference between CBD Ltd, as I found out, and the retailers. They are two different groups. One is the property owners; the other one is the people that run the business.

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely.

Mr Manikis: We have had several of those people very interested. We have had a

couple of meetings with the business owners. Their main complaint was that, whilst several of the businesses take out stalls and run successfully for the weekend on the footprint, others just sit back and watch it; they are pretty passive. There is not much creativity going on in terms of taking advantage of or capitalising on the event, so we are working through it with the businesses. They have come up with some ideas on next year—how they can be more involved—and we are listening to them.

We derive a great deal of our third level of revenue from commercial stalls. That ensures that we meet our budget and do not go over budget. So they are very important. It has been made clear to the local businesses that if they are to replace outside retailers coming in, they will need to still stump up the commercial fee. They are keen to do that, but their major gripe was that their competition from Belconnen or Tuggeranong was coming in and making a killing on the day while they sit there and watch.

Ms Burch: It is about how they turn their shopfront into part of the festival, so it is a natural footprint as people move through the festival.

Mr Manikis: Yes, and we will work with them.

Ms Burch: And that is what we aim to do.

MS PORTER: They should go to Parkes and see all the people in Parkes during the Elvis festival. Every single shop gets involved—every single shop.

Ms Burch: You are encouraging us to go to the Elvis festival, Ms Porter?

MS PORTER: No, I am saying it is every single shop, even the butchers.

MS LE COUTEUR: My other question is that a couple of years ago we had the fringe festival as part of the Multicultural Festival, and obviously it is still happening out at the Folk Festival. Is it still officially part of the Multicultural Festival or has it moved to arts?

Ms Burch: No. That funding has been allocated over to arts and to the Folk Festival. Apparently it is a great success out there as part of the Folk Festival.

MS LE COUTEUR: There are huge queues to get in. I know—I was there only a few months ago.

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Ms Hunter, a new question?

MS HUNTER: Yes. I wanted to move on to a question around the ACT women's plan for 2010-15. I note that the time frame for establishing benchmarks for sex disaggregated data is due by June. Can you advise whether this project is on target for completion by June, or where it is up to? Can you give us a bit of a progress report?

Ms Burch: This has been a long and complex project. I think we spoke last year or at

the annual reports about this level of complexity. We are into that almost final stage. Meredith can speak about that.

Ms Whitten: Thank you, minister. It is on track. In fact, we are meeting with the women's plan implementation group next Monday. We are taking a whole-of-government approach in terms of identifying the benchmarks across the three aspects that are identified in the women's plan—the economic, the social and the environmental aspects in the plan. We will come together on Monday just to clarify and confirm what the benchmarks will be. One example has been in terms of the economic aspect, around gender pay. That has been reported in the Commissioner for Public Administration's report, as you would know.

MS HUNTER: Thank you for that. The other one was budget paper 3, page 108. It may not be in that budget paper, but I can talk to it anyway. It is around the extra funding that is going—I am sorry if this involves Mr Manikis again; it was not a very good order in which to ask these questions—to the office of multicultural affairs.

MS PORTER: I think you will find it is on page 364 of budget paper 4.

MS HUNTER: Thank you.

Ms Burch: What is it, Ms Hunter?

MS PORTER: There is additional money for—

Ms Burch: Additional funding to OMATSIA.

MS HUNTER: Yes. It is the additional funding for the operating costs and support for OMATSIA programs. I wanted to get an idea, Mr Manikis, about what that funding will go to. You might want to take it on notice. It is around the breakdown of the funding and also the programs, and how much of it is going to office administration.

MR HANSON: This is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, is it? That is on Monday.

THE CHAIR: We are doing Indigenous on Monday.

Mr Manikis: No.

Ms Burch: It is OMA.

MS HUNTER: It is in the office—

Ms Burch: It is the Office of Multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. There is a component that is going to the multicultural elements and a component to Aboriginal—

MS HUNTER: If you could just give a bit of a breakdown, that would be wonderful.

Mr Manikis: Okay. I think for next year it is 386,000, of which 206,000 is going to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs unit so that it can implement some programs, and they are listed there. And 180,000 is going to the office of multicultural affairs. That will fund one position in the office of multicultural affairs to support the operations of the office where the office has had an increase in workload—over the years, we have had many initiatives which we have not had staff cover for—and increasing our work in supporting organisations that are doing a hell of a lot more work with refugees and asylum seekers out there as well.

MS HUNTER: I can ask this on Monday, but the 206,000 going to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander bit—

Mr Manikis: That side of the operation, yes.

MS HUNTER: Is that around again boosting up the office or is that about programs?

Mr Manikis: No. In that 200, there is a leadership grants program; there are elders camps; there is—

MS HUNTER: Okay; I understand that. I am just wondering why the 180,000 came in here. That would normally just be an increase to the department's bottom line rather than being seen as a budget initiative, if you like. I am just wondering, minister, why that 180—

Ms Burch: Yes, it is an increase in a resource within the office, but it is quite specific to refugees and asylum seekers, recognising that increase in, for example, skills recognition and those other elements that are supporting program areas. It is a resource within the office, but this particular element has those program supports.

Mr Manikis: Yes. We have had new funding agreements, for example, that we monitor and work with—

MS HUNTER: I do not doubt that there are increased workloads. It is just that I am interested—normally that would just be put in and you would get an extra allocation.

Ms Burch: We can get you—

MS HUNTER: I am just wondering why it was pulled out as a particular budget announcement.

Ms Burch: Because of those program supports across those vulnerable areas. I would anticipate a similar question around the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander part, so we will package those both up and bring it back in.

THE CHAIR: All right. I have the last question and I shall defer to Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. I have got a supplementary which I would like to finish my previous question on and then a new question. The supplementary is regarding the per capita—minister, this is to you.

Ms Burch: Sorry, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: I am coming back to the question regarding per capita funding for students—

Ms Burch: For the Ethnic Schools Association?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes. The figure I had was—

Ms Burch: How did I guess that?

MR DOSZPOT: The figure I had was \$40 per head, and Mr Manikis has indicated that it is \$80. Could I get some clarification on that. I do not need—

Ms Burch: We said we would provide advice on that.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay.

Ms Burch: But recognising that, if you are comparing it to other jurisdictions, we do need to be careful about what quantum we are counting and what goes into that summation of—

MS HUNTER: A breakdown of what is involved would be good.

Ms Burch: We can provide what we give, but if you are looking at comparators to other jurisdictions, I am not sure if we can account for that.

MR DOSZPOT: I am comparing it to other jurisdictions in terms of Victoria, at \$190 a head—

Ms Burch: That is what I have just—

MR DOSZPOT: New South Wales, \$120 a head—

Ms Burch: I have just indicated, Mr Doszpot—

MR DOSZPOT: South Australia, \$140 a head. We would like some comparison to that.

Ms Burch: But as I have said, Mr Doszpot, I cannot give you the descriptors of what those other jurisdictions account for in their dollars.

MR DOSZPOT: I look forward to getting what information you can give us and we will look at the rest.

Ms Burch: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: The second question is regarding the interpreter service in Canberra. Can you elaborate on what funding currently goes into the interpreter service?

Mr Manikis: When we talk about the interpreter service, that is run by the commonwealth department—the Translating and Interpreting Service, TIS. That is run—

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any room for multicultural affairs to look into some of the issues regarding interpreter services?

Mr Manikis: We do. Interpreter services in the ACT are largely provided by, as I say, TIS. What we do is try to ensure that all our agencies use interpreters appropriately. So it is the promotion part of that service that we try to assist in. Also, we encourage our community members to become accredited with the national authority on accreditation and translating and interpreting so that we can grow the pool of available translators here in the ACT—interpreters and translators.

We funded the Sudanese community with software packages where they themselves can translate in Dinka in their office over in the Multicultural Centre, and we make representations to the immigration department if there are any issues that arise from time to time. The minister is a member of the national authority for accreditation in translating and interpreting, as an owner: the jurisdiction is an owner of that company; I represent, as a delegate, the minister. So at the highest levels of policy development we have an input.

But as far as the ACT is concerned, our directorates and the service provision points perform reasonably well in terms of getting interpreters and paying for interpreters. The cost of interpreting is borne by the service providers around the directorates, so there is not a central pool.

MR DOSZPOT: The requests that I have had from constituents are (a) that they are finding it very difficult to find enough interpreters and (b) about whether any thought can be given by multicultural affairs on funding and subsidising the training of speakers of languages to become interpreters. Or is that—

Mr Manikis: We have, I understand, a LAPA allowance, which is a language allowance, but that is within the ACT public service, where staff who have a second or third language are able to use their skills and be paid. We would certainly support assisting community members to get accredited.

MR DOSZPOT: So if applications are made by community members for that, you would consider them?

Mr Manikis: We would consider that, yes. The costs are not enormous in terms of increasing the pool that is available out there, but it is something that, if we get—we have not heard in our office any complaints that there are limited interpreters, so I would be interested to hear what languages.

MR DOSZPOT: I will direct them to you.

Mr Manikis: We had an instance the other day where we needed an Indonesian interpreter. I must admit that that was a little bit difficult to get hold of, but after several inquiries we were able to get an accredited interpreter. That is from our

personal experience. Some languages are going to be difficult, particularly in the emerging groups. That is why we are in there supporting with software packages and assisting. We would assist the Sudanese community, the Sierra Leone community or other communities if they wanted to identify three or four people within their community who wanted to go off and get accredited. We would be fully supportive of that. All those service provision areas out there that deal with members of that community for various reasons—it would enhance the experience if there were people there speaking and they were accredited.

MR DOSZPOT: I will pass that on to my constituents. And terima kasih: that is “thank you” in Indonesian.

MR HANSON: Sama-sama: that means “you too” in Bahasa Indonesia.

Ms Burch: Mr Smyth, can I just make a correction from earlier?

THE CHAIR: Sure.

Ms Burch: In response to a question about the childcare grants and the community support infrastructure grants—the allocation as per my announcement when they came out is 250, not 200,000. So just a correction.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that, minister. I will close this session on output class 1.1, social housing services; 3.1, community services; and 3.2, community affairs. We ask that any questions that have been taken on notice be answered within five days. Members, if you have additional questions on notice, could you get them in within four days. We will break now for lunch and resume at 2 o’clock with the Assembly, the Auditor-General and Tourism.

Meeting adjourned from 12.28 to 1.28 pm.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Legislative Assembly for the ACT

Duncan, Mr Tom, Clerk

Kiermaier, Mr Max, Deputy Clerk and Serjeant-at-Arms

Duckworth, Mr Ian, Corporate Manager

Barrett, Ms Val, Manager, Hansard, Communications and Library

Skinner, Mr David, Manager, Strategy and Parliamentary Education

THE CHAIR: It being 1.30 and there being two members of the committee present, we are able to start. Mr Speaker, I draw to your attention the yellow privilege statement that is before you and I would ask: have you read the statement and do you and your officers understand its implications?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I remind you and witnesses that proceedings are being recorded live by Hansard for transcription as well as being broadcast live, webstreamed and will be available on Committees on Demand. Are you happy to proceed?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, we are, thank you.

THE CHAIR: That is good. Mr Speaker, would you like to make a short opening statement?

Mr Rattenbury: I might just make a few comments, Mr Chair, thank you. Firstly, thank you for that opportunity. I wanted to note simply that the budget for the Legislative Assembly is just over \$13 million for the next financial year. It is quite a small part of the budget; it represents 0.3 per cent of the total proposed appropriation for all territory agencies. Interestingly, based on an assessment of the last 12 years of budget papers, that has gradually declined from 0.43 per cent, and I think that reflects broader trends.

The Secretariat does continue to be resourced capably, I think. The focus, of course, is on providing procedural and business support for the operation of the Assembly. Certainly the Secretariat will continue to aspire to provide high levels of service to ensure the efficient and effective operation of the Assembly in the coming year.

The Secretariat will again be conducting a members' survey in order to ascertain how the services provided by the Secretariat are received by members. But this year members' and ministers' staff will be surveyed for the first time, and we believe this will provide improved and increased amounts of data which will help us to refine the delivery of services and address any issues that might arise.

The Secretariat's budget has been framed broadly in accordance with the Latimer House principles. In that regard I would again like to thank the Treasurer for the manner in which she and her department have approached the various discussions and

deliberations on the Assembly's budget requirements. The Assembly did not seek any additional funding for the forthcoming year and was not subjected to the efficiency dividend.

With those few remarks, we are happy to take whatever questions you would like to put to us.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Could I refer you to page 1 of budget paper 4, and could we look at dot point 1 on page 1, under "2011-12 Priorities". What is meant by "exploring the development of stand-alone legislation for the Secretariat"?

Mr Rattenbury: This is actually in the strategic plan for the Assembly for this period and it also reflects the essential principles of the Latimer House principles. This essentially creates a stand-alone Legislative Assembly Secretariat. At the moment the Secretariat is covered by the Financial Management Act and a range of other directives that are applicable to the broader ACT public service put in place by the executive. In the context of the Secretariat and the parliament not being subjected to directions by the executive, it is the practice in many jurisdictions for the parliamentary service to have its own stand-alone legislation.

To my mind, this has been particularly brought into focus by some of the changes that are flowing from the Hawke review, but it is a longer term consideration for the Assembly. I have written to all members outlining some of the rationale and the time line and indicating that there will be an opportunity to discuss it at various times. I have also received a letter back from the Chief Minister indicating broad support for the approach and an agreement to proceed with discussions as and when required.

THE CHAIR: Do all other jurisdictions have such legislation?

Mr Rattenbury: Not all jurisdictions but a number of them do. I might ask the Clerk to add some detail there.

Mr Duncan: Mr Smyth, the federal parliament has legislation. I think the Victorian and Queensland parliaments also have legislation. So there are a number of other jurisdictions that do have their own stand-alone legislation.

THE CHAIR: Obviously, therefore, five other jurisdictions do not have the legislation. What is the benefit? What are we actually seeking by this? Is there a problem that we are seeking to address or is it just legislation for legislation's sake?

Mr Duncan: Mr Smyth, I think there have been occasions when there has been some confusion about whether acts apply to the Legislative Assembly. I am talking principally about the Financial Management Act, the Government Procurement Act and the Freedom of Information Act, to name but a few. I think one of the advantages that we hope this legislation will achieve is to make it clear what legislation does apply.

I think it is also fair to say that we want to be seen as an independent agency from the executive. I think a separate act along the lines of the other jurisdictions would be useful. We are created now under the Public Sector Management Act. It does seem

somewhat strange to have the Legislative Assembly created under the Public Sector Management Act. So that is part of the reason why we have moved down this path.

THE CHAIR: On the same page, under dot point 2, the broadcasting asset replacement and infrastructure upgrade plan, when does it begin, when will it be in place, how much will it cost and where will we find it in the budget papers?

Mr Rattenbury: I will ask Val Barrett to speak to this in detail, Mr Smyth, but essentially this is being driven by the digital changeover. It turns out that we have something like 117 televisions throughout this building, all which are analog, so we have quite some work to do. But I will ask Ms Barrett to provide the detail.

Ms Barrett: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker is right. This is driven by the need to change over to digital sometime in the first half of next year. So we needed to do a couple of essential things. The first was to change a piece of equipment called the head end to make sure that it could reticulate digital signals, which we have done at a cost of around \$32,000. The next step in the strategy is to replace all the televisions. But at the same time we thought it was a good opportunity to look at all potential broadcasting requirements and what else we could achieve once we went digital.

We have developed a plan that talks about various assets, their replacement and their further potential to do more broadcasting of Assembly proceedings. The plan is currently with the admin and procedure committee. It was looked at initially because we needed to get approval to do the essential work of the head end replacement and the digital television replacement. And there are a number of other options in there that we are considering for the future.

THE CHAIR: Where is the money for that? Is it appropriated in this budget, in the coming budget?

Ms Barrett: Because we knew this was going to happen, we have had money set aside. It is in the existing budget. We have already paid for the replacement of the head end. We have just put out a request for quotation for the televisions yesterday and we have enough money this year to pay for those, even if we do not actually get them until next financial year.

MS HUNTER: The environmental sustainability plan has been dropped as a priority for this year, or it does not seem to appear in this year's priorities. Does that mean that it is substantially implemented or are there other initiatives that are planned for this year, Mr Speaker?

Mr Rattenbury: I might ask Mr Skinner to come forward. Mr Smyth, you will also be pleased to note that there is no reference to the parliamentary agreement this year in the priorities either, after you particularly asked us about that last year.

THE CHAIR: As is appropriate, Mr Speaker.

Mr Rattenbury: Ms Hunter, the work continues on the environmental plan. In fact, our committee that Mr Skinner heads up continues to work on that. I might ask Mr Skinner to provide the details of where they are up to.

Mr Skinner: It is actually the Clerk that heads up the sustainability committee. It is probably true to say that the bulk of the original sustainability—

MR HARGREAVES: Don't stay on the baseline; come to the net, Mr Clerk.

Mr Skinner: The bulk of the original sustainability plan has been implemented and the committee is now in the process of actually looking to reinvigorate some of those planning arrangements. I think it is probably fair to say that a lot of the low-hanging fruit has been picked and we are now looking at what things might be worth doing from an economic perspective as well as from an environmental perspective. So that is really where things sit. But because it does not appear here I guess it does not mean that it is not a priority. It is just that there has not been a strong focus in the budget on that particular aspect.

MS HUNTER: What sorts of things will you be looking at doing this year?

Mr Duncan: We are continuing along with the initiatives that we started off in terms of the energy efficient lighting, the water usage and things like that. I guess the big ticket item that we are grappling with is solar panels for this building and whether we would go down that path. We have engaged a consultant to give us a report on that and we are considering that report now, with a view to putting up a recommendation to the Speaker in due course. But it is very early days yet and we just want to assess that report and test some of the assumptions that have been made in the report. That is probably the biggest one.

MS HUNTER: Have you got some indicative cost?

Mr Duncan: We have. I will have to take that question on notice.

Mr Rattenbury: It depends on the size of the system. The report that has been commissioned in the first instance explores a number of sizes of systems. I think 30 and 100 kilowatts were the two options.

Mr Skinner: They range anywhere from about \$150,000 upwards. The key consideration would be around things like payback period, opportunity cost and things of that nature. They are the things that need to be grappled with, and making sure there is actually some economic or financial argument to progress them, in addition to having an environmental benefit.

MS HUNTER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: A few days ago we talked to InTACT, except they are not called InTACT anymore—Shared Services ICT. We talked about desktop—

THE CHAIR: SSICT.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, but I might say the word “InTACT” because I will relapse.

We talked about desktop refreshes. Obviously we all know we have just had a desktop refresh in the Assembly. Was the Assembly offered the choice of whether or not to replace the screens and the keyboards as well as the main computing unit?

Mr Rattenbury: I will have to ask Ms Barrett for that level of detail.

Ms Barrett: No, we were not specifically consulted about only replacing part of the equipment, and all of it was replaced, as you know.

MS LE COUTEUR: I know. That is why I was asking InTACT and they said that agencies were given a choice. If you had been given a choice, I would have then gone on to ask why you chose that way. I guess the other issue is—

Ms Barrett: We did not raise it either. It was not something that we actively pursued. I suppose, because we lease all of the equipment on a four-yearly refresh cycle, we just assumed that it would all be replaced each four years. We have not specifically sought to change that.

MS LE COUTEUR: And you were not specifically given any options either?

Ms Barrett: No.

MS LE COUTEUR: Because the keyboards and the screens were all working. I particularly say that about the keyboards because I was one of the people who jumped up and down early enough and I was able to keep my old keyboard. Obviously we moved to European keyboards from US keyboards. Was the Assembly given any choice about that? It was the cause of considerable angst for at least a few days and—

MR HANSON: Surely we are a non-discriminatory employer here in the Assembly, based on—

Ms Barrett: No, we were a little taken by surprise at the change in keyboards. We tried to make sure that we could reinstate the older keyboards for people who really were having difficulty with the new ones or did not wish to use the new ones.

MS LE COUTEUR: And did InTACT offer to provide training for the staff as part of the change, or was that all organised by—

Ms Barrett: We did discuss training with InTACT. We did have quite a number of discussions with them about the rollout in conjunction with the executive. We discussed their training material—the information that they had available on the website and so on. You may be aware that we organised some training ourselves through CIT, and we are currently in the process of organising some further training, because a number of people said they would be more comfortable doing some training when they had had a little time to get used to the system so that they could actually learn what they did not know about it.

So we emailed people recently—this week—asking for more specific requirements from people so we can tailor the next lot of training to particular requirements. We have not used InTACT directly to provide the training, and we do not have training

facilities in house. We do not have a training room, for instance, or a particular training staff, but we are looking at a number of options for providing further training.

The library has purchased a number of books which they are going to make available to people. I asked the librarian yesterday if she could duplicate some of the purchases, because we suspect that people will want to take them away and use them for a while and we do not want there to be a bit of a run on them. We are doing what we can, but we do appreciate that it is a new system. I think it is inevitable that we have to move on, but we are looking at ways to try to make people more comfortable with the new system.

Mr Duncan: If I can just add, Ms Le Couteur, I have the library's copy of *Windows 7 for Dummies* in my possession at the moment, so I am training myself as well.

MR HARGREAVES: Is that an insinuation about the quality of one of my colleagues, Mr Duncan?

Mr Duncan: No, no. I have the book. I need the training.

MR HARGREAVES: Just thought I would clarify that.

THE CHAIR: Moving along, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: I just asked my question, Mr Chair.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Moving right along, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Mr Speaker, the amount of salaries, DOA and other resources that your office is entitled to above that of an opposition backbench MLA, what is that?

Mr Rattenbury: I actually do not know. I will have to ask Mr Duckworth.

Mr Duckworth: Thank you. Mr Chair, I cannot quote the specific figures, but I can certainly say that the amount that is allocated to the Speaker for staff salaries is set by the Chief Minister as part of the process where the Chief Minister exercises his or her powers under the LA(MS) Act. I will be happy to provide a copy of the current determination to the committee for its reference. Historically, the allocations the Chief Minister makes available were the result of a consultancy that was undertaken possibly five years ago in consultation with all the non-executive members' officers, and those allocations are still made on that basis. As I said, I will certainly provide a copy of the determinations to the committee.

MR HANSON: That would be useful, thank you.

Mr Duckworth: In relation to DOA, again, historically the Speaker's office does receive a slightly larger sum than other members. I will take on notice for the committee the exact—actually, no, I think I have brought the document with me. So a base member in this current financial year receives \$8,500. The Speaker's office receives \$8,900. So there is an additional \$400. Historically—and I think we are going back to possibly about the year 2000 when DOA was first put together—the

Speaker's office had since the very early days some, I think, additional Christmas card and postage entitlements and, when they were all blended and rolled into one, it just left the Speaker's office with a higher allocation.

MR HANSON: What constitutes a base member? Who are the base members and who is a non-base member?

Mr Duckworth: I can tell you the Leader of the Opposition receives \$11,700, the Parliamentary Convenor of the Greens receives \$9,800, the Speaker receives \$8,900 and all remaining members receive \$8,500.

MR HANSON: And moving back to the salaries combined, Mr Speaker, to your dual role—and we have spoken about this on occasion in the chamber—how can we satisfy ourselves that the additional entitlements that are provided to your office as the Speaker are used solely for the purpose of your role as Speaker and are not used to advocate and promote Greens' policies in the role that you have taken on as a Greens' party spokesperson?

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Hanson, you are going to be delighted to know that the Speaker's allocation for staff is actually less than that of a crossbench MLA.

MR HANSON: Yes. What is it compared to an opposition MLA?

Mr Rattenbury: I have no idea. It is not my job as Speaker; I am not the administrator of the staff entitlements. As the Speaker I know what my allocation is, and I operate within my staffing budget.

MR HANSON: All right. More broadly, have you received any representations, either you or any of your staff, with regard to the duality of your role? Have you received any anecdotal concerns from other parliaments as you have had conferences and so on about the roles that you have taken on as both the spokesperson for the Greens and Speaker?

Mr Rattenbury: The primary agitation has come from you, Mr Hanson, although I know Mr Hargreaves has mentioned concerns about it as well. That said, I have been quite open in discussing it at parliamentary conferences. We have recently had a session with parliamentarians from across the Asia-Pacific region through the Centre for Democratic Institutions at the ANU, and I actually raised the matter in that context as an example and indicated that it was a point of controversy with some members but it was also reflective of the fact that, in a smaller parliament, many members often take a number of different roles. I have been quite transparent in discussing it with other parliamentarians.

MR HANSON: Were there other parliaments that indicated that they have got a Speaker that takes on both roles?

Mr Rattenbury: Not in that context, no.

MR HANSON: But there would be other small parliaments, would there not?

Mr Rattenbury: Probably—well, yes, there are, obviously.

MR HANSON: Mr Duncan, in the course of your engagement with other parliaments in discussions, have you had this issue raised with you, for instance?

Mr Duncan: Mr Hanson, I have not had it raised formally, but there is only one Greens Speaker in the whole of the world, I think.

MS LE COUTEUR: In the universe we believe, yes.

MR HARGREAVES: Is there anything bigger than that?

MR HANSON: The Greens are aware of some alien planet, obviously, where it is different from earth. They seem to think there is a difference between parliaments—

MR HARGREAVES: How do you know there is not a little green man somewhere around there that is a Speaker?

MR HANSON: Maybe they take *Star Trek* a little too literally, Mr Speaker.

MR HARGREAVES: There has got to be a little green man somewhere.

Mr Duncan: Just to follow up, the Speaker has characterised it. When it is pointed out to people that the Speaker does have that dual role, there often are the sorts of questions that the Speaker has just mentioned. Like with the CDI presentation, there are some questions raised as to how that works. A lot of people are not used to hearing about that dual role.

MR HANSON: Are you aware of any other parliaments where a Speaker has taken on special roles as a spokesperson for various portfolios?

Mr Duncan: No, I do not think I am.

MR HANSON: Why is that? Why do other parliaments not take on that role? Why would other speakers not take on that role?

Mr Rattenbury: I think you would have to ask other parliaments that question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: In terms of convention in the Westminster system?

Mr Duncan: Mr Hanson, in terms of those other parliaments, they make their own decisions as to who they select as a Speaker and how they operate. In this legislature, because of the small numbers, this Speaker—in some senses his predecessors have undertaken a more proactive role than any other speakers in other legislatures. Speaker Berry, you would be aware, introduced private members' bills. He presented petitions for the first time. Speaker Cornwell actually sat on a committee. He was on a public accounts committee, he was on a select committee. I think that just reflects the nature of a small legislature. But, you are right, the normal pattern in any other legislature is that a Speaker does remove him or herself from the normal roles of a

member.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hargreaves, with a supplementary?

MR HARGREAVES: A supplementary to the Speaker or to the Clerk, whoever feels it is most appropriate to answer it: the allocations contained in this budget, do they reflect just the operations of the role of the Speaker as the presiding officer of the parliament, or do they represent anything else beyond that?

Mr Rattenbury: In what sense, Mr Hargreaves? I am not quite sure—

MR HARGREAVES: My reading of the budget papers indicates to me that the resources on allocation to the Speaker's office and subordinate agencies reflects your operation of your conduct, if you like, Mr Speaker, as a presiding officer of the parliament—as the minister of the parliament, if you will—and certainly does not reflect any engagement by yourself in any other activity beyond that. Am I correct?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson?

MR HANSON: Sorry, so you are saying, then, that you have not used any of those resources for anything other than your role as Speaker?

Mr Rattenbury: It is quite clear, Mr Hanson, that I have two roles. I have staff that assist me in both of those roles. But I am certainly not receiving any additional resources to operate as a Greens member of this Assembly.

MR HANSON: I must have misunderstood your answer to Mr Hargreaves's question then.

MR HARGREAVES: The answer was yes.

MR HANSON: I thought that you said that all of your resources were simply there appropriated for your role as Speaker.

Mr Rattenbury: That is not how I understood Mr Hargreaves's question. I understood Mr Hargreaves's question to be: are there any additional resources allocated through the budget to me as the Speaker or to my officers to propagate an agenda as a member of the Assembly? That is how I understood Mr Hargreaves's question, and I was seeking to indicate that there are certain allocations attached to the Assembly for the Speaker to perform the Speaker's role, and then I have my own allocation as an MLA, just as you do.

MR HARGREAVES: So Mr Speaker, you actually receive as a member of the Legislative Assembly—just as a member—an allocation for a discretionary office allowance?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I do.

MR HARGREAVES: And you also receive allocations of funds to prosecute the role of the presiding officer of this parliament?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: And both of those two allocations are quite separate?

Mr Rattenbury: As Mr Duckworth indicated, there is obviously a small additional allocation on discretionary office allowance and there are various other resources. A lot of the functions or the additional tasks associated with the performance of the Speaker's role are, in fact, performed through the Secretariat, for example, when we host a Speaker's citizenship evening. That is organised through the education office, although my office actually does the legwork in sending out the invitations on occasions and taking RSVPs. Those lines tend to get blurred, so they are the sorts of things where a lot of the Speaker's role is done quite separately to the Secretariat.

MR HARGREAVES: Do you find that, similarly perhaps to the executive, your role as the Speaker, in fact, gives you a lesser opportunity to communicate with your electorate in your role as Speaker, Mr Speaker?

Mr Rattenbury: Probably not. I am probably not as constrained as the executive. In fact, this has been a discussion in the admin and procedures committee where it has been identified that members of the executive—the ministers—do not have a discretionary office allowance, for example, which is how many of the regular MLAs—non-executive MLAs, I should say—use their discretionary office allowance to communicate with the electorate through the publication of materials through the use of the photocopiers which are then letterboxed, for example. The ministers actually do not have that opportunity. They have to seek funding through different forms. That is something the admin and procedures committee has actually had a look at, and at this point we have no clear resolution for that discrepancy or that difference.

MR HARGREAVES: I was wondering whether or not the office of Speaker in fact put you in a less advantageous position or a detrimental position, for example compared with the ordinary non-executive, because of the need for you to have your discretionary office allowance applied to your role as Speaker notwithstanding the rather paltry extra \$400 a year which, I have to say—we have spillage at most bars worth more than that.

Mr Rattenbury: I appreciate—

MR HANSON: That is your personal experience, I suppose.

MR HARGREAVES: You would not know, being the teetotaller that you are, but then again organic tea is your go; organic booze is not mine.

Mr Rattenbury: I appreciate the observations, Mr Hargreaves. I certainly have no complaints. I feel comfortable in the role and the ability to draw that delineation.

THE CHAIR: All right. Moving along—budget paper 4, page 2, I note the footnote to the employment chart. Employment goes from—

MR HARGREAVES: Is that Roman numeral ii, Mr Chairman?

THE CHAIR: There is no Roman numeral ii, I understand. There is; I do apologise. There is a Roman numeral ii. It is the standard 2, the FTE. The budget for the year was 42 but the outcome was 44. I note that note 1 says that this is because you have brought the finance function back in house. Is there a saving that has been made by bringing the finance function in house away from Shared Services?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. That is a saving that was identified by the corporate services area as an opportunity both in terms of cost and in terms of as a small agency actually finding it easier to operate by not working with Shared Services. The saving is approximately \$150,000 a year.

THE CHAIR: Is that the saving in the chart on page 3—savings estimated outcome \$144,000—or is that other savings that we have made under the budget technical adjustments?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry; just point me to that. Oh, yes. I will have Mr Duckworth clarify that.

Mr Duckworth: No, Mr Chair. The savings the Speaker referred to that we have identified as a result of pulling the function back are literally made in departmental appropriations, so we effectively reduced the amount that we are paying to Shared Services. I think we were paying in the vicinity of 500 and something thousand a year. We have been able to create two new positions, which is largely reflected in that increase in the FTE. We have also had to purchase an MYOB package and a bit of training, so there have been some implementation costs. Our estimate now is that our recurrent expenses will be \$150,000 less, and those funds are available, obviously, to devote to other areas of budget pressure that we confront.

THE CHAIR: So the two FTEs have gone into running these services that Shared Services used to deliver?

Mr Duckworth: Largely. It is actually about 1.6, and there are some other adjustments in the organisation, but these figures are not run at decimal point level so they get rounded up. In a sense, that is the main change, yes.

THE CHAIR: So given that it has been successful with the finance areas, is there consideration—with all due respect to the excellent staff we have from InTACT, are we going to look at the ITC side of the operation?

Mr Rattenbury: The admin and procedures committee actually considered this recently, in the last six months or so, as a result of questions from members—concerns about the provision of services. Certainly some members feel constrained by some of the services available for IT. The Mac users in the world, it would be fair to say, are frustrated. Those who like to use Skype, for example, are frustrated—and various other combinations, as you can imagine.

However, we did look at it in the admin and procedures committee. We had a

discussion with the head of InTACT, who came over and had a session with the admin and procedures committee. We also sought advice internally. We felt that at this point the potential savings or the potential financial outcome did not justify a change in position. We felt that we were too small to go it alone to some extent.

THE CHAIR: On page 3 I see in the changes to appropriation that there is a line “Savings Initiative”—16,000, 16,000, 17,000 and 17,000 over four years. What do you propose to save?

Mr Rattenbury: That is actually almost a pro forma saving that has come from Treasury as the central agency. That is entirely from electricity savings. The government has indicated that it will be negotiating a new contract for the whole of government. The Assembly gets its electricity through that whole-of-government electricity contract, so that is that saving—

THE CHAIR: So they are taking a dividend?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: And lower down, the savings, the \$144,000—what is included in that?

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Duckworth.

Mr Duckworth: Mr Chair, those savings are highlighted in more detail on page 4. I am not trying to move you through the budget papers more quickly than you want to, but it is basically savings due to capital works that we undertook on the building. The lift upgrade that most people who have worked in the building for more than a year or so will remember only too well came in at \$88,000 under original budgeted cost. And the \$52,000 for the building fabrication restoration was some funding that we had intended to spend this year repairing the red quarry tiles. The situation—Mr Kiermaier may want to elaborate—with those tiles is that the job has become more complicated and it is larger than we think. We have handed back the money we had for the project so that we can sit down and very carefully cost what it is really going to involve. We have foreshadowed with the Speaker that we will need to approach the Treasurer next year with a proposal to undertake that work. A key issue for us is that the length of time that work will require to be set aside is—the opportunity of the Assembly election and the chamber not being in use for a period really gives us a one-in-four-year opportunity to get in and get that done.

THE CHAIR: It is not an OH&S issue until then?

Mr Duckworth: No.

THE CHAIR: A final one for me, also on page 4, as you have moved over—capital upgrades are \$228,000 this year. What will that purchase for the Assembly?

Mr Kiermaier: If you turn to budget paper No 3, page 198, you will see all those documented there or listed. I am quite willing to take you through those or give any explanation you need.

Mr Rattenbury: For the committee's benefit, the Assembly receives a capital upgrade—a capital works program budget each year in this order. It is indexed, so it does increase a bit each year. This is a general ongoing maintenance budget to ensure that we maintain the quality of the building and do not drop behind in maintenance terms.

MR HARGREAVES: There was a massive noise in what looked like the lift well or bits stuck to it just before the lunch break. It sounded very much like a dentist's drill going through it. I just wondered whether there was a new member trying to come in a bit earlier than would be warranted. Could you tell me what was going on with that boring sound into the cement?

Mr Kiermaier: I am not too sure what you are referring to—

MR HARGREAVES: Everybody else was.

Mr Kiermaier: but at the moment we are having a lot of work done on fire penetrations in the cavities in the seating, fixing up those penetrations that could—

MR HARGREAVES: Penetrating through cement, it would appear—

Mr Rattenbury: The cavities, the link to the dentist.

MR HARGREAVES: And just doing a little bit of filling perhaps.

THE CHAIR: If there are any more questions—Ms Hunter, more questions? If not, we will push on to the Auditor-General.

MS HUNTER: Yes. I just had a quick one, which was about the asset revaluation—budget paper 4. It is on page 6 and also page 9. It is around the property, plant and equipment. It was revalued as a result of an audit, and the explanation for change is listed as heritage and community assets. Could you please give some details about what those assets are. Is it the art collection?

Mr Duckworth: Yes, it is; spot on. All our heritage and community assets are effectively our art collection. We have them valued just prior to 30 June every year so that that value can be reflected in our financial statements. Last year the valuation placed on that art collection increased significantly, so when we come to this year's budget papers we have to flow through that revaluation. That is precisely what that revaluation was.

MS HUNTER: What is the value of the art collection?

Mr Duckworth: I have to take that particular question on notice, but I will certainly provide that to you.

MS HUNTER: Thank you.

MS LE COUTEUR: My question is about the Secretariat's involvement or otherwise in the government's one-office building project. One of the things that have been said

to us is that one of the reasons for the proposal is linkage into the Legislative Assembly. I understand that there would be an overpass and a basement linkage. Have you been involved in discussions as to how the Assembly would link and what it could link to?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. I am just trying to think, Ms Le Couteur. We have been involved in some discussions, but I would have to say at a very preliminary stage. We certainly raised concerns with the government about access to the Assembly building, during the construction phase in particular. Is there anything else we should add, Mr Kiermaier?

Mr Kiermaier: Not really. We had a briefing with the executives from Land and Property Services in February running through the proposal as it was then. It was stressed that it had not been agreed to and cabinet had not looked at it yet. They were just running through the proposed building diagrams. At the meeting they certainly undertook that we, as in the Secretariat, would be involved in any future development of that building—in liaison, yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: And you were not asked for any advice as to what would be reasonable distances for any government building from the Assembly if there were ministers there?

Mr Kiermaier: I do not think so, no. It was just a preliminary briefing on the proposal.

Mr Duncan: If I could just add to that, I do remember the discussion that if the ministers are to go to the new building there was an issue about how long the division bells would ring for and things like that. We did query that if the ministers did move away from this building and moved over into any possible new building that—where they would be. Obviously, for the purposes of maintaining this building and being relatively close for the purposes of division, they would have to be on this side. The building is quite large, as you know, and it goes right round to Constitution Avenue. We were told that it was too early at this stage to even know where the ministers were going in that building. As I said, it was a very early sort of stage discussion.

MS LE COUTEUR: Did you give any advice as to what the acceptable time would be for division bells? I remember from a parliamentary conference that apparently in Westminster they have 10 minutes for their divisions.

MR HARGREAVES: That is because they are across the road and down the street. They have to catch a bus.

MR COE: They have non-voting days as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes. They go home of an evening and they come back from home.

MR HANSON: They also have a Speaker who resigns from their party.

THE CHAIR: Members, we have a lot to get through.

Mr Duncan: We did not give any specific advice, but we certainly did point out to them that it would be desirable for them to be located close to the chamber to assist in the smooth running of the Assembly. Obviously if it is going to take 10 minutes to conduct every division, that is going to significantly impact on the sittings of the Assembly.

Mr Rattenbury: It is worth noting, of course, that the federal parliament has a four-minute division, and we know the size of that building. Ministers may just have to be quicker.

MR COE: How does it work in Melbourne? I understand the ministers in Melbourne or in Victoria are now located in department buildings as opposed to all being in the parliament.

Mr Duncan: Mr Coe, I was aware that—all ministers in other jurisdictions have two sets of offices. They have an office in parliament house and they have an office. The only jurisdictions that have the offices in the same building, I think, are ACT and the federal parliament. As I understand it, there is still—unless it has changed recently.

MR HARGREAVES: They have got two in the territory.

Mr Duncan: That is right; they do. But in Victoria—I know that it is quite cramped accommodation in Victoria, but unless something has changed since I have been there they would have some minimal presence within the parliament office and larger ministerial offices in the Melbourne CBD.

THE CHAIR: We need to move on. Mr Hargreaves, another question? Mr Hanson? Mr Coe?

MR COE: Continuing the line of questioning I have asked some of the ministers about concerning privacy issues: with regard to the electronic access to the building and the internal doors, as well as the cameras in operation, who has access to all that data?

Mr Kiermaier: In terms of the CCTV data, that only stays on the system for about 30 days, and then it is automatically wiped. No outside organisational member as such has access to the CCTV. The only people that would have access to it would be me or anybody I direct—for instance, an attendant to go and view some footage had we suspected there was some sort of event to look at. But there is certainly no routine looking at CCTV coverage.

MR COE: What about entry and exit logs, and internal access?

Mr Kiermaier: The same would apply. I am not too sure how long we retain the logs. It is all electronic. I could give you the information as to how long they are actually kept. Again, they are not looked at as a matter of course and nobody has access to them.

MR COE: Is that information stored on a line server somewhere or is it—

Mr Kiermaier: It is stored here in the Assembly.

MR COE: On a line server or on the broader system?

Mr Kiermaier: No; the security system is independent of the InTACT system here. Our security system is stand-alone.

MR COE: You are the only person who has access to that?

Mr Kiermaier: The Secretariat staff, yes.

MR COE: Who in the Secretariat staff?

Mr Kiermaier: Myself and anybody who has access, who has the passwords, to the system.

Mr Duckworth: Mr Chair, I am sorry to interrupt you. I have an answer to a question that just moments ago I took on notice from Ms Hunter. I think it might be quicker to give it now. The valuation of our art collection at 30 June last year was \$647,690.91. Do not ask me about the 91c. It might be the listening tree, perhaps—I am not sure. The value of the library collection, which is also classed as a heritage community asset, was valued at \$255,499.02.

MR HARGREAVES: Mr Chairman, on the art collection, I noticed that there were a couple of really wrecked footballs on the wall up there for quite a long time. I was wondering, therefore, if that means that the variety of artworks around the precinct is not limited to paintings and photographs. Quite clearly, there is an artistic expression. I was wondering whether the art committee would be interested in a guitar signed by Eric Clapton, which would, I think, feature very nicely in the foyer of the public entrance.

THE CHAIR: Actually, it does prompt a question on the art. In other jurisdictions often the Prime Minister, the Premier, the Chief Minister and, indeed, Speakers in many parliaments have official portraits done. We, of course, have our lovely black-and-white photographs in the corridor. Following the death of Trevor Kaine, is it time, or is it appropriate, that we consider better honouring those that hold these positions in our parliament?

Mr Rattenbury: Actually, it is the first time it has been raised, Mr Smyth, but I am happy to look into that and have a further discussion. The admin and procedures committee, I think, would be the best forum. Certainly, in terms of the art committee, we have an annual acquisitions budget. It is \$20,000 a year. We have actually endeavoured recently to promote the profile of the art collection a little. You may have noticed that in this corridor outside the committee room the new artworks are going up just to give them—

THE CHAIR: And they are not footballs.

Mr Rattenbury: They are not footballs. They are diverse works, and we are trying to

give them a bit more public exposure. We also, this year, for the first time, invited members of the public to come for an art evening, and that was quite popular. We had, I think, 20 people come. Certainly, those that came had a very enjoyable time. We are just endeavouring to share that art collection with the community a little more than we perhaps historically have.

THE CHAIR: It was just a thought. On the passing of Mr Kaine, I thought a bit about it.

Mr Rattenbury: Thank you. I will look into that and give it some thought.

THE CHAIR: It is important that they are—

MS HUNTER: Is there a reason why Mr Seselja's portrait, a black-and-white portrait, has disappeared?

MR HARGREAVES: Yes; it was stolen on the treasure hunt from the ANU.

MR HANSON: He is soon to be Chief Minister, I would think.

THE CHAIR: Mr Clerk, over to you.

Mr Duncan: You might have noticed that all the other portraits have got a signature on them. In the course of updating the boards at the front of the Assembly building on the departure of Mr Stanhope, we took the opportunity to take the board off and take it up to Mr Seselja. I understand that if it is not back already it will be back very soon, with a signature underneath.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Speaker, to you and your officers. There is a time frame of five working days for questions taken on notice, so if we could have those quickly. Members, as you contemplate what you have heard today, if you want to put further questions on notice you have four working days in which to do so.

Short adjournment.

Appearances:

Auditor-General's Office

Sheville, Mr Bernie, Acting Auditor-General

Nicholas, Mr Rod, Director, Performance Audits and Corporate Services

Prentice, Mr Malcolm, Acting Director, Financial Audit

THE CHAIR: We will recommence. We now call before us the Auditor-General of the ACT for this session of the public hearing for estimates. I need to bring to your attention the yellow privilege card on the table before you and ask: have you read the card and do you understand the implications of that card?

Mr Sheville: Yes.

THE CHAIR: That is a great thing. I also need to tell you that we will be not only transcribing this through Hansard but broadcasting and webstreaming this afternoon. And if you really want to watch yourselves later on and see how you have performed, you will be able to do so because Committees on Demand is being trialled in these hearings. Are you happy to proceed?

Mr Sheville: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We have got a great deal of ground to get through so I would ask members to keep their questions relevant and, if the answers could be concise and directly relevant to the subject matter, that would be a good thing. Mr Auditor-General, would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Sheville: Yes, I would. Our 2011-12 budget submission is fairly similar to previous submissions that we have had in previous years. Most of our funding comes from financial audit fees and from appropriation. The appropriation is used to fund our performance audit program, deal with disclosures and representations, do our annual reports and also do our report on our financial audit program, amongst some other things as well. While we do have an appropriation of \$2.2 million out of the \$5.7 million funding income that we get, it is used not just for performance audits but for a range of things.

The office's budget and level of resourcing have received some attention in recent years. Our view has been, in the current year's budget, that we would have a budget that basically assumed no real change to our operations. I am aware that the PAC would like us to do more performance audits and would like us to be resourced accordingly. But that is really a matter for the government of the day and the Treasurer to decide.

I would point out that the performance audit done of the office the year before last by Bob Sendt indicated that our performance audit function is viable, but only just viable. The size of our PA program, which is about six audits a year, does not really enable you to do a series of audits based on particular themes. For example, you might want to have as a theme governance, risk management, environmental protection or something along those lines. Also, it becomes difficult for a small group to become

specialised in actual areas of government activity.

The small size of the PA team, which is only funded for, say, around eight or nine people, means that it will continue to be disrupted by staff departures. If we lose staff, it has a disproportionate effect in a small group.

As I said before, this budget submission will not address any of those issues that we have as an office, but we do believe that we provide good value for money with the money that we have. If we were one day to receive more money, the taxpayer would quite rightly expect that we would provide good value for that money as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Auditor-General. I noticed on page 22, in the changes to appropriation chart, that this year you are budgeted to receive \$2.215 million—last year it was \$2.165 million—which represents an increase of about 2.3 per cent, which is below CPI, at the government’s own forecast of three per cent, or WPI, at the government’s own forecast of 3½ per cent. Given that in real terms the budget is now going backwards, what service cuts will we expect from this lack of funding?

Mr Sheville: We believe that the funding that is reflected in here will not result in a change in the service that we provide. We have not changed our target of six performance audit reports a year, importantly. So, yes, the funding of three per cent is minimal but we believe that we will still deliver the six performance audit reports from that funding. Also, our financial audit program is not subject to appropriation funding. We can charge money for the costs of delivering that, so it will not have the same impact.

THE CHAIR: How many performance audits have you done, say, in the last three financial years?

Mr Sheville: In the last three financial years? The last year—

Mr Nicholas: We have tabled seven performance audits this year.

THE CHAIR: In this financial year so far?

Mr Nicholas: This financial year so far. That will be the number we table this financial year. We had a target of six and we have managed seven. I think in the last two years there have been six and eight reports each.

THE CHAIR: So in real terms the number of performance audits that you are able to do inside the budget is decreasing?

Mr Nicholas: That is partly a factor of the resources that we have available to us. Unfortunately, our performance audit team is also decreasing at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Are there any risks or dangers on the horizon for the effectiveness of the organisation?

Mr Sheville: I think the major risk, and the issue that worries me most, over the next two to three years is staff turnover and retaining capacity to perform our audits well.

Our staff turnover for the current year is expected to be about 26 per cent, which is too high, as people are accepting jobs in the public and private sectors, often for more money than we were paying them. Our performance audit group has had a 30 per cent staff turnover rate. When you only have, say, seven or eight people in there, it has a significant impact on our operations and it results in delays in performance audits. If a senior auditor leaves then obviously new people have to be put into that particular audit to progress it and that often leads to delays in other audits that we have in train.

THE CHAIR: Often staff turnover is a result of unhappiness with the workplace or the organisation. Is there anything to indicate that it is not the case?

Mr Sheville: No. Our staff survey, pleasingly, has stayed very high, which suggests that it is the outside opportunities that are the driving factor. Eighty-one per cent of staff indicated they are satisfied with their job in the survey that we did in January and February this year, and 89 per cent said they were proud to work at the audit office. Yet despite that, 15 per cent of our staff plan to leave in the next 12 months and 27 per cent of them—and that is an additional 27 per cent—want to leave in the next two to three years. So that means about 40 per cent of our present staff do not expect to be here three years from now.

THE CHAIR: In your priorities on page 21, dot point 4, it makes the point that you need to continue to respond to representations and public interest disclosures in a timely and effective manner. How many representations have you had from the public, what were they about and how did you respond; and how many public interest disclosures did you receive, what were they about and how did you respond?

Mr Sheville: We received 17 representations in 2010-11. There is not a theme, if you like, in the types of representations we have received. One was on the north Weston pond, which resulted in a performance audit. We have had others relating to aspects of government services or concerns about accountability or probity.

Not all of them require a lot of work on our part. Sometimes we ask the government departments to provide us with information about a particular issue and the government department will tell us what they are doing to address that particular matter. Sometimes we do not conduct a performance audit on that matter specifically, but we factor it into our program and our thinking for other audits that we might be thinking of in that particular area. So not every representation results in, if you like, a detailed investigation on our part. But we received 17 of them in the last 12 months.

Mr Nicholas: None of those representations have been public interest disclosures.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Hunter?

MS HUNTER: Thank you, chair. When do you expect to have an Auditor-General in place? How is the recruitment for that position going?

Mr Sheville: The recruitment for the Auditor-General is controlled by the Chief Minister's Department, so we do not have direct control over that particular process. My understanding, from discussions with representatives of that department, is that we are looking at weeks, not months and months.

MS HUNTER: On page 21 of budget paper 4 it states that you are considering the impact of any changes to the Auditor-General Act resulting from the public accounts committee inquiry. Could you elaborate on what changes in particular are being considered which are likely to be put forward and when this might happen.

Mr Sheville: The PAC undertook an inquiry into the Auditor-General Act. At this stage there has not been a government response, so at this stage we do not know what the outcome of that inquiry would be. With respect to our view about the recommendations made by the committee, we saw them as quite positive. We thought that the capacity to be able to follow the money, if you like—not be kept at the gate of the government department but actually go outside the government agency and have a look at the service providers when necessary—would be useful.

The draft program that we are looking at for the current year includes two audits that I am aware of that would benefit from having such a power. The provision of policing services is one, for example. We would like to be able to go beyond the government department and have a look at how well those services are being provided. You could argue that you would like to be able to undertake a similar type of exercise if you wanted to look at Calvary, for example. We have had access to Calvary but it is not a right of access. It is not provided for in the legislation. So to be able to look at those sorts of things would be very useful for us.

For our jurisdiction, it has perhaps not been as great as in some of the other jurisdictions. Other auditors-general have told me that it is not so much that they feel concerned about expanding their powers but that, with more and more services being provided by non-government organisations—critical government services—they feel there is an erosion of their capacity to keep the government of the day accountable for the provision of services. So they are liking the idea of being able to go beyond the government's spending of the money or just looking at government actions to looking at the NGOs.

Mr Nicholas: There were 41 recommendations out of the PAC's report and we are quite happy to see those. A lot of them go towards strengthening the role of the Auditor-General as such—about the appointment, the review processes, the funding for the audit office. Some of those we are obviously aware of but they do not necessarily impact directly on our services at the moment.

The key one, as Mr Sheville has mentioned, is the potential to go beyond the current contracting arrangements that typically we stop at, with services provided by external parties, third parties. We are aware that that has potential for us. We are looking at the range of activities that we have in mind for some of our audits. There are two or three audits in our potential program that would benefit from that view. Some audits of the Health Directorate or the Community Services Directorate certainly would benefit from that additional authority. So that is more or less where we are directing our attention at the moment.

Mr Sheville: From recollection as to what was in the inquiry into the Auditor-General Act, a greater role was also seen for the PAC in the appointment processes for the Auditor-General, a greater role for the PAC in the setting of the office's budget. So

those sorts of things we would see as positive.

THE CHAIR: Ms Le Couteur and then Mr Hargreaves.

MS LE COUTEUR: I want to go back to the point that you mentioned earlier about 26 to 30 per cent staff turnover. Have you actually done any comparative work on the difference in wages between your office and either the commonwealth or private sector? That seems like a rate of staff turnover that it would be very hard to function with.

Mr Sheville: Yes. I would say that when we have compared our turnover, I do not think the ACT audit office is the lone ranger. It depends on which jurisdiction you look at but you will get quite different results. I think in Tasmania they have quite a low staff turnover. I think the commonwealth's turnover is relatively high. It is difficult to come up with what is an appropriate level of turnover just by looking at what is happening in other jurisdictions because it very much depends on the localised factors, it seems.

MS LE COUTEUR: Auditors are into moving office jobs, are they, fairly often? We have asked this question of a number of departments over the past fortnight. Generally they have all been pleased if it is below 10 per cent. They regard sort of 10 per cent as having a problem. No-one would have thought that 26 per cent was related to anything reasonable.

Mr Nicholas: It does not take much to—if one person leaves our organisation, we have only got 30 to 35 people in the office. One person is a reasonable percentage as it is; so we are looking at about three per cent there. What we are finding, I guess, is—one of the potential reasons is not so much the dollars that are available in our office but the opportunity that is available as well. We are a small organisation. There is less opportunity for advancement up through the ranks as some areas might be able to offer in larger businesses and larger departments. We are seeing a number of people that are choosing to leave the audit profession, if you like. They are moving on. They have had their time, gained their experience and are moving into financial areas or other management corporate areas.

It is pretty hard for us to pinpoint exactly what the reasons are, but the impact is fairly significant on us. We are trying to deal with that at the moment. We have a recruitment process underway this weekend. It starts by looking for some more performance auditors. We will see how we go and take it as it comes.

Mr Sheville: Yes. If you look at the people who have left in the last 12 months, they are often at that senior auditor level. In many cases they have been at the office for maybe two to three years, just acquired their CPA or done their qualification. Then the opportunities are there. That is going to continue to be a challenge for us, to bring people into the office and groom them and then hopefully they end up somewhere in the ACT government so we benefit from the skills they bring. But often the demand is in both.

We have run, I think, two recruitment rounds in our financial audit area and we are about to do another. What we are finding is that the response has probably been as

poor as I have seen it in the past 10 years. There will be a lot of applications but very few suitable ones for our particular office. This is the first year when we have had to engage two people from the private sector from the big four firms to assist us in completing this year's program for the entire financial audit program. I cannot recall having to do that before.

So the market out there is fairly tight. I think the ANAO is regularly advertising. Just recently, I understand, they advertised for 12 performance auditors. Their advertising, if they are successful, would replace our entire division and more. It is not a market that you can easily get into at this particular stage. Of course, it makes the timing of recruitment problematic because from an external perspective, people are more likely to see the ANAO as perhaps providing more; it is a larger organisation; it is the commonwealth; it is a better stepping stone. So they may tend to go in that direction.

Mr Prentice: Could I just add that we do benchmark our salaries against the ANAO as our biggest competitor in Canberra—against their certified agreement. Where we can, we try and keep pace with them so that we are not falling behind. But they are a big drain on audit resources in this town. Most of our chartered accounting colleagues in the big four firms are also experiencing a similar level of turnover as we are at the same sort of level. It is the people with three to five years of experience who, for one reason or another, take up finance officer jobs, budget officer jobs, in mainly commonwealth agencies at the moment. There is a very big demand for people with an accounting background.

MR HANSON: Rules me out.

MS LE COUTEUR: As you know, there has been the big reorganisation with the Hawke review—or there will be a big reorganisation. What impact is that going to have on your financial auditing program?

Mr Sheville: The short-term financial impact was, I guess, that we were caught a little by surprise by the admin orders that came out in May. We were not aware that any of that was going to occur before 1 July. That being said, we believe we can cope with that and we are working with the agencies to find out exactly what are the impacts on our reporting program. At this stage, I am still fairly confident that we will achieve the delivery of the statutory reports or the audit reports on agencies' financial statements in accordance with the timetables that we have.

MS LE COUTEUR: Will this mean that you will have to increase your charges because you will be doing more work because you are going to be moving people's figures from one organisation to another?

Mr Prentice: At the moment our discussions with Treasury are that there will be the two new directorates created, Economic Development and Environment and Sustainable Development. The sustainable development one is virtually ACTPLA and DECCEW added together. They still need to be audited individually up to 16 May; so we do not see a whole lot more work in auditing the new directorate because we have to audit the two subparts of it already anyway. The extra six weeks worth of transactions are probably not going to be all that difficult and resource-intensive to audit. Similarly, with Economic Development, because it brings together LAPS and a

few other functions, we are going to have to audit the old functions anyway up to 16 May; so we do not anticipate for this year that it will create too much extra work for us.

MS LE COUTEUR: And so not—

THE CHAIR: Sorry; just to clarify, do not the existing departments run until 30 June and then the new directorates start on 1 July?

Mr Sheville: No; the administrative orders took effect on about—

Mr Nicholas: 16 May.

Mr Sheville: 16 May.

Mr Prentice: 16 May. What is going to happen with the agencies such as ACT Health, which effectively does not gain or lose any functions, is that the name of the organisation will change to the Health Directorate but it will report for a 12-month period. There will not be a set of accounts for ACT Health to the 16th and then the Health Directorate takes over from the 17th. It has been decided that it is just easier and actually allowable that it continues to report for the entire financial year. It is only where entities disappear, like ACTPLA and DECCEW, that you have to do two lots of reporting—one for the old and one for the new.

MS LE COUTEUR: So that is going to mean that if anyone is trying to do comparisons with previous years it will be very hard?

Mr Prentice: Yes. Yes, that is—

MS LE COUTEUR: Well, almost impossible?

Mr Prentice: That is where it is going to be difficult because you will have—for the new directorates that start off from 17 May, the only thing that will be in their financial statements will be actuals. There will not be any budget figures and there will not be any comparatives. For the entities that end on 16 May, you will be comparing an annual budget with 46 weeks effectively of actuals and a whole year of comparatives. So there will be a bit of mucking around with variance explanations and management discussion and analysis reports.

Mr Sheville: Yes. One of the difficulties—I might add, too, that that is one of the issues with admin restructures that occur in the middle of the year. The FMA—

THE CHAIR: Yes, most inconsiderate.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes.

Mr Sheville: is actually set up so that you can compare your actual results for the year to your budget—your plan for the year. When you have an admin restructure three-quarters of the way or part way through the year, many of your variance explanations become attributable to the admin restructure rather than to such underlying reasons for

these things. So it can diminish, I think, the capacity for any agency to be held accountable for meeting its budget, because it becomes unclear. The budget becomes less meaningful in circumstances where your budget is a 12-month budget and you are only comparing your actual or including your actual for part of the year.

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely. Am I correct that you also have a role in auditing the accountability indicators?

Mr Sheville: Yes, we do.

MS LE COUTEUR: And so we are going to have exactly the same problem with those?

Mr Sheville: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: They will become somewhat meaningless?

Mr Sheville: Well—

MS LE COUTEUR: Or will you try and recombine them somehow so that they do get full-year indicators for things?

Mr Prentice: I believe instruments are going to be processed under the Financial Management Act to have the performance indicators from the old entities reported by the new directorates so that you will be able to see the whole year picture.

MS LE COUTEUR: Good.

Mr Sheville: Where we can influence reporting and suggestions in that direction to try and facilitate like-with-like reporting, particularly budget to actual, we will try as far as we can to achieve that. But whether we can or not in all instances—for example, with those new entities that are only going to be reporting for six weeks, there will be no budget for that.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hargreaves and Mr Hanson.

MR HARGREAVES: Thanks very much, Mr Chair. I refer to budget paper 4, page 22. This is probably a question for Mr Prentice, I would expect. The 2011-12 budget for technical adjustments, revised indexation parameters, grows by \$4,000, which is nothing. Then it takes a massive leap to \$42,000 in 2014-15. That is a bit of an unusual jump. Can you tell me what it is? How does the arithmetic work?

Mr Sheville: Are you talking about the jump from the 4 to the 42?

MR HARGREAVES: Yes.

Mr Sheville: Mal, do you know much on that?

Mr Prentice: No; I am sorry. I do not have the answer to that one; so—

MR HARGREAVES: Take it on notice then. That is fine.

Mr Sheville: We will take that one on notice.

MR HARGREAVES: Yes; it is just that everything seems to be ticking along pretty consistently with everything else. All of a sudden, whack, up she goes. Because the arithmetic works, I do not know whether it is an error and, therefore, the formula has produced the balance figure or whether there is actually something in there that you are not aware of. So on notice is fine, thanks, guys.

THE CHAIR: All right. Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Thank you. The replacement of the position of Auditor-General that you are currently acting in—

Mr Sheville: That is right.

MR HANSON: When will that be finalised—are you aware? Who is actually responsible for that process? Is that the Assembly?

MR HARGREAVES: We asked that one.

MS LE COUTEUR: We have already asked that.

MR HANSON: You asked that one?

MR HARGREAVES: Yes.

MR HANSON: My apologies.

MR HARGREAVES: He has referred us to the Chief Minister's Department.

MR HANSON: So the Chief Minister—

MS LE COUTEUR: Chief Minister.

MR HARGREAVES: And it should be in weeks, not months.

MR HANSON: Right. I missed that; my apologies.

THE CHAIR: All right. Further questions, members?

MS LE COUTEUR: We get to re-ask that on Monday.

Mr Sheville: By “weeks”—it could be eight weeks or 10 weeks, but I am not talking eight, nine or 10 months.

MR HARGREAVES: Short gestation period.

THE CHAIR: All right. Any further questions for the Auditor-General's Office? As

there do not appear to be any further questions, Mr Sheville, thank you to you and your colleagues for attending this afternoon this session of the estimates committee. We remind you that for any questions that you took on notice, you have five working days in which to answer. Members, if you have further questions to be placed on notice, they should be placed within four working days. That calls this part of the afternoon to a halt and we will resume at 3.15 with the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation.

Mr Sheville: Thank you.

Mr Nicholas: Thank you.

Meeting adjourned from 2.45 to 3.13 pm.

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Education and Training and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation

Economic Development Directorate

Shepherd, Ms Simonne, General Manager, Australian Capital Tourism

Dawes, Mr David, Director-General

O'Leary, Mr Shane, Director, Sport and Recreation Services

Guthrie, Mr Neale, Group General Manager, Territory Venues and Events

Clarke, Ms Liz, General Manager, Exhibition Park in Canberra

Thomson, Mr Ian, Chief Operating Officer

THE CHAIR: Minister and officers, welcome to the final hearing this week of the public hearings for estimates for the 2011-12 budget. We will be looking at the Economic Development Directorate—output 1.3, tourism venues and events, and output 1.4, sport and recreation, as well as the Exhibition Park Corporation. Can I draw your attention to the yellow card on the table in front of you, which outlines the privileges of the Assembly, and ask: have you read the statement and do you understand the implications therein?

Mr Barr: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Can I also remind witnesses that the proceedings are being recorded by Hansard for transcription purposes, as well as being webstreamed, broadcast live and trialled on Committees on Demand—so you can watch yourself later this weekend in case you miss anything. Are you happy to proceed?

Mr Barr: Thank you, Mr Chair.

THE CHAIR: That is very kind. Minister, would you like to make a short opening statement?

Mr Barr: I will, thank you, Mr Chair. It is a delight to appear in this portfolio area. I am very pleased that the portfolio title of Tourism, Sport and Recreation remains and remains with me. It is an area of great interest and passion for me and one that I am delighted to have the opportunity to continue to work in. The observations I would make in relation to tourism in the ACT in 2010—which cover, obviously, part of what we will talk about today, I presume, as well as looking forward—are of a strong and growing tourism sector that has ticked over \$1.5 billion in contributions to the local economy and employs more than 13,000 Canberrans. The most recent data that has come out showed that we had our strongest tourism year in the last 12 months since the Sydney Olympics. I think it is a very encouraging time. As we lead up to the city's centenary, the increased opportunities in terms of events and marketing that flow from that, I think, augur well for the future of tourism and events in the capital. Having said that, Mr Chair, I look forward to taking the committee's questions this afternoon.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Members, given there is about an hour and three-

quarters, we might spend, say, from now till just after four on tourism and from just after four till approximately five on sport and rec.

Mr Barr: And Exhibition Park.

THE CHAIR: And Exhibition Park—a couple of minutes on Exhibition Park at the end of it.

Mr Barr: Just a couple of minutes?

THE CHAIR: I am happy to stay. Could we extend till about 5.30, then?

Mr Barr: Unfortunately, I am attending the public education awards, so I have a prior commitment.

THE CHAIR: There you go, minister. On page 124 of budget paper 4 are the two output classes we are discussing. I see that we now have tourism venues and events, which is very similar to what there was in 2001 when we had CTEC, which was a fine organisation. This is a standard question we ask, and in some ways it is annoying that one has to ask: what is the breakdown between tourism venues and events? It is a question we ask every year. Can we have some comparisons? How much is in this year's budget and how does it compare to last year's budget?

Mr Barr: I understand that. I was going to seek the committee's guidance in relation to perhaps making a recommendation on how output classes should be presented in the new directorate.

THE CHAIR: I think we have made recommendations previously.

Mr Barr: I note your opening comments in relation to this about the alignment of tourism and events. There were a number of recommendations out of Loxton and Hawke that have been picked up in the establishment of this directorate and the alignment of these functions. I am very happy to separate the tourism element from the events element, but they will be working together, obviously, more closely. So it is open to the committee to consider and make recommendations in relation to whether the outputs should be presented together or separately. I do not have a problem either way. I anticipated that you would ask this question and I believe that I can give that information. I could read it all out, or would you just prefer a written reconciliation?

THE CHAIR: If we could have just the six figures that would be nice. Tourism in 2010-11 and 2011-12?

Mr Barr: Tourism—total GPO in 2010-11, noting the following impacts, was \$15.897 million in 2010-11, increasing to \$17.702 million in 2011-12. There are ins and outs in relation to that, as you would anticipate. The outs relate to the transfer of the Science Festival post-box amount of \$246,000 that we have just on-passed that sits in the business area and an efficiency dividend of \$278,000. On the positive side: the airline access initiative, \$100,000; a \$500,000 boost to marketing related to the centenary initiative; a million dollar boost in relation to the blockbuster fund; a

\$440,000 boost in relation to the Canberra Convention Bureau budget—again, we just on-passed that—and then \$983,000 for Commonwealth Park. Those balance out to an increase, noting that in the forwards the Commonwealth Park figure is a one-off, so it would not be represented in 2012-13. So the picture is of an increase in the tourism budget, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: All right. Venues?

Mr Barr: Venues we will come to when we get to venues later in the hearings.

THE CHAIR: So how do we get to venues later in the hearings?

Mr Barr: Because TVE appear as a separate—it is different. Mr Guthrie will appear later on, it is my understanding, as part of this hearing.

THE CHAIR: The output class is described as tourism venues and events. I am quite happy to do it as a lump.

Mr Barr: Sure. When Mr Guthrie is here, I can get that information. But we would be in the remainder, presumably.

MR RATTENBURY: He is here, minister.

Mr Barr: He is? Mr Guthrie, are you in a position now to—

THE CHAIR: Mr Guthrie, is venues and events a single item, or is it venues and events?

Mr Barr: Mr Guthrie runs territory venues and events.

THE CHAIR: Okay, venues and events. What is your funding in 2010-11 and what is it in 2011-12?

Mr Guthrie: I will quickly consult my notes and I will find it. Actually, it is a reasonably complicated answer. Can I take it on notice, because we have got a combination of own-source revenues and appropriation?

THE CHAIR: Surely you have got a GPO figure for the current year and the coming year?

Mr Guthrie: I do; I have just got to find it in my notes.

THE CHAIR: Okay. That would be good.

Mr Barr: While Mr Guthrie is finding that figure, we could perhaps move on to a further question.

THE CHAIR: Yes, sure. The Tourism Industry Council—I notice they got \$50,000 this year, but there is nothing in the coming year. Why is that? What support do we give the Tourism Industry Council?

Mr Barr: That was, I believe, a one-off payment for last year. There are still negotiations ongoing in relation to the next financial year. They will have an allocation out of the total GPO for tourism.

THE CHAIR: So what was the total they got in this current year?

Mr Barr: Fifty.

THE CHAIR: Just the 50?

Mr Barr: Yes.

Ms Shepherd: No, I believe it was 50,000 for one component of the agreement and 20,000, which I will have to check. It was 20,000 or 25,000—but I am pretty sure it was 20,000 for the business accreditation program.

THE CHAIR: And we are still negotiating as to what they might receive in the coming year?

Ms Shepherd: We are still negotiating the program. Basically, it was an outputs-based agreement. The Tourism Industry Council is delivering a number of projects, which have been both with the commonwealth, through a TQUAL grant, as well as ACT tourism. They are mainly industry development-type activities. I think, Mr Smyth, you attended the symposium that was one of the outputs from our agreement. Similar to that, we are just negotiating with TIC this year to put together that contract of activity. I would anticipate it would be a similar amount of money.

THE CHAIR: All right. On page 119—while we wait for Mr Guthrie—I notice that we are now delivering a range of tactical tourism marketing campaigns. The word “tactical” has crept into a number of the priorities across a number of the departments. What does that mean in real terms?

Ms Shepherd: “Tactical”, I guess, means it is not just pure brand activity. It contains a number of retail elements, such as packages, price points and specific calls to action. It is not just about awareness; it is a specific call to action for people to do something within a defined period. So the “wrapped in winter” campaign that you would be aware we launched recently is a good example of that.

THE CHAIR: I am just intrigued by the use of the word “tactical”. Mr Guthrie, have we got the GPO figures?

Mr Guthrie: The GPO figure for budget year 2011-12 is \$1.999 million for TV.

THE CHAIR: And the 2010-11 year?

Mr Guthrie: The 2010-11 year is \$2.30 million.

THE CHAIR: So it has gone down \$31,000?

Mr Guthrie: That is correct.

THE CHAIR: Okay. That does not add up to the GPO. The GPO for 2011-12 combined—

Mr Thomson: It also includes the events money which transferred from the Chief Minister's Department, which is about \$1.945 million in the current year.

THE CHAIR: I am sorry; how much?

Mr Thomson: \$1.945 or thereabouts. I am chasing the numbers from last year, which came from a number of spots, but it is a marginal increase, I have been informed. I would have to get you the 2010-11 number.

THE CHAIR: All right. That would be kind. Now that comes to about 21 and a half. So what is the other \$700,000? Can I just make the point, minister, that we go through this every estimates where we draw this information out. It would be lovely if the breakdown was presented—even if it was just an attached table somewhere.

Mr Barr: I will happily do that. Obviously there are a number of different areas from previous departments that have been drawn into this area, this new directorate.

THE CHAIR: But it was the same last year where tourism was incorporated into another output class and it was hard to get a handle on.

Mr Barr: I appreciate your particular interest in wanting this line item presented in a different way, and I will, again, take the advice of the estimates committee in relation to how it would like this. Given the amounts of money concerned, it is interesting the level of detail required in some of these areas as opposed to much bigger output classes elsewhere, but, nonetheless, I understand the interest.

THE CHAIR: The same could have been said this morning when we go to some of the output classes in community services where you have got ageing, multicultural and women's affairs in one lump. These questions are asked throughout the budget.

Mr Barr: Yes. Understood.

THE CHAIR: Ms Hunter, a question?

MS HUNTER: Yes. Budget paper 4, page 126, in the accountability indicators, there is a long list of new indicators now that this output has been moved to the economic directorate. I am just wondering about the overarching direction of this area now that it has moved to the economic directorate. Is there going to be any significant change in direction?

Mr Barr: Well, yes—a much stronger focus on economic return to the territory from a range of these activities, but noting that there is still a strong community event element contained within. So there are, I believe, some organisational efficiencies and skills development opportunities that are available in terms of event teams from previously different areas of ACT government being able to work across multiple

events and build up the skills base within the directorate. So that, I think, will be a good thing and a good outcome and provide some career paths within the ACT public service for this particular skills set.

I would observe a desire to use events to drive improved outcomes in some of the other indicators here. So the awareness of the capital region as a tourist destination in addition to generic marketing of Canberra, the events that we hold and the promotion of them interstate drives performance against that particular criteria as well. So you will see, I think, a stronger focus on achieving those key indicators using some of the capacity that we now have.

MS HUNTER: Some of the new indicators, they appear to have been carried over from the previous Chief Minister's Department. Is that the case?

Mr Barr: I think that is a fair observation to make, yes.

MS HUNTER: Therefore, I guess my question is: why have they not been reported on?

Mr Barr: Sorry, why have they not? I believe they have. Depending on the timing of presentation, as you said, there are a series of notes that are attached to these particular indicators—

Ms Shepherd: They are under c and d. They are on the other page.

Mr Barr: Yes. They are on page 43.

Mr Thomson: Basically the budget measures were showing estimated outcome for the 2011-12 year under the new directorates. Where the outputs transfer and the accountability measures transfer, they are actually reported in the department where they were completing. So that is the reason that the first couple of columns are not applicable. This is the standard budget format set by the Treasury.

MR RATTENBURY: While we are on the performance indicators, can I just ask why the annual city-wide, whole-of-government newsletter falls under tourism venues and events?

Mr Thomson: That is actually also under Chief Minister's, and that was an error on my behalf. It actually appears in both.

MR RATTENBURY: So it is part of the transition and getting settled?

Mr Thomson: Yes, and we will also be contributing to the newsletter. It is one of things that falls between the spaces.

THE CHAIR: Ms Hunter?

MS HUNTER: I have finished.

THE CHAIR: Ms Le Couteur?

MS LE COUTEUR: This is a bit around the questions we have already been asking, but clearly there is a strong link between tourism and sport. Page 126 talks about the promotion of major sporting events at major sporting venues such as Manuka Oval and Stromlo Forest Park. My question is around what actually is the relationship? Where is the decision point? Is it around the sporting events or is it around the government looking for tourism events? How do you decide what things actually get funded?

Mr Barr: In terms of major events at those venues?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes.

Mr Barr: Okay, well, the major events at Canberra Stadium are Raiders and Brumbies matches largely. They have varying degrees of tourism impact. The Manuka Oval events are AFL matches, and I think the evidence is that they have a greater impact on tourism than do rugby league and rugby union matches. The Stromlo Forest Park events relate to a variety of different activities, from running festivals to mountain biking to cross country events. A range of national and occasionally international championships are hosted there.

There are different performance agreements that are entered into with the tenants of Canberra Stadium and Manuka Oval—namely NRL, the Australian Rugby Union and the AFL. So those funding arrangements are undertaken on a commercial hiring basis with various subsidies depending on the nature of the events, as we have discussed at some length when talking about major football teams in this city.

There are other events—and this is the nature of this area—and other event opportunities that present from time to time. Depending on the scale of those events, decisions are taken either by Mr Guthrie or in terms of whether they are in the capacity of his delegations, by me as minister if they are within the capacity of my delegations and then, ultimately, cabinet if they are of a substantial level.

MS LE COUTEUR: In your opening remarks you talked about an increased emphasis on economic return and less emphasis on community—

Mr Barr: No, I did not say “less emphasis on community”. I just said an increased emphasis on economic return.

MS LE COUTEUR: Okay. I figure that if the pie is whatever size it is, if there is more emphasis on one thing, the corollary is that there is less on the other. Or has the pie got bigger?

Mr Barr: Yes, the pie has got bigger. There are a number of specific initiatives in this year’s budget that increased the pie.

MS LE COUTEUR: So the amount of community events will not be diminished in any way, despite the increased emphasis on economic—

Mr Barr: The answer to that is no, other than to say we do not control or fund every

community event. So to the extent that the government supports a range of community events, there are annual grants rounds and some are by application. I cannot say that every single event that received funding last year would automatically receive funding but—

MS LE COUTEUR: No, I was not meaning that. I was aware that most events that people would think of as community events are not here. But I was assuming that when you said there was going to be more emphasis on economic outcomes, that was really indicating a change, and I guess—

Mr Barr: That relates to the specific blockbuster fund initiative—the biggest new initiative in this area is a fund associated with large events that have significant economic impact.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand that. I was really trying to tease out that there was not anything in the other part that had been—

Mr Barr: Sure.

MS LE COUTEUR: No.

MS HUNTER: On that blockbuster fund, can you give us a bit more detail about where that money will be spent?

Mr Barr: Sure. It was a recommendation of the Loxton review that such a fund be established. The rationale behind it is that the event cycle and the opportunity to bid for and achieve major events does not perfectly align with the budget cycle. So the minister of the day needs some capacity to be able to respond outside of the two-month window in the lead-up to each budget. So that is the thinking behind it. Obviously, the Masterpieces from Paris is a very good example of the sort of event that we would support. That set an Australian record for attendance at an art gallery. Not every event would be of that scale, but there are some benchmarks that need to be set in terms of economic impact and the number of visitors. Obviously we will put out a set of guidelines in relation to that or else the potential is that I will be inundated with everyone thinking they have got a blockbuster event. But, as a rule of thumb, we are talking about something that attracts around 200,000 visitors and has an economic impact upwards of \$50 million.

MS HUNTER: Are there some plans that are being progressed at the moment?

Mr Barr: Look, there are always things that come across the desk of the minister in this area and a range of different proposals are being put forward. Can I reveal them all today? No, but then, obviously, it is our intent to be able to utilise this fund in the coming financial year. It is possible that, if there are no events, the money would not be expended and we would roll it over.

I want to set a reasonable threshold around allocation of this funding. It is not that it would all be expended every year if there were not events of sufficient quality that would meet the criteria. But I would anticipate being able to make some announcements down the track in relation to the first events that we will be supporting

under this fund. As the money is not available until July—

MS HUNTER: I am sure you are already starting to think about it.

Mr Barr: Indeed.

THE CHAIR: Which is pleasing, given that last year you thought that blockbusters was simply the responsibility of the federal parliament when we suggested there be a strategy. A new question, Mr Hargreaves?

MR HARGREAVES: Thanks very much, Mr Chairman. BP 4, page 128—I have also got one for sport and rec—I am a bit curious about the increased funding for the Canberra Convention Bureau. It is a \$1 million over three years. Can you tell us what the money is being used for and what do you hope to achieve out of it?

Mr Barr: Sure. There is an element of ongoing funding as well as a one-off component for this year.

MR HARGREAVES: I notice that it is in there, but it is not in there for the fourth year of the outyears.

Mr Barr: Yes. So it is supplementary recurrent funding of \$280,000 per annum for sales activity over the next three years, plus a one-off payment of \$160,000. The one-off payment will be used to acquire trade show infrastructure, develop a business events specific DVD for big presentations and delegate boosting and to build the “Think Canberra” branding and communications tool kit. So that is the \$160,000, and then there is \$280,000 over each of the next three years for sales activity.

MR HARGREAVES: There has been a lot of activity around the convention centre in the last couple of years. I can see you are projecting quite a bit more if you are going to throw this kind of money at it. What effect do you think it will have on the higher class accommodation in town?

Mr Barr: I think it is important to draw the distinction between the convention bureau and the convention centre. The bureau services more than just the convention centre. There are a number of other operators within the ACT who host conventions. The current target, I am advised, is approximately \$28 million per annum in direct delegate expenditure and nearly 52,000 associated room nights. So this will facilitate, I believe, a significant boost in terms of conferences won for the ACT. Clearly, the more delegate room nights you have, the more demand there is for new hotel accommodation. We have seen in recent times some significant investment in new hotels. The twin to the Realm is coming out of the ground at a rapid rate of knots. In the inner south we see there are a number of other sites that we put to market and will continue to do so over the next 12 months.

MR HARGREAVES: How far away do you think we are from achieving sufficient quality accommodation to host the COAG meeting and/or CHOGM?

Mr Barr: A COAG meeting we host regularly. A commonwealth heads of government meeting?

MR HARGREAVES: CHOGM was all I was after.

Mr Barr: That is a good question. Simonne, do you want to—

Ms Shepherd: I do not think I could confidently speculate on that, no. I could not even tell you the numbers that attend a CHOGM meeting.

Mr Barr: We can find out, if you are interested.

MR HARGREAVES: I just recall a few years ago that the lack of a convention centre—

Mr Barr: We could not; we were not in a position to host it.

MR HARGREAVES: or something of that size and the lack of five-star accommodation meant that heads of state and the commonwealth were not going to come here. We were that close to getting something, and then the Prime Minister of the day said, “No; we will move it to Brisbane.” I think that is where it was.

Mr Barr: I think that was prior to the Diamant and Realm. I think the Hyatt was the only five-star operation. But clearly we need a little bit more product at that end of the marketplace, just as we need significantly more in the low cost end too.

MR HARGREAVES: Yes, agreed.

Mr Barr: But the level of investment in new hotel infrastructure across the range has been quite significant in recent times.

MR HARGREAVES: My last question, Mr Chairman, is this: has there been dialogue within this section of your collection of directorates, minister? I do not know what the collective noun for a collection of directorates is.

MR HANSON: Directi.

MR HARGREAVES: A confusion of directorates.

Mr Barr: Now, now.

MR HARGREAVES: I think it is more likely to be a direct debit of directorates. And the planning—

Mr Barr: I consider it a focus of directorates now.

MR HARGREAVES: And whether or not—has there been any conversation between your collective officers and the planning people in terms of progressing into the future provision for this sort of accommodation?

Mr Barr: Indeed, yes, and also through the land release side, most particularly. This brings these areas together in an alignment that was not there previously.

THE CHAIR: You are taking on notice that question about beds for CHOGM?

Mr Barr: About beds for CHOGM, yes.

THE CHAIR: Mr Thomson, you took on notice that you were going to give us a breakdown of the ins and outs of the financials.

Mr Thomson: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Hanson, a new question?

MR HANSON: Thank you. If we could look at the issue of Chinese tourism—

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR HANSON: I believe that you went to China within the last year—

Mr Barr: Last year, yes.

MR HANSON: To Shanghai?

Mr Barr: I did, yes. It was on an education delegation, but we did have the opportunity to meet with—

MR HANSON: I do recall some sort of discussion around tourism.

Mr Barr: Yes. I did take the opportunity to meet with Austrade and others, yes.

MR HANSON: And federally there is a move to try and attract more Chinese tourism.

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR HANSON: And to get it away from the hubs of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and into the regions, in particular Canberra. I am just wondering what initiatives we have looked at in order to do that and whether they are meeting with any success.

Mr Barr: Yes. We are certainly working with Tourism Australia, who are charged with international marketing. We have been working with them. Our capacity ourselves to finance campaigns—ACT alone in China—is very limited given the size of the marketplace. It is just too big for us to have a meaningful impact if we do not work through Tourism Australia so we work through Tourism Australia.

MR HANSON: Are Tourism Australia doing advertising in China?

Mr Barr: I believe so, yes.

Ms Shepherd: They are for Australia. Yes, they are.

MR HANSON: And does that have an ACT-specific component to it when they do

that advertising?

Ms Shepherd: They do a range of activities. Their charter is obviously to represent the whole of the destination. The ACT is included in that, but they also do state-specific partnerships with airlines as well as the STOs, the state tourism organisations.

MR HANSON: What have we done specifically with Tourism Australia to make sure that we get that share of the funds?

Ms Shepherd: We have been working with TA. They are just about to release—I think it is going to their board within the next few weeks—their China plan for the next, I think, 10 years. We have been working closely with them on the consultation. As the minister alluded to, we are simply too small to have the resources to be able to go in market. The China market is a very large market. It has good figures currently, and it is projected to have good figures into the future. Our best approach is through Tourism Australia—so to make sure that we are part of their planning for this soon to be released China plan.

MR HANSON: Sure. Have you seen a draft of that 10-year plan?

Ms Shepherd: I have not seen a draft of the final plan. They did a round of consultations round the countryside with not only the state tourism bodies, but also academics. I believe Byron Keating from UC was also involved. So they have consulted with states and territories from an academic perspective as well as with the tourism body. So yes; we were involved in that. Have I seen the final draft? No.

MR HANSON: Right, but you are broadly satisfied that the engagement that we have had from the ACT—

Mr Barr: Some further examples of that are obviously the Australian Tourism Exchange, where we exhibit, and—

MR HANSON: I just want to get on with the issue of this plan, though. I just want to make sure that if it does not get delivered—the 10-year plan, and the ACT has been marginalised. I just want to make sure that the—

Mr Barr: No. We are engaged actively in the development of the national long-term tourism strategy and, indeed, the implementation of that. And, through Australian Capital Tourism, we work closely with Tourism Australia, not just in China but in a number of different markets. But on some more specific examples in terms of our engagement with China—in the Australian Tourism Exchange when World Expo was in Shanghai, which is one of the reasons that we were over there and active in market from an education perspective, in addition to tourism, we had ACT-specific material as part of the Australian pavilion. I hosted an event whilst I was there that the universities attended. Obviously education tourism is an important part of our overall efforts, and we will continue to build on our partnerships with our education providers into the future in that there is a strong alignment of education and tourism outcomes associated with having more Chinese students study in the ACT; there is a visiting friends and relatives component as well in that—

MR HANSON: And we directly market through the students, do we, to try and encourage that?

Mr Barr: Certainly we are happy to work with various international student associations and happy to continue to promote Canberra through our education institutions as well. They hold a number of alumni events, so another event that I attended whilst I was in Shanghai was an alumni event for former University of Canberra students. There was a very large gathering; some had not been to Australia before but were there in support of their relative who had. And then again all of these opportunities are there and are taken to build on our capacity to grow that market share.

I also took the opportunity whilst I was there to meet with various officials within the sports administration of Shanghai. In fact, I understand that I am hosting a delegation in early June, a return visit. They were so impressed by Canberra's sporting facilities and our sporting culture that they are coming back for another visit, I think early next month.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot; then Mr Rattenbury.

MR DOSZPOT: It is a supplementary there, minister. With the 2015 Asian games coming to Australia, and indeed to Canberra, what tourism activity has been pursued with some of the potential Asian countries that we may be getting here? We have got quite a good lead-up period. Is anything being done?

Mr Barr: We do. It is something that we are working on. I think there are still to be announcements in relation to which pool and the teams that we will be hosting. But we have six pool matches and a quarterfinal so it is a very good opportunity. I think you will see from the budget allocations that there is funding this coming financial year and next financial year and that it ramps up, obviously, in the year just before the event is held. So yes, there is capacity for that. Obviously the rubber really hits the road when we know the countries that will be playing here, but I agree it is a very good opportunity. I know the local football community is very keen to take the opportunity to pursue business links, not just in tourism but across the board.

MR DOSZPOT: We look forward to hosting them.

MR RATTENBURY: I just wanted to ask this. On page 128 of budget paper 4, there is an amount of \$983,000 for upgrades to Commonwealth Park. Can you just take us through what that is for a little bit?

Mr Barr: Certainly. There are a number of elements to Commonwealth Park upgrades. The commonwealth itself, through the National Capital Authority, is contributing funding in this area. The 983,000 is part of stage 2 of upgrades. It includes additional pathways and footpaths, improved electrical services distribution, improved stormwater services and a range of safety and aesthetic improvements. As I have indicated, the NCA have involvement in this. Stage 1 of the project has been jointly funded by the Department of Territory and Municipal Services and the National Capital Authority, to the value of 865,000. TAMS's contribution is sourced through the commonwealth with the regional and local community infrastructure

program, and this was matched by the NCA—in fact, more than matched by the NCA. TAMS contributed 385, the NCA 480. That stage 1 that is underway now includes the construction of a multipurpose structure, associated service connections, and upgrades to sewerage, potable water and stormwater infrastructure. The NCA's component, they have indicated, will be used for the construction of the multipurpose building.

MR RATTENBURY: Is that Floriade specific or is that a sort of a general—

Mr Barr: It assists Floriade considerably. All of this work assists Floriade considerably, but it obviously is available for other purposes as well.

MR RATTENBURY: The other area I wanted to ask you about was the Australia Forum. I note that there is money set down in the budget for the Australia Forum project. Can you tell us a bit more about the funding arrangements with the commonwealth and the private sector? Obviously there was a joint ACT government and private sector investment for the first stage of the study.

Mr Barr: That is correct, yes.

MR RATTENBURY: What is the arrangement for the next stage?

Mr Barr: We have committed a million dollars towards looking at the precinct, the West Basin site. That is now the preferred site. At this stage the commonwealth has given no financial commitments at all.

MR RATTENBURY: As we might expect.

Mr Barr: So in order to progress the project to a more complete stage where we could go to the commonwealth with a more complete proposition, we have provided some funding in this year's budget, largely around looking at the West Basin site, as we own the land there. What this enables, though, importantly, is that it takes the hold off the current Olympic pool site and will enable, once the feasibility work is completed on that, a redevelopment of aquatic facilities within the CBD, which I think is important because that project has been on hold for a little while, pending an outcome here. Now that Australia Forum has settled on a preferred site, we can progress that redevelopment work—initially that design work and feasibility work on the Civic site, but ultimately a redevelopment of aquatic facilities in the CBD.

MR RATTENBURY: What is your understanding of the proposed time line for the Australia Forum at this stage?

Mr Barr: Many, many years off.

MR RATTENBURY: Can you tell us a bit more about the nature of the redevelopment for the current aquatic facility site?

Mr Barr: I am in probably the wrong output class. I could do it in sport and rec, but—

MR RATTENBURY: I am happy to ask it again in 20 minutes, Mr Barr. That is

quite convenient.

Mr Barr: We can do that. I will have the right set of officials who can give you some information on the specifics. Certainly, I can just say very briefly before we come back to it that obviously the footprint of the site is surrounded by a sea of surface car parks. So the redevelopment potential for a major state-level aquatic facility is there, together with a variety of other infrastructure—new hotels, potentially, new commercial accommodation, new residential. It could be, I think, a quite significant mixed use development over time.

MR RATTENBURY: Are there any heritage issues with the existing site?

Mr Barr: Limited; there are some, but they are not insurmountable. I understand that the dive tower and the facade might have some interim listing, but—

THE CHAIR: The change rooms won the 1956 Sulman medal for public architecture.

MR RATTENBURY: That is going to be on my next trivia night.

THE CHAIR: And the trees have some significance as well, apparently.

MR HARGREAVES: You have really got to get out more, Mr Chairman.

Mr Barr: Certainly, it is quite possible to undertake a redevelopment of that site that protects those heritage values. An example of a similar one would be what has occurred at new Acton, where the old Hotel Heritage has been, but within a larger precinct. So, yes, I think something like that is certainly possible.

THE CHAIR: Minister, could we go to Enlighten. I see you managed to release the report there today.

Mr Barr: I did not want you to issue a media release saying I was not going to face scrutiny on the matter, Mr Smyth. So, yes, I have released it in advance of today's hearings to enable you to ask a series of penetrating questions, given your long-held support for the event.

THE CHAIR: How much did the government spend on Enlighten and how much was received in kind to run the event, or in sponsorship?

Mr Barr: The GPO—\$1.5 million. Obviously, our quarterly marketing effort was part of the total marketing budget; a proportion of that was spent on Enlighten as well. Someone may be able to enlighten us on that amount. Then there was a revenue component associated with ticket sales. There is, I understand, approximately \$450,000.

Ms Shepherd: Yes, that is correct—\$1.5 million in government appropriation for Enlighten, which was announced as part of the package. We expended over the period \$1.4 million for various marketing promotional campaigns for Autumn and Enlighten and then own source revenue was approximately \$450,000.

THE CHAIR: And the value of sponsorship?

Ms Shepherd: There were no sponsors per se for this first event. We will be seeking sponsorship for the next event, but we did not seek sponsors for this—

Mr Barr: Partners, so the—

THE CHAIR: What did the partners contribute?

Ms Shepherd: I will have to take that on notice. I do not have the value of that.

Mr Barr: Obviously they are product—so the NGA late openings and all that. There are obviously details of the different offerings from NGA, Old Parliament House and Parliament House.

THE CHAIR: So the total cost to put on Enlighten was how much?

Mr Barr: \$3.4 million.

THE CHAIR: \$3.4 million and a return—

Mr Barr: Incorporating all of the marketing.

THE CHAIR: And a return to the government or a return to the economy?

Mr Barr: About a million in the first year.

THE CHAIR: About a million?

Mr Barr: A million?

THE CHAIR: So we spent \$3.4 million and got a million back. I note on page 6 you say that the total attendance figure was 8,678, which included multiple visits by attendees, as well as complementary promotional and VIP entries. How many individuals attended when we convert the multiples down to single people?

Mr Barr: Each night was separate. If someone attended and went to every concert, you are wanting to count them as one person?

THE CHAIR: Yes, how many different names turned up? Yes, if you count them as one.

Mr Barr: We would not have that.

Ms Shepherd: If an individual bought a ticket on two nights we did not collect their names. It is not possible to track.

Mr Barr: We would not have recorded their name. We did not microchip—

THE CHAIR: The response from the ticketing system does not tell you how many

multiples there were so that you can reduce this?

Mr Barr: We did not microchip people, so you could not—

THE CHAIR: You can laugh about it, but I am curious as to how many people attended.

Ms Shepherd: The 8,678 is individual people coming, but they could have come over two nights.

Mr Barr: As in going on Friday night and again on Saturday.

THE CHAIR: So this number of individuals could actually be a higher number then? Is that what you are saying? I would have thought it was a lower number, but—

Mr Barr: No—

THE CHAIR: Can you take on notice how many people that actually represents?

Mr Barr: That number, 8,678—

THE CHAIR: Is?

Mr Barr: is people.

THE CHAIR: Individual people?

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Or is that individual visits?

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Visits or people?

Mr Barr: People. It is the same thing.

Ms Shepherd: But they could have visited—

THE CHAIR: Well, no. Somebody could have come to all four or five events.

Ms Shepherd: That is correct.

Mr Barr: That is exactly it, yes.

MS HUNTER: I think we are going round in circles.

THE CHAIR: Well, is it people or is it visits?

Mr Barr: It is tickets sold—tickets sold or—

THE CHAIR: How many individuals attended?

Mr Barr: 8,678.

THE CHAIR: All right. Of the 8,678, how many paid, how many were complementary, how many were promotional and how many were VIP?

Ms Shepherd: We will take that on notice.

Mr Barr: We will take that on notice, yes.

THE CHAIR: You do not have that with you?

Ms Shepherd: I do not have the breakdown, no.

THE CHAIR: Okay. You claim that the average stay for an interstate visitor is 1.6 nights.

Mr Barr: Well, we do not claim—the report indicates.

THE CHAIR: What is the average stay for interstate visitors, normally?

Ms Shepherd: It is around two nights, depending on what sector of the market it is. It is around two nights.

THE CHAIR: It is around two nights. So people who came for Enlighten actually stayed less?

Ms Shepherd: Marginally less.

THE CHAIR: That is okay. Do we know how many purchased a hotel room? Most of the hotels that I have spoken to said they saw no impact of Enlighten.

Ms Shepherd: I think the Ernst & Young report has a figure of close to 80 per cent of those who came from interstate stayed in paid accommodation—so hotel, motel et cetera.

THE CHAIR: All right. Now that you have mentioned the Ernst & Young report, can we have a copy of the report?

Ms Shepherd: We do not normally. Because of commercial in confidence, we do not release Ernst & Young's report.

THE CHAIR: What is commercial in confidence about it?

Ms Shepherd: Their preparation of the report is proprietary—same as for Floriade.

THE CHAIR: The committee might have a discussion on that issue.

MR HANSON: I have a supplementary when you are finished.

THE CHAIR: Yes, you may; just a minute. The Canberra visitors centre—how many people would it see during an ordinary financial year?

Ms Shepherd: I will correct myself if this is on the record as being incorrect, but I think it is around 250,000 or 260,000 a year.

THE CHAIR: So about 5,000 a week, on average?

Ms Shepherd: Approximately.

THE CHAIR: Because you seem to claim as an additional key result that the Canberra and Region Visitors Centre welcomed and assisted 5,004 visitors to the centre during the nine-day period of 11 to 19 March.

Ms Shepherd: But do not forget that it is a seasonal business so—

THE CHAIR: What is the figure for the previous year for those nine days?

Ms Shepherd: I would have to find out for you, but that 260,000 is seasonal, and the reason Enlighten was put into place was that we identified this period as a seasonally low period.

THE CHAIR: I am just asking for the comparison.

Ms Shepherd: Yes. The other thing to note when we do—and I will get that figure for you—is that Masterpieces was last year over this period as well.

THE CHAIR: All right. Perhaps you could give us three or four years of numbers so we can get a trend line. A supplementary, and then just a few more questions. Mr Rattenbury, have you got questions? No? Mr Hanson?

MR HANSON: Yes. It is just the contradiction in a government that promotes both Enlighten and Earth Hour. It seems a little odd that whilst Mr Corbell is telling everybody to turn the lights off, you are turning them all on. How do you reconcile the two?

Mr Barr: I think you will find that the amount of energy used and the capacity to utilise renewable energy through our friends at Actew is not one that is inconsistent, Mr Hanson. I do not think that at any point has anyone suggested that there be no lighting ever, and it is not unreasonable for an event of this nature to be promoted.

MR RATTENBURY: Which one are you upset about?

MR HANSON: The irony of it.

MR RATTENBURY: Earth Hour?

MR HANSON: Earth Hour is the one I am not happy with.

MR RATTENBURY: I figured that might be the case.

THE CHAIR: Back to page 6:

A total of 2415 interstate and international visitors (unique visits) came to Canberra specifically to attend ENLIGHTEN or extended their stay because of it ...

What was the split there of the 2,415? How many came specifically and how many extended their stay?

Ms Shepherd: Came specifically or extended their stay? We will have to take that on notice. I do not have the answer to that. We will take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: All right. Your original estimate for the total attendance was how much?

Ms Shepherd: We actually, as you would recall, had Ernst & Young do a piece of work for us. That had a scenario ranging from—again I will correct myself if this is incorrect—I think a low of around 3,000 interstate attendees up to a high of, I think they projected, up to 30,000. There were three scenarios that were modelled.

THE CHAIR: So 3,000 up to 30,000 interstate visitors?

Ms Shepherd: Correct.

THE CHAIR: So at 2,400 we are well below the original estimate?

Ms Shepherd: We are below the projection that Ernst & Young did, yes.

THE CHAIR: All right. You list some of the things where people were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. For those that were not, what were the complaints about the function?

Ms Shepherd: Again, this report is fairly new so, I am sorry, I cannot answer the questions off the top of my head for you.

THE CHAIR: It cannot be fairly new. We have put out a glossy 16-page document. You had time for a document. What were the major complaints?

Ms Shepherd: To be quite honest, there were not major complaints about Enlighten. In the main, we had quite positive feedback. You will see that from the high satisfaction rate; it was nearly 90 per cent. There were very few; and if there were, they were minor things around people not knowing where to look for pieces of information or people wondering why we did not have certain types of food at the event. I can get you more information.

THE CHAIR: That would be kind.

Mr Barr: There were some complaints that it rained a little during Frankie Valli's performance.

THE CHAIR: Who happened to be the most popular?

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Who would have thought? All right.

MR RATTENBURY: Mr Smyth, just a supplementary on that?

THE CHAIR: Yes; sure.

MR RATTENBURY: How much did the Ernst & Young report cost?

Mr Barr: Do you have that one?

Ms Shepherd: Yes, I do. It was approximately \$30,000.

MR RATTENBURY: Was that in part of the budget that you spoke of earlier?

Ms Shepherd: That is part of the budget; correct.

THE CHAIR: Was this actually printed and distributed today? I have downloaded it off the web. Was this printed as a hard copy?

Mr Barr: There are a small number of hard copies, yes.

Ms Shepherd: Only a handful.

THE CHAIR: How many were printed, and what did that cost?

Ms Shepherd: It was nothing. Approximately five brochures at this stage.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, five copies of this?

Ms Shepherd: They were printed in house.

THE CHAIR: That was printed in house?

Ms Shepherd: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So there was not a big print run?

Ms Shepherd: No.

THE CHAIR: I will have some further questions, depending on your answers.

MR RATTENBURY: Just one more supplementary on that. I notice that the first weekend Enlighten was on was the Canberra Day weekend, if I recall correctly. It was

the 12th and 13th and then the 18th and 19th?

Mr Barr: Yes, that is correct.

MR RATTENBURY: Do you think that impacted on the performance of the event? Why did you choose to run it on that weekend?

Ms Shepherd: We chose to run it over that weekend because the Canberra Festival was on, as you might recall, during that time. Obviously Enlighten is a night time activity specifically designed to drive overnight stays for interstaters. We felt that the Canberra Festival activity would add vibrancy and add breadth to the daytime programming on offer. That is why the two were running parallel. I think what you are referring to is that Canberrans leave—

MR RATTENBURY: I was asking a question merely on the rationale, but yes, that did strike me. I was out of town myself and missed a number of the events. I wondered whether that impacted on the success of the event or not.

Ms Shepherd: It could have impacted on local visitation, but because it is not a public holiday interstate, then not from an interstate perspective.

MR RATTENBURY: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: If I could just clarify two things, and then we will move on to tourism. There was no financial contribution of your partners to the event?

Mr Barr: Their own offerings, yes.

THE CHAIR: What does that mean?

Mr Barr: As in they stayed open—

Ms Shepherd: They did not pay us cash.

THE CHAIR: So nobody paid the ACT government cash to assist with the promotion?

Ms Shepherd: No.

Mr Barr: No. But they stayed open late.

THE CHAIR: That is the gallery, the library and Parliament House?

Mr Barr: Yes, and then they contributed some of their own advertising. The NGA did advertising—

THE CHAIR: So beyond the cultural venues, were there no other partners?

Ms Shepherd: No. Not this year.

THE CHAIR: Did any of the other government agencies contribute in kind—SES officers, TAMS officers or Roads officers? No?

Ms Shepherd: Not to my knowledge.

THE CHAIR: All right. If we go back to page 7, under key survey results, it says that total attendance, including multiple visits by attendees, was 8,678. Can you take on notice to give me a breakdown of that number?

Mr Barr: By each night?

THE CHAIR: I fail to understand whether that number is 8,678 individuals who turned up or—

Mr Barr: Yes. It would be quite possible for someone to have gone to both George Benson on the first weekend and maybe Frankie Valli on the second. They would have bought tickets for both—

MR HARGREAVES: I would not think so.

THE CHAIR: So we do not know—

Mr Barr: They would have bought tickets for both nights—

THE CHAIR: Does the ticketing—

Mr Barr: And they were real people and they went to both.

THE CHAIR: But does the ticketing—

MR HARGREAVES: Not without their hands in their pockets, they would not.

THE CHAIR: You do not get a ticketing report? The number of actual different individuals could be much smaller than 8,678.

Mr Barr: No. That is the number of—because one person—

THE CHAIR: So the number of visits could be more?

Ms Shepherd: No. Can I try?

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Take it on notice. Give me a written reconciliation of the numbers—how many visits there were by individuals and—

Ms Shepherd: It is 8,678.

THE CHAIR: What is?

Ms Shepherd: That is by people. Obviously no-one else can.

THE CHAIR: Okay, by people.

Ms Shepherd: Obviously it cannot be the dog or the cat.

Mr Barr: Yes. No-one else is attending.

Ms Shepherd: So no-one else is attending. But we do not know if Mr Smith bought two tickets and came on two nights or whether it was Mr Smith and Mr Jones. We do not know that.

THE CHAIR: How many tickets were sold?

Mr Barr: That we will take on notice and give you the breakdown of.

Ms Shepherd: Yes, because we had family tickets for sale.

Mr Barr: We had family tickets as well.

Ms Shepherd: So people and ticket sales do not necessarily match.

THE CHAIR: Give as much detail as you can on tickets sold, the breakdown of multiple ticket sales to one individual, what constitutes a family et cetera, so that we can get to a real number of how many attended.

Mr Barr: You want us to define a family?

THE CHAIR: By the Ticketek sale criteria. With that, we may move on.

MR SESELJA: Just a quick one on that, chair, if I could, just to follow up.

THE CHAIR: Sure.

MR SESELJA: There were some concerns expressed by some local suppliers of lighting as to whether they were able to bid for tenders for Enlighten. Are you able to enlighten us at all, Mr Barr, about whether or not local suppliers were used and if they had the opportunity to bid for any of those tenders?

Ms Shepherd: Assuming it is the architectural projections that we are talking about, there is not another company who can match—basically Electric Canvas is the only company in Australia that can undertake those types of large-scale projections of that quality; there is not another company.

MR SESELJA: So no local suppliers are able to provide that kind of effect?

Ms Shepherd: Not that matches those specs, no.

MR SESELJA: How do you know that no local suppliers are able to do that? What sort of market testing has been done in the past?

Ms Shepherd: Again, I will provide any further information if this is not correct, but our events people specialise in this particular area and know the suppliers fairly closely. Electric Canvas are recognised worldwide for that reason, because of their technical ability. They have done events such as the Vancouver Olympics. The reason they are used is that they cannot be matched, to the best of my knowledge, on their technical capability.

MR SESELJA: And there were no other tenders where there was an exclusion of any local suppliers?

Ms Shepherd: Not to my knowledge—not on those architectural projections. I am assuming that we are not talking about stage lighting. No, not to my knowledge. I would stand corrected if there is something that I am not aware of.

THE CHAIR: We might move to sport and rec. In the spirit of generosity and inclusion that has been the hallmark of this estimates, we will go to the far end of the room and start with Mr Seselja and work our way back, given that the sports shadows are on that table.

MR SESELJA: Thank you, chair.

Mr Barr: We will just do a quick shuffle of officials.

THE CHAIR: Minister, thank you for attending for output class 1.4, sport and recreation. Over to you, Mr Seselja; then Mr Rattenbury and Mr Doszpot.

MR SESELJA: Thank you, chair. I just have questions around one area, and I will declare a personal interest. It is in relation to a football club that my family is associated with, a Rugby League club, the Valley Dragons. They have raised a couple of things with me which I would like to explore briefly, if I could. In their treasurer's report of 2010—so last year's treasurer's report for the Valley Dragons—the treasurer noted that there have been significant cost increases for the club, and overall cost increases, which include a range of costs from 54,000 to 112,000 over 11 years, particularly noting that ground hire had the highest percentage increase in that time, of 260 per cent, despite the fact that, even with increases in club team numbers, the club has been unable to obtain additional ovals for training due to shared commitments with the Vikings. Can I get you first to comment on that significant increase over a number of years. What is the justification for ground hire fees going up that much for the Valley Dragons?

Mr Barr: We will need to have a look at the—I cannot ascertain exactly what the starting and end point of that is. I do know that the proportion of costs returned in terms of the operating costs of maintaining a sportsground versus the hire fees is a very small proportion, so the level of subsidy is in the order of 80 or 90 per cent. If you were able to forward the treasurer's report to me, I could have a look at the different dates and—

MR SESELJA: I am very happy to provide the treasurer's report and I will take you to another couple of more specific dates now if I could as well, minister, but are you

able to perhaps take that on notice and come back.

I also received an email with some specifics from them over the last couple of years. What they tell me is that in 2009—and they tell me that they have not changed the amount of ovals that they use in this time, so it is basically the same number of ovals for the same time—they were paying \$11,793. In 2010 that jumped to \$17,880 and in 2011 to approximately \$20,144—so another significant increase. Is there a reason? From looking at some of the schedules, it seems that the main one that has gone up in the last year, although I do not know what it was from 2009-10, is some of the training fees. I am told that that has gone up from \$1.70 to \$4 per oval for training. What is the rationale for that significant jump?

Mr Barr: Water costs would have increased, so the costs of maintaining facilities increase. As I say, the level of subsidy would be amongst the highest in the nation in terms of utilisation of sportsgrounds. As to the exact dollar amounts you referred to, without being privy to how many hours of time they were purchasing, it would be difficult to—I am happy to take this on notice and have a look at this as a case study, but undoubtedly the costs associated with the provision of these facilities rise each year. Factors that impact on that clearly are climatic conditions and the amount of watering that is required—and it certainly was during a number of years of this particular period. I am advised that cost recovery for sportsgrounds overall remains at between 16 and 20 per cent of the total cost of providing such facilities, and that that has remained constant over that time.

MR SESELJA: Are you able to tell us then, between 2009 and 2011, how much the fees for hire of unenclosed ovals have gone up?

Mr Barr: We can provide that information, yes.

MR SESELJA: What has been the percentage increase overall? Obviously the Valley Dragons, not doing anything differently, are paying a lot more, so some fees have gone up significantly.

Mr Barr: Certainly fees have gone up, yes.

MR SESELJA: Yes.

Mr Barr: As have costs.

MR SESELJA: But the \$1.70 to \$4 I am interested in—that is a more than doubling. I do not think water has doubled in that time. I do not think anything else has. What is the rationale for such a significant increase in training fees?

Mr Barr: I think you will find that it actually has.

MR SESELJA: In two years?

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SESELJA: Why has the cost of water doubled in two years?

THE CHAIR: Mr O’Leary, on his inaugural visit to estimates.

Mr O’Leary: Without being in a position to put a precise figure on it at the moment, there is no doubt that the escalation of water prices in recent times has been significant and would have had an effect on the situation that has been presented at the moment.

MR SESELJA: But this is between 2009 and 2011; I will just make that clear. It is not over the last decade.

Mr Barr: I will have a look at those and provide some information for you.

MR SESELJA: And just in a final area—they did express an amount of frustration, and I think this would be shared by other clubs as they are seeing their costs increase and they try and keep their fees down. The other frustration is the flipside—what they are getting for that. Some of the criticism of what they are getting is that there is poor floodlighting, there are unmarked car parks, there is a lack of car parking, there is no hot water in the canteen, there are inadequate toilet facilities, there are no sanitary disposal bins in ladies toilets, and there are lights turning off during training booking times. This is the frustration: they are paying a lot more and they do not feel that they are getting the kind of service that they would expect. Perhaps I will get you to comment on how much of that is being reinvested, I suppose, in terms of facilities. You can point to some individual examples, no doubt, but for the people in Tuggeranong valley who are using some of these facilities, how much is being reinvested in their local sporting facilities?

Mr Barr: All, and more. There have been a number of significant initiatives to upgrade facilities across a variety of venues within Tuggeranong but also across the rest of Canberra. The levels of investment, both in terms of seeking to address some of the core issues that go to sportsground maintenance provisions, so drought proofing—and there is a major project that the government has funded in relation to sourcing non-potable water for about 30 hectares of sportsgrounds. In the Tuggeranong valley, for example, there has been a major investment in securing the sports facilities and protecting them against future climatic change and the potential that we will not have a year of rainfall like we have had. We have an annual facilities upgrade program to upgrade these facilities. There have been some specific initiatives in relation to lighting. And of course in this year’s budget there is money to restore the Isabella Plains sports field in Tuggeranong valley.

MR SESELJA: Which local sportsgrounds have received those upgrades to both lighting and other facilities over the last two years?

Mr Barr: There is a very long list. I am happy to provide you with a list of all of those upgrades over an extended period.

MR SESELJA: That would be great. And what does sport and rec do to monitor and talk to these clubs about some of the cost pressures that are placed on them and seek to deal with them? Obviously one of the real dangers when these fees go up is that poorer kids do not get to play sport. That is one thing that all of us would be

concerned about—if some kids are missing out on playing rugby league, soccer or Aussie rules because it is getting out of reach.

Mr Barr: Sure. We have increased operational subsidies for all of the sports through the sport and recreation grants program; that has assisted all of the sports organisations to keep their costs down. We have provided a range of other targeted supports to assist sports to administer themselves more efficiently, so there have been a number of sports that have received funding assistance around their governance, competition design structures et cetera, to get maximum value and to be able to deliver their competitions and programs at the lowest possible cost to end users.

And of course, we continue to provide opportunities and assistance through the provision of sports in schools as well, recognising that it is not just at the community club level that young people participate in sport, but there is also a variety of opportunities that are provided through the schooling system. In some instances, obviously there is an interrelation in that schools participate as school teams within some of these community sporting competitions. There are a number of schools, most particularly in the non-government system, for example, that have requirements in relation to students playing only for the school rather than for a community-based club. So there is support provided for all of these competitions through those initiatives. But the most specific one was a very significant increase in the—

THE CHAIR: Short and concise answers, please.

Mr Barr:—amount of funding provided to sporting organisations through the sports grants.

MR SESELJA: On the first part of the question, the engagement with the clubs, what is the mechanism for engaging with those clubs, various clubs around town, to find out what pressures are placed on them and how the government can assist?

Mr O’Leary: We at Sport and Recreation Services have a very close engagement with the community, whether it be through the peak bodies or—we are certainly available to respond to questions of any nature that any sport or recreation organisation in the territory has. Our sportsground crews are also out in the field and available to respond to questions. So in terms of our ability to be available to all sports organisations, I think that we bat at a very high level, and we would certainly welcome any approaches from any sport or recreation organisation that has queries of the kind that you are tabling today.

THE CHAIR: All right. A supplementary from Mr Doszpot; then we will go to Mr Rattenbury. We need to move on, members.

MR DOSZPOT: Following on from Mr Seselja’s question about costs related to grounds, there are a few contractual arrangements that I would like to clarify as to how some of these arrangements are in place. Is there such a thing as a single-sport or club usage ground and is there a contract for any such arrangement?

Mr Barr: I do not believe so, no.

Mr O’Leary: No, I do not believe so.

MR DOSZPOT: You do not believe so?

Mr Barr: No.

MR DOSZPOT: I have got to express a little bit of interest; this is about one of the football clubs in my area. Lanyon football club has tried to get access to an oval in Banks which apparently is being used by Little Athletics. Little Athletics use it during the summer season. Lanyon want to use it in the winter season when the oval is not being used. They were denied access to it because they were told that the athletics association had exclusive use of the oval. Can you explain that to us?

Mr O’Leary: I suppose in answer to that question I would require some understanding of to whom that question was posed and who provided that answer.

MR DOSZPOT: I can give you that if you want. It is Brian Ashcroft.

Mr O’Leary: Okay.

MR DOSZPOT: In fact, they were given that answer in a two-line response to a submission that was made by the club. They were given a two-line answer through Capital Football, not even directly to the club, saying, “Please be advised that Banks oval is to remain athletics specific and will not be made available for football. Please accept this as my formal advice.” The club sought a discussion to find out what can be done, because they are under extreme pressure to maintain the service to their membership.

Mr O’Leary: I know that this is not the forum to speculate, but I would be interested to—

THE CHAIR: It would be very unwise.

Mr O’Leary: I would be interested to find out whether it was advice that was provided in collaboration with Capital Football. But regardless, it is—

MR DOSZPOT: It was advice provided to Capital Football to pass on to Lanyon.

Mr O’Leary: I understand. Perhaps, given the circumstances and the unsureness that I have in providing a direct answer, it is something that I will take on notice.

MR DOSZPOT: I would be happy to provide you with further information to get some clarification on this.

Mr O’Leary: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: All right. A new question, Mr Rattenbury; then Mr Doszpot with a new question and then Mr Hanson and Mr Hargreaves.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you, chair. I recall from last year’s budget that the

performance fees for both the Raiders and the Brumbies were included. It may be the transition arrangements this year, but I have not been able to identify them in this year's budget. Are you able to point me to the correct page?

Mr Barr: No, they are not. That is not a new appropriation this year, so it would be in the base of this area. Only new initiatives are reported.

MR RATTENBURY: Can you tell me what the performance fee is for each of those teams for 2011-12?

Mr Barr: We can provide that information. I do not believe we have got it in front of us now.

Mr O'Leary: I do have it with me here.

Mr Barr: For 2010, by calendar year, for the Canberra Raiders—did you want 2010 or 2011?

MR RATTENBURY: I was after 2011. I thought it would—

Mr Barr: Okay, 2011: performance fee \$1,337,272—plus the rolling in of the former national league team program adds another \$105,063. There is a payroll tax concession. The total value of the package is \$1.942 million, with the cash component being \$1.442 million.

MR RATTENBURY: And for the Brumbies?

Mr Barr: For the Brumbies, the 2011 performance fee was \$772,646. That was based on a six-game season. There being extra games now in the super 15, there is another \$111,439 added on—plus they were formerly in the national league team program, and they are not, so there is \$105,063 rolled on there. They have a \$590,000 payroll tax concession. Their total package for 2011 is \$1,690,587, of which the cash component is \$1.1 million.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you. I notice that the government in this budget allocated a little over \$1 million for upgrade of the CIT facilities to improve them for Raiders training.

Mr Barr: That is correct, yes. We are the landlord, through CIT. It is not through sport and rec; it is through CIT. They are the landlord for the Raiders. The Raiders maintain the facility and also have maintenance responsibility for the oval that accompanies that facility as part of a long-term agreement between the CIT and the Raiders. I think it runs for a decade. Yes; we are the landlord. They requested some particular upgrades to player facilities within the main administration building, and we were able to provide that.

MR RATTENBURY: Are the Raiders contributing anything to that upgrade or is that entirely from the ACT government?

Mr Barr: They do the fittings inside, but the building fabric is ours, as it is our

building.

MR RATTENBURY: What is the exact nature of those upgrades?

Mr Barr: They relate to players' change facilities, showers and change rooms. I think there is a small expansion of the gym space. It is slightly expanding that part of the building.

MR RATTENBURY: And the government has also budgeted \$2.3 million over two years for improvements to the Canberra Stadium. Can you tell us about the nature of those upgrades?

Mr Barr: I will ask Mr Guthrie to come forward and talk about that.

Mr Guthrie: The funding over two years for Canberra Stadium is detailed design, basically to prepare designs that will cover new entrances, better landscaping and road flow around the venue, improvements to player facilities, back of house ticketing facilities and some kitchen facilities.

MR RATTENBURY: So the \$2.3 million is—sorry?

Mr Guthrie: It is \$2.2 million.

MR RATTENBURY: Is it just for the studies or is it actually to conduct the work?

Mr Guthrie: It is detailed design.

MR RATTENBURY: Thank you. And I am glad you have come to the table, Mr Guthrie; I want to ask about the own-source revenue for Canberra Stadium.

Mr Guthrie: Yes.

MR RATTENBURY: Can you tell us the nature of the fee structure for the use of Canberra Stadium? How do you charge for the use of Canberra Stadium?

Mr Guthrie: Both hiring agreements we have with Canberra Raiders and Brumbies Rugby are commercial-in-confidence but they are around fees for venue hire, sharing of revenues that come with corporate sales, with catering revenues, with revenues associated with ticketing, and those are all negotiated through their hiring agreements. We have a six-year agreement that we are in year two of with the Brumbies, and a 10-year agreement which we are in year two of with the Raiders.

MR RATTENBURY: While you are there, Mr Guthrie, I understand that if you look at a comparison of ticket prices at comparable venues it shows that the entry fee for a family of four to a Raiders game is \$80, compared to \$70 to see the Broncos at Suncorp Stadium and \$40 for the Bulldogs at Homebush. Do you have any understanding of why it is so expensive to go to the Raiders?

Mr Guthrie: I am the wrong person to ask that question of. That is a question for the CEO of the Raiders and the CEO of the Brumbies. They control their ticket prices and

set them themselves.

MR RATTENBURY: So it is not part of the arrangements at Canberra Stadium?

Mr Guthrie: No. Anyone that hires the venue sets their own ticket prices.

THE CHAIR: I notice you asked that question in the absence of your colleague Ms Bresnan.

Mr Barr: Let us be grateful that the Queenslander is not in the room today.

MR RATTENBURY: I probably should declare I am a Bulldogs fan.

Mr Barr: That probably explains a lot, doesn't it?

MR HARGREAVES: You would expect that kind of question, wouldn't you?

THE CHAIR: Moving right along, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary first off to follow on from Mr—

THE CHAIR: A quick supplementary and then a quick question because we are running out of time.

MR DOSZPOT: There is a \$3.9 million upgrade for Manuka Oval according to BP 4, page 80. The question I am asking is related to an expense in BP 3, page 159, where I think \$750,000 has been spent on the Manuka Oval redevelopment design. Is that an excessive design fee for the redevelopment there? We are talking about the same exercise. It is \$3.9 million.

Mr Guthrie: No. The \$0.75 million relates to a larger proposed upgrade which is a proposal at this stage still within my organisation. And normally an architect fee sits somewhere between seven per cent and 10 per cent of the design. So that relates to that. The money allocated in this year's budget is \$3.4 million. I accept your sum there. I think it is slightly different but it is \$3.4 million. There is \$750,000 for detailed design. There is \$2.5 million directly for purchase of up to 4,500 temporary seats. There is \$200,000 allocated for a planning study for the precinct adjacent to Manuka Oval and there is \$300,000 in the capital upgrades program for immediate maintenance of various aspects of the oval. So the \$750,000 for detailed design does not relate to the funding that is allocated this year.

MR DOSZPOT: And that design plan is for future development of Manuka Oval, you say?

Mr Guthrie: That is correct.

MR DOSZPOT: Does that include the lighting?

Mr Guthrie: Yes, it does. Yes, we will be designing where the light towers go, and the detail that comes behind that is part of the \$750,000.

MR DOSZPOT: I asked a question in education regarding the blind sports in school program. Is that something that I can now ask? I was told it was in sport, minister, so can you let me know? You said you were going to clear the air.

Mr Barr: There was a grants round. I understand that vision impaired sport put in an application and it received funding of \$7,960 under the inclusive participation funding program.

MR DOSZPOT: I am not sure that we are talking about the same thing. What is the sport called?

Mr Barr: Vision impaired sport.

MR DOSZPOT: I believe that is for a different sport. I am talking about \$24,850 for a 10-week pilot program throughout the schools. Are you aware of that?

Mr Barr: I am not aware of that program.

MR HANSON: It will go back to the minister for education.

Mr Barr: It could well be funded through the commonwealth. It is not an organisation known to sport and rec. If you could provide me some details of this, I will happily investigate it.

MR DOSZPOT: I believe it is the same organisation, VISACT.

Mr Barr: Vision impaired sport. It may well be a commonwealth grants program.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Take it on notice. Let us roll along.

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR RATTENBURY: Mr Barr, you indicated before, when I asked about the Civic aquatic facility, that we should come back to it when the officials came. Can we briefly touch on that?

Mr Barr: We can talk about that, yes.

MR RATTENBURY: You mentioned the redevelopment of the site. I asked for some details and you—

Mr Barr: Suters have been doing that work for us. Do you want to talk a little about it?

Mr O'Leary: Certainly, minister. There are a number of activities going on in the ACT at the moment that are interrelated. There is certainly the investigation review of the Canberra Olympic Pool. At the same time, the feasibility was commenced for the

Gungahlin leisure centre. In our dealings with Suters, it very quickly became apparent that the work that we were doing in these two areas had impacts on the entire ACT, which led to the commissioning of the point strategy for the entire ACT.

The strategy for the entire ACT, in draft form, has been presented to the department. There are a number of comments that we have put back to the consultants to consider, based on what they have put to us. We expect a response to that in the coming four weeks, in response to the questions that we have put to them. At the same time, we expect the tabling of the Canberra Olympic Pool strategy. So we are getting very close to receiving final reports on both these important reviews that have been undertaken.

MR RATTENBURY: I take it from your nuance that the government is committed to keeping an aquatic facility on the site in the Civic.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson a question and then Ms Le Couteur.

MR DOSZPOT: Chair, I have a very brief qualification on the previous answer that I was seeking. What you provided an answer on was goalball, which we were aware of. Thank you for that. What I am specifically asking about is the blind sports in school program, \$24,850. It was a grant last year. You will get back to me with information on that?

Mr Barr: I am pretty sure it is going to be a commonwealth grant, not an ACT one. We are not—

MR DOSZPOT: We have tried ACT education and sport. This is a school issue. I am just—

Mr Barr: I am saying that there are commonwealth funds—

THE CHAIR: It has been taken on notice. Mr Hanson and Mr Hargreaves.

MR HANSON: I refer to parking at Manuka Oval. There are upgrades to increase the capacity for events there, but parking seems to be a problem. Are we doing anything about the parking problem there?

Mr Barr: As part of parking enhancement across the city, yes, but the desire—

MR HANSON: Parking in the city is not much good to you if you are going to Manuka Oval.

Mr Barr: It is late on a Friday afternoon. I will let your childish remarks pass.

MR HANSON: I want to know about parking at Manuka Oval. I want to know specifically about Manuka Oval.

Mr Barr: There will be a desire to enhance public transport to major sporting events and, as you may be aware, in almost every other Australian city about 80 to 90 per cent of people who attend major sporting events do so on public transport. We are the anomaly. We are the odd ones out. There is not sufficient space to build—

MR HANSON: Can I clarify: there is no intent to update the parking in the Manuka surrounds but your solution is to—

Mr Barr: What I am saying is that the particular studies that are funded in this year's budget do not go to parking within the Manuka Oval precinct but there are other areas—and this is what I was attempting to say before you went off on a little tangent—within the city overall. There are a number of structured car parking proposals, and park-and-ride opportunities are available. There is also the Manuka group centre. There is parking provision in other areas certainly within walking distance of Manuka but there will not be a major car parking structure built in Manuka Oval. It is certainly not part of the thinking in relation to—

MR HANSON: You have no intention of upgrading any of the ground car parking necessarily?

Mr Barr: I do not know what you are referring to by that.

MR HANSON: When people park at Manuka, they often park in the street or they park on some of the school ovals and those surrounds.

Mr Barr: There are designated major event parking areas for Manuka.

MR HANSON: That is right.

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Will they be upgraded?

Mr Barr: No.

MR HANSON: Thank you. That is what we could have got first up.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Minister and officials, at BP 3, page 159—my interest has been sparked on behalf of a friend of mine—it talks about motor sports fund, capital improvements to Fairbairn and design costs, half a million bucks.

MR HANSON: The dragway.

THE CHAIR: Not the dragway.

MR HARGREAVES: The preliminary information says it is a design project.

Mr Barr: You did it first, Brendan, I think. You were the first to abandon the dragway, apparently.

THE CHAIR: That is not true. You do not know your history, Mr Barr.

Mr Barr: No? I keep on being told that you were the one that abandoned it first, that I am the most recent devil but you were the first one.

MR HARGREAVES: Where is this heading, guys? Minister, 500,000 bucks is a lot of money. Are you going to be presumably talking to the collective of motor sports enthusiasts? Can we have perhaps a list, on notice later, of whom you will be canvassing? I would like to see for myself the extent because I have got a funny feeling that the list is a lot longer than I might believe it to be. It is just the one year—

MR HANSON: You will be providing on notice a list of—

Mr Barr: A list of all the organisations.

MR HARGREAVES: I do not mean the owners of every motor car in the ACT. I can get that myself out of the phone book. The \$500,000 is only for 20011-12. Over what period do you expect to do the design work and over what period will you be evaluating that one and how will you deal with it?

Mr Barr: Mr Guthrie.

Mr Guthrie: The money that is allocated in this year's budget, we anticipate, will have a design available at the end of 2011-12, which will expend the \$500,000. It is specifically for redesigning Fairbairn motor sport park. It will incorporate a number of recommendations from the motor sport strategy which involve relocating the hill-climb facility from its current location to a new position within the site, the design of sound mounds to assist with the noise abatement on the site, some common facility for all of the clubs on site around a common event room, common car parks and meeting areas, ablution blocks et cetera and, finally, extension to the go-cart facility. These are all designs. It is not necessarily so that they will all be funded but we are effectively coming up with the detailed design of works that can be done.

MR HARGREAVES: All right. I seem to recall some years ago there was contaminated waste on that site. There was a big contract that was fraught with problems in itself and a whole lot of dirt was carted off to Belconnen landfill, as I understand it. Has that issue gone away? Has it been fixed?

Mr Dawes: To the best of my knowledge, that has been removed, but I believe that in all of these things we will need to double-check. But my understanding is that it was dealt with some years ago.

Mr Guthrie: I can answer that. We have been working with Fairbairn motor sport park around the contaminated site. Some material has been removed, as you mentioned, Mr Hargreaves. We have been working with the EPA. There is still one more minor check to be done on the site which is scheduled for August this year. We expect after that that the site will be given a green light and that we will basically rebuild. The area that we have been removing from the site is actually spectator mounds around the flat motor bike track there. We will not hand it back. Fairbairn motor sport park will then rebuild those mounds. It will be identified as finished—the issue will be finished after that.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you for that. This is going to significantly enhance that Fairbairn facility. It has been in a somewhat decrepit state for a long time and, therefore, people are not bothering to go out there, or not so many anyway, except for the diehard enthusiasts. With all of the work that will come as a result of this design work, presumably you will be expecting the crowd numbers to increase exponentially. Is there anything in your design work where you can have a conversation with the public transport provider about having an alternative delivery of people to that site?

Mr Guthrie: Certainly, at this stage there has been a lot of consultation moving forward. Part of the design work will be around how the public access that site. In terms of public transport and the next step in going forward, we certainly have plans and are working with the motor sport clubs that occupy the Fairbairn motor sport complex around a centralised management model. What form that takes is yet to be agreed, but I would see that as the next phase. Once the site has been designed and everyone is happy with that we will put it on the radar that we need to move to a more centralised management process. So that is on the books and it has been discussed informally, but it will be a formal process that follows the detail design.

MR HARGREAVES: The last question, Mr Chairman: that will mean there will be a fair amount of vehicle traffic going in and out of that facility. Will there be any discussions with the Queanbeyan City Council about coughing up their share to the effect of a road pavement leading in and out of the place?

Mr Guthrie: I will take that on notice. That is a good point. I will take note of that advice, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: It is just a suggestion.

THE CHAIR: We will now go to Ms Le Couteur. Given there is only two minutes left, we will move to EPIC. I thank officials from sport and rec. We will have a question on EPIC to complete the week.

MS LE COUTEUR: This is possibly not the most important EPIC issue, but nonetheless it one which is of interest to me. Budget paper 4, page 474, has a capital injection of \$105,000 to acquire poultry cages. Why? Is EPIC going into a new line of business? Why does EPIC require \$105,000 worth of poultry cages?

Ms Clarke: Yes, we have been fortunate enough to get \$105,000 to purchase poultry cages. The objective is to rent them out to the Royal Agricultural Society—the Canberra agricultural society—as well as looking at interstate. There is a need from Sydney down to Melbourne to use these cages when they exhibit poultry. There was an opportunity to work in partnership with the society.

MS LE COUTEUR: Will they be staying at EPIC all the time? You said there was a need from Sydney to Melbourne. Are you hiring them out to people who are taking them around the countryside? I am not quite sure that I really understand the nature of this line of business.

Ms Clarke: With the society the advice is that they will fold down and be portable.

We will be arranging for them to be manufactured. The Agricultural Society has an annual poultry event and every four years they have the Olympics poultry event. They bring exhibitors from around the world, really, and will be utilising those cages.

Mr Barr: One useful bit of information I can give you, Ms Le Couteur, is that some of the cages that the society has been using are nearly 90 years old. There is a view that a more modern updating of said cages would provide for a more comfortable environment for those who happen to be fortunate enough to be in the mid-winter poultry Olympics show.

THE CHAIR: So if a Greens member wanted to hire one so they could protest in Civic Square they could hire a single—

Mr Barr: For example, Mr Smyth, yes.

THE CHAIR: There is a precedent for such activities.

Mr Barr: There is something about Deb Foskey in a cage that comes to mind.

MS HUNTER: I am interested in the sorts of events that are held during the chook Olympics, but we will not go there today. Budget paper 4, page 473, Ms Clarke, is about the low budget tourist accommodation. I am wondering whether there is any progress in the development of that accommodation.

Ms Clarke: Yes, there is. We have been doing a lot of work in the background on getting the site ready to develop. We have undertaken a business case to assist with determining the type of accommodation that is required, particularly for visiting school groups, as well as patrons that will be attending events at Exhibition Park. We are preparing an expression of interest to go out to the market so that we can gauge the type of interest there is. We should be ready to release that expression of interest next month.

THE CHAIR: The master plan for EPIC, minister—where is the master plan for EPIC?

Ms Clarke: The master plan is our rejuvenation program. The Exhibition Park Corporation Board signed off on the program last month. What the program will bring to the site is for us to look at opportunities for having development at the site that complements the charter of EPIC, meaning more activities for the community. For example, we are looking at a private equestrian centre and establishing a horse riding-bicycle track similar to the one in Centennial Park in Sydney. The board's aim is to encourage more of the community to come to Exhibition Park. We will be looking as well at facilities such as a drop-in cafe. Other developments in the program would be to have young artists hanging their exhibitions in one of our pavilions on a special week. There is a list of what we are looking at.

THE CHAIR: Minister, when will the rejuvenation plan be made public?

Mr Barr: I suppose it is a matter for the board, ultimately.

Ms Clarke: I can take that on board.

THE CHAIR: Can the committee have a copy of the rejuvenation plan?

Ms Clarke: Yes, it certainly can.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I look forward to seeing it. I note that in either your statement of intent or the budget papers there is no mention of the petrol station site. What is the status of the remediation of the site and when will we see a new tenant in the place?

Ms Clarke: The tenant will be lodging its DA over the next couple of weeks, I have been advised. Obviously, there have been a lot of preliminary works undertaken. As I mentioned in a previous hearing, it will be operational in 2011. The plan is that that is still the case. We are working closely with ACTPLA and the service station operator to assist in the development of that.

THE CHAIR: There was mention that it might be a petrol station and a fast food outlet. Is that still the intention and will it be on one lease or two?

Ms Clarke: It will be one lease. It will be a service station and a fast food outlet, but the contract is between the corporation and the service station operator.

THE CHAIR: Who will be the service station operator?

Ms Clarke: I just need to comment that we have a signed agreement in place with Woolworths, but there are some conditions that need to be finalised, such as the development application being approved.

THE CHAIR: And the food outlet will be operated by who?

Ms Clarke: It is for Woolworths to put in place whatever arrangement they have because our contract is with Woolworths.

THE CHAIR: So will it be a fast food outlet or will it be a food retail outlet?

Ms Clarke: My understanding is that it is a fast food outlet.

THE CHAIR: So when will we know that?

Ms Clarke: As soon as the DA is put out into the—

THE CHAIR: We will know it from its distinctive shape, will we?

MS LE COUTEUR: When you awarded the contract to Woolworths, did you take into account the government's supermarket policy, bearing in mind that Woolworths has a supermarket very close to EPIC? Was this a consideration?

Ms Clarke: The procurement process for the service station and fast food outlet went out to tender and went through the procurement process with the board. I am not privy

to whether they actually considered that policy.

Mr Barr: That is a petrol station, not a supermarket, so—

Ms Clarke: Yes, it is not a supermarket.

MS LE COUTEUR: I do appreciate that, yes.

Ms Clarke: Sometimes they sell milk or bread.

MS LE COUTEUR: I assume, and I even hope, that they will because it has been one of the complaints of people. They really miss having a convenience store there, actually.

Ms Clarke: It is certainly good for EPIC to have for events or with our caravan park. It is good that you have got a facility instead of having to get a bus down to Dickson shopping centre.

THE CHAIR: The time being 5 o'clock, we might call it a day there. Minister, I thank you and your officials for your attendance today. We have had output class 1.3, tourism venues and events, and output class 1.4, sport and recreation, as well as the Exhibition Park Corporation, in attendance. Regarding any questions taken on notice, you have five working days in which to supply answers. Members, you have four working days in which to put additional questions as you feel necessary on the record for answering.

Rather than have a chair's award today, let me just say that the weekend is upon us. We have, members, only one further day of hearings to go so this weekend may I suggest that you take the advice of Mr Jim Murphy and enjoy the good times.

The committee adjourned at 4.59 pm.