



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3))

Members:

**MS C LE COUTEUR (The Chair)
MR B SMYTH (The Deputy Chair)
MS J BURCH**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 11 MARCH 2009

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms A Cullen (Ph: 6205 0142)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Committee Office of the Legislative Assembly (Ph: 6205 0127).

APPEARANCES

Canberra Institute of Technology	24
Department of Education and Training	24
Department of Justice and Community Safety	49
Department of Territory and Municipal Services	24
Exhibition Park Corporation.....	24
Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory Secretariat	56

Privilege statement

The committee has authorised the recording, broadcasting and rebroadcasting of these proceedings.

All witnesses making submissions or giving evidence to an Assembly committee are protected by parliamentary privilege.

“Parliamentary privilege” means the special rights and immunities which belong to the Assembly, its committees and its members. These rights and immunities enable committees to operate effectively, and enable those involved in committee processes to do so without obstruction, or fear of prosecution. Witnesses must tell the truth, and giving false or misleading evidence will be treated as a serious matter.

While the committee prefers to hear all evidence in public, it may take evidence in-camera if requested. Confidential evidence will be recorded and kept securely. It is within the power of the committee at a later date to publish or present all or part of that evidence to the Assembly; but any decision to publish or present in-camera evidence will not be taken without consulting with the person who gave the evidence.

Amended 21 January 2009

The committee met at 2.01 pm.

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Children and Young People, Minister for Planning and Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation

Department of Territory and Municipal Services
Byles, Mr Gary, Acting Chief Executive
Elliott, Mr Tom, Acting Executive Director, Enterprise Services

Exhibition Park Corporation
Sadler, Mr Tony, General Manager

Department of Education and Training
Tardif, Mr Phillip, Acting Deputy Chief Executive
Whybrow, Mr Mark, Director, Finance and Facilities

Canberra Institute of Technology
Adrian, Dr Colin, Chief Executive
Kowald, Mr Peter, Deputy Chief Executive, Operations
Radic, Mr Ivan, Operations Manager, Central Support Centre

THE CHAIR: I formally declare open the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3). On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, minister, and relevant departmental officials, some of whom are still on their way, for appearing today. We are firstly going to examine the appropriation bill in relation to the items that are the responsibility of the Minister for Planning, followed by items for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation, and concluding with items for the Education and Training portfolio.

I am sure you have all seen the privilege card and have no desire to listen to me read it. Before we proceed, have you an opening statement, minister?

Mr Barr: No, Madam Chair, I am happy to proceed straight to questions.

THE CHAIR: My first question is with respect to you in your role as planning minister, about Nudurr Drive. From my limited research—we had a look on the website and found that it is already up on ACT Procurement Solutions, with the tender starting on 21 February. How come it has already gone for tender if it is in this? And can you say a bit more about what it is.

Mr Barr: In the first instance, the project comprises the forward design of the extension of Nudurr Drive from Grampians Street, Palmerston to Gungahlin Drive. I am advised by the Planning and Land Authority that it is in order to provide adequate traffic access to the suburbs of Crace and Palmerston. The extension of Nudurr Drive to Gungahlin Drive coincides with the land release that was commenced in Crace this financial year. There will be 1,200 dwellings once that development is complete.

The implementation strategy is indeed that the call for tenders went out on 21 February. They close on 17 March. A preliminary sketch plan would be required by June of this year, with development application lodgement in August, and the forward design plan being complete by September 2009. You will see that the funding proposal here is over the two financial years.

As to why the tenders have been called in advance, it would probably be a cash flow issue. ACTPLA will have had a budget for the work associated with the Crace development. This is bringing forward that design for this major link road. I can seek some further advice from ACTPLA officials when they arrive, but that would be why. But you will see that the bulk of the money falls in the next financial year and this is simply bringing forward this piece of work.

MR SMYTH: You said it is because of cash flow?

Mr Barr: It might be, but it could also be that ACTPLA have an existing budget for the work around Crace.

MR SMYTH: That raises a question. If they have actually got an existing budget that would accommodate at least this \$100,000, then one could assume that you do not need it therefore.

Mr Barr: It might. I doubt if it is going to accommodate that \$100,000, but it might accommodate the starting of the tender process.

THE CHAIR: Any more questions?

MR SMYTH: No; I think it is a bit late.

MS BURCH: I do not think I can take any more from that.

MR SMYTH: I have a general question when you are finished.

THE CHAIR: That is all I had on that.

MR SMYTH: Is this the only project that ACTPLA could call forward? Is this the only project for all the work that is going on in the ACT—whether it be in Gungahlin, Molonglo or anywhere else across the ACT—that ACTPLA can call forward at short term?

Mr Barr: That could be brought forward in this time frame?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Barr: Certainly that was funded through this third appropriation, yes.

MR SMYTH: So there is nothing else in—

Mr Barr: ACTPLA has a huge amount, but then there is—

MR SMYTH: But none of that is even close to being able to be called forward?

Mr Barr: There is a budget process that we are currently going through for a much more extensive forward program for ACTPLA but, in terms of projects that were deliverable within the time frames and criteria that the Treasurer set for this appropriation, this was the number one priority for ACTPLA.

MR SMYTH: The number one or the only one?

Mr Barr: The number one priority for ACTPLA.

MR SMYTH: Could we have a list of what the other priorities were?

Mr Barr: No, because I have not completed that list. It is under current consideration in our budget process at the moment.

MR SMYTH: There is a contradiction there. It is either the only one and you cannot give us anything else because it is the only one or, if there is a list and it is number one, surely that list is available to the committee?

Mr Barr: If you are asking me to give to you all the budget bids that ACTPLA have put forward, I am not in a position to do that.

THE CHAIR: I think we have to ask that question in estimates, Brendan.

Mr Barr: In the estimates, yes, in the budget process.

MR SMYTH: We might ask it a couple of times on a couple of days as well.

THE CHAIR: Any more on planning?

MS BURCH: No, not on planning.

MR SMYTH: On page 34, in the infrastructure program for next year, the 2009-10 capital upgrades, again there is only one project listed for ACTPLA, which is the land release infrastructure improvements—roads, paths, fencing and landscape minor works, at \$325,000. Can you inform the committee of where that is and what it is?

Mr Barr: I will have to take that on notice until an ACTPLA official arrives. It is a very small part of the capital upgrade programs and in terms of the detail of that I do not have that in front of me.

MR SMYTH: Right.

THE CHAIR: Are we ready to finish?

MR SMYTH: Again I will ask the obligatory question.

Mr Barr: We can come back to that.

MR SMYTH: Is that again the only work that ACTPLA is planning to do next year in minor capital upgrades?

Mr Barr: That is its allocation under that capital upgrade program. It is only one portion of the overall capital program. There will of course be a substantive number of ACTPLA bids in the larger capital works program, but under the category of minor capital works ACTPLA has only a very small allocation. That is what that is indicating.

THE CHAIR: We might finish in your role as Minister for Planning and possibly segue back for a minute when ACTPLA comes.

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will move to speak to you as the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation. Welcome, Mr Byles. Minister, I imagine that you have not got an opening statement for this either?

Mr Barr: No.

THE CHAIR: This is just EPIC, as I understand it?

Mr Barr: No; this would be EPIC and Stromlo forest park.

THE CHAIR: Is Stromlo forest park the arboretum?

Mr Barr: No. Stromlo is mountain biking, cross-country running, equestrian—what else is there?

Mr Byles: Just running.

Mr Barr: Running, yes.

MR SMYTH: Anything you want it to be.

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Anything that is on Stromlo.

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Can you tell us a bit more about where the restaurant is in EPIC? I am trying to imagine it. In the grandstand?

Mr Barr: It is the Terrace Restaurant, the refurbishment. I will get Mr Sadler to give you a little bit of detail about exactly where in the park it is, but the refurbishment involves upgrading of the internal walls, improved lighting and acoustic ceiling treatment, for the princely sum of \$50,000.

Another initiative at EPIC, whilst I am on a roll, is the installation and accelerated

delivery of on-site recycling and rubbish removal; that is a \$40,000 project. Then there is a \$70,000 project involving the installation of some new footpaths and upgrading of the storage system for hazardous chemicals and combustible materials. The footpaths and upgraded paths are to be complete by the end of April and the hazardous chemicals material storage is to be completed by 30 June.

THE CHAIR: Can you tell us a bit more about the recycling and rubbish removal stations?

Mr Sadler: Most people would know that we have a huge number of events at EPIC and they are very varied. Obviously, they generate a lot of waste removal—packaging, wrappings on food and that type of thing. We have a cleaning contractor. We are building a recycling and rubbish removal station where we can take all the bulk garbage that is collected, recycle it and remove it properly.

THE CHAIR: So you will have different bins there; you will have a recycling bin and a general bin?

Mr Sadler: Some of the events have three bins and—

THE CHAIR: I know about some of the events; the Folk Festival has three bins.

Mr Sadler: The Folk Festival are certainly the best at EPIC, and probably the worst are some of the other major events that are there, and I guess you would know that from the type of clientele. It is an education process to try and get people to put the right things in the right bins. Certainly the Folk Festival people are far more amenable to that than those at other events.

THE CHAIR: But in general, after this has been done, you will have at least two bins for everything happening there? You will have a general and a recycling?

Mr Sadler: This is not provision of bins. This is provision of a station out the back where things like that can be sorted.

THE CHAIR: Have you looked at providing the bins—

Mr Sadler: Yes, we have.

THE CHAIR: so that people can sort it themselves rather than your staff doing it?

Mr Sadler: It is easy to provide the bins; it is very difficult to provide the people to put the things in the bins correctly. That is the problem.

MS BURCH: So you are looking at on-site separation?

Mr Sadler: Yes. It is out the back, on the edge of the northern car park, well removed from where all the public will go.

THE CHAIR: Forgetting the Folk Festival, with the other groups, have you done any trials of actually having two bins to see how—

Mr Sadler: Yes, three bins.

THE CHAIR: Two or three bins.

Mr Sadler: Three bins, at the big events, yes indeed.

THE CHAIR: And the contamination rate has been too high?

Mr Sadler: I would say it has been 20 per cent successful. And I would rate the Folk Festival at probably 80 to 90 per cent.

THE CHAIR: It is a bit depressing. Have you looked at trying to influence what people sell in terms of having maybe fewer non-recyclables? If there are fewer options as to where people put things, they might manage to get them in the right ones.

Mr Sadler: I am sure the people who have been running these events for 20 years would be fairly well across the type of food and that sort of thing that their customers want.

THE CHAIR: Are there any more questions on this?

MR SMYTH: Yes. The hazardous chemicals and combustible materials storage system: what is currently in place, how is it deficient and what are you replacing it with?

Mr Sadler: Obviously, we have suitable storage areas. The cabinets are getting very old. We are getting a consultant in to make sure that they are up to standard and, if they are not, we intend to replace them.

MR SMYTH: So this is a consultancy to look at them?

Mr Sadler: No. We have estimated that the total exercise will be done with the remaining amount of money that we have got left there.

MR SMYTH: So there is a central storage area or are there areas all around the park?

Mr Sadler: There are areas all around the park, but there is one major area in our maintenance shed where the public cannot go, where the bulk of this is stored.

MR SMYTH: And all of this work will be completed very quickly? It will be completed in this financial year?

Mr Sadler: Yes. We already had a contract up and running to upgrade the restaurant and this is just some additional work that we required.

MR SMYTH: So how much is that existing contract for?

Mr Sadler: The existing contract is \$100,000.

MR SMYTH: So this will take it to \$150,000?

Mr Sadler: Correct.

MR SMYTH: And is this additional work or is this the budget blowing out?

Mr Sadler: No, this is additional work.

MR SMYTH: So what does the existing contract look at?

Mr Sadler: There was some catering equipment, there was some painting, there was some shade cloth at the entrance, upgrading of the entrance.

THE CHAIR: Are there any more questions?

Mr Barr: I was just going to say that the final element within the Tourism, Sport and Recreation package relates to Stromlo forest park, but if you have any further questions on EPIC or—

MR SMYTH: Before we get off EPIC, on page 35, the capital upgrades for 2009-10, there is a list of projects there. With things like the upgrade of the underground power network, is it inefficient, is it a need or is it at risk of deterioration?

Mr Sadler: Parts of the venue are getting towards 30 and 40 years old now. It is a checking, a refurbishing, to make sure that there are no safety issues and gradually upgrading all the infrastructure out there.

MR SMYTH: With the electronic billboard, is that one billboard and, if so, where would it go?

Mr Sadler: There is one there at the moment right on the corner as you go in, on Northbourne Avenue, and we are looking at one to capture the people coming from the northern side, on that side of the road but about 300 or 400 metres up.

MR SMYTH: The trade waste disposal upgrade: what do you get for \$40,000?

Mr Sadler: This is the report from a consultant telling me what we need. I am just reading it at the moment.

MR SMYTH: Do you want to take that on notice and get back to us?

Mr Sadler: Yes, sure.

MR SMYTH: The upgrade of catering equipment: you have got money in the existing contract for the Terrace Restaurant. Where will this be for?

Mr Sadler: This is partly in the upgraded area, the sheds that the farmers' market use. We currently operate off a couple of barbecues outside; we make bacon and egg rolls and things like that.

MR SMYTH: Very nice bacon and egg rolls.

Mr Sadler: The staff have to set that up on Friday and leave it there overnight, so we are better off putting it in a kitchen and hopefully it can provide a better range of food on Saturdays.

MR SMYTH: And you can do that for \$90,000?

Mr Sadler: No, there was part of the shed contract; there was \$1 million to extend the two sheds. So it is just a top-up of that because we were not sure of exactly what catering equipment we wanted.

MR SMYTH: So this is a top-up?

Mr Sadler: Yes.

MR SMYTH: What is the upgrade of exhibition equipment—suitably vague?

Mr Sadler: That is screening systems, PA systems and those types of things.

MR SMYTH: Can we get a list of that?

Mr Sadler: Yes. Somebody will send me—

Mr Barr: We will take that on notice.

MR SMYTH: The minister would love to sign off on that letter.

Mr Barr: Yes, we can provide that information.

MR SMYTH: The refurbishment of the Cotter campground facility: which area is called the Cotter?

Mr Sadler: That is the existing campground.

MR SMYTH: On Flemington Road?

Mr Sadler: No, it is the one near the trotting practice track. It has been there for about 20 years and the roadways are starting to disintegrate, the sides of them, and things like that.

MR SMYTH: And bitumen in the stabling complex: is that just between the stables?

Mr Sadler: Yes. There is a large area in there, between the things. If you were there at the show, it had tanbark all over it.

THE CHAIR: Nothing more on that?

MR SMYTH: Not on this, but I have a final question: so you are now the minister for EPIC?

Mr Barr: Yes. Exhibition Park is now part of Territory Venues and Events, and falls under my portfolio responsibilities.

MR SMYTH: Although it still has a board at this stage?

Mr Barr: Yes, but it will not by the end of this financial year.

MR SMYTH: How will that be achieved?

Mr Barr: I have disbanded the board, and Territory Venues and Events will take over responsibility for—

MR SMYTH: Does the act not call for a board?

Mr Byles: We are currently going through a process of transition. The transition team under the new AAR arrangement will be addressing this very issue about the transition of EPIC. One of the requirements is to look at the legislative requirements; hence we set a time frame of the end of this financial year to address that and a range of other issues involved in the transition.

MR SMYTH: Minister, if I heard you correctly, you just said you had already disbanded the board?

Mr Barr: No, I have advised the board of my intention that—

MR SMYTH: You have advised the board?

Mr Barr: Yes. I have written to them saying that we are wanting to bring Exhibition Park into the Territory Venues and Events group and have set a time line to achieve that.

MR SMYTH: Why is that? What has EPIC done wrong or what has the board not achieved that would require its absorption back into TAMS?

Mr Barr: You would be aware, following the 2006-07 budget, we disbanded the Manuka Oval Management Committee and the Canberra Stadium equivalent.

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Barr: We have brought all of those venues into one consolidated group. Exhibition Park, because it was sitting in another portfolio, was not part of that transition at that time. It was somewhat of an anomaly as a major event venue that it was sitting outside the Territory Venues and Events group. Following the change in admin orders, it came into my area of portfolio responsibility. It would be incongruous to have one board for one venue and not have boards for the others. Having made the decision not to have boards, we are simply continuing that philosophy through to this venue as well.

MR SMYTH: But will the commercial expertise that the board currently gives EPIC

be available through the department?

Mr Barr: Certainly, the management of the venue will remain the same.

MR SMYTH: Yes, but you have got some significant people on the board—

Mr Barr: Indeed, yes.

MR SMYTH: who offer experience in business, accounting, project management—

Mr Barr: Absolutely, yes.

MR SMYTH: and in a whole host of areas. Will that expertise be available from the department?

Mr Barr: Yes, because we are bringing in a new set of expertise consistent with management of other commercial facilities like Canberra Stadium, Manuka oval and Stromlo forest park.

MR SMYTH: But at this stage it will have to go through the Assembly and the act will have to be removed; otherwise the board, under law, will still be required to be in place?

Mr Barr: The act might have to be amended, yes.

THE CHAIR: Are there any more questions for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Recreation?

MR SMYTH: Stromlo Forest?

Mr Barr: Stromlo forest park, yes. It is bringing forward \$300,000 in expenditure. That involves some landscaping works adjacent to the pavilion. The next phase in the master plan for that site involves the construction of a young children's bicycle park, for children aged three to eight, together with some play equipment, a visitor shelter, some barbecues and landscaping. The project also involves some further landscaping on the southern side of the pavilion, some increased viewing opportunities for the criterium track and general site hardening and landscape improvements, I am advised.

MR SMYTH: What does "site hardening" mean?

Mr Barr: That is a very good question.

MR SMYTH: And I am sure Mr Elliott is dying to answer it!

Mr Elliott: I think that means that what they are going to do is take some of the broad grass and other environments and specify some spaces. That would be a bit of kerbing; it would be a bit of designated space for people to walk around—in what is basically a paddock or an open grassed area at the moment. It just means that they are going to build the amenity of the site to the southern area of the pavilion and turn it into a children's area with improved viewing access to the track. It is part of the

\$1.7 million improvements to Stromlo forest park. The purpose of bringing forward this \$300,000 is just to accelerate that particular work.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much.

Mr Barr: I can refer back to the previous question and table for the committee the description of the ACTPLA \$317,000 worth of 2009 capital upgrade funding. I will just table it; it is probably easier just to do that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. We have finished with you as minister for tourism et cetera. We now move on to talking to you as the minister for education.

Mr Barr: You will do the department of education first and then CIT second?

THE CHAIR: Whichever you would like.

MR SMYTH: Just before you go, I notice that this chart says \$895,000 for capital upgrade funding. That is the intersections?

Mr Barr: No. I think the authorisation is \$317,000. The projects add up to \$316,105. That means a balance of \$895.

MR SMYTH: In that case, where does the number of \$325,000 come from on page 34? That is 2008-09.

Mr Barr: I may have just given you the current year.

MR SMYTH: You have given us the 2008-09 total upgrade.

Mr Barr: Sorry; I have been provided with the wrong piece of paper. We will get ACTPLA to print out—

MR SMYTH: In fact, we want the 2009-10.

Mr Barr: That is what it was spent on this year. That is the sort of work. Yes, that has got 2008-09 on it, and I want 2009-10.

THE CHAIR: So if we had asked this question nine months ago, we would have got this?

Mr Barr: Yes, you would have got that piece of paper. Apologies for handing you the wrong financial year's capital update program. I will ask for the 2009-10 one to be provided.

MR SMYTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A very similar amount of money?

Mr Barr: Yes, a similar amount of money, and I imagine a similar range of projects.

THE CHAIR: We will go to Education and Training. You wanted to have the CIT after the department?

Mr Barr: Yes. We will deal with departmental work in schools, which is stormwater and sewer pipes, roof access systems and asbestos removal.

THE CHAIR: And then the CIT afterwards? Okay. Do you have an opening statement?

Mr Barr: No, I do not have a statement on this section either.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Barr: The detail in front of you goes to outline each of the initiatives. The stormwater and sewer pipe replacement is replacement of aged and damaged underground stormwater and sewerage pipes across ACT public schools. The roof access system project is to ensure that all ACT public schools have a compliant roof access system, in accordance with Australian standards. The asbestos removal program is the removal of that in situ—that is, contained asbestos—at approximately 35 of what I presume are our older schools across the territory.

THE CHAIR: Is that going to get rid of all the asbestos or have we still got some more to go?

Mr Tardif: No, it will not, but it will make a good start on the asbestos in places like Dickson college, Wanniasa primary, Curtin primary and its two preschools and the other schools as well. What we have essentially done is identify the asbestos that is—I am not sure of the technical term—most at risk of coming into contact with people.

MS BURCH: How are you going to manage that removal through a school year?

Mr Barr: How do we manage the removal during—

Mr Tardif: What we do is try to do it at times—not during term time if we can avoid it. If it is during term time, those parts of the school are isolated and we make sure that all those safety standards are fully met.

Mr Whybrow: I should just note that there is an existing asbestos program within our schools at the moment. It is not something new. This type of work happens and has been happening for a number of years. While I am personally not aware of all the protocols, they are well established. As I have said, it has occurred for a number of years now.

MR SMYTH: Can the committee have a list of the 35 schools?

Mr Tardif: Yes. A list of the schools that—

MS BURCH: That this year and next year are earmarked for it.

Mr Tardif: Certainly.

MR SMYTH: It does raise a question. You have got 35 schools on the list. How many other schools, at the end of this program, will still have asbestos in them?

Mr Tardif: We can have a look at that. I guess it depends on the type of asbestos we are talking about—the asbestos with the sort of lagging on the pipes, the walls or inside the ceilings. There are different types. Sometimes you do not know until you do some refurbishment work: you remove the walls and there it is.

MR SMYTH: So this is asbestos that needs to be removed rather than material that is sealed and does not pose a health risk to the students and staff?

Mr Tardif: Yes.

THE CHAIR: It says it is in situ.

Mr Tardif: It is the highest priority.

THE CHAIR: It is contained.

Mr Barr: It is not a health risk at this point in time, but its safe removal will eliminate risk.

MR SMYTH: You have also got a program at CIT and you are going to do the same thing at CIT. We will get that a bit later.

THE CHAIR: We will get to CIT.

MS BURCH: Are the roof access systems a similar rolling type program?

Mr Tardif: Yes. There are about 20 schools that at the moment have adequate roof access systems. The idea is for this funding to provide roof access systems that meet Australian standards in all the schools. It involves installing brackets for tradesmen who need access to the roof so that they can safely hook the ladder up to the roof. Then there are sort of harness points right around the roof so that tradesmen can hook themselves onto those harness points, so that if they fall they are not going to kill themselves.

MR SMYTH: When was the standard changed?

Mr Tardif: I would have to take that on notice.

MR SMYTH: You said that 20 schools have done this—or put another 64 schools in compliance with this annually?

Mr Tardif: Yes.

MR SMYTH: All right.

THE CHAIR: Any more schools questions?

MR SMYTH: Yes, just on the stormwater. What schools will that be done at?

Mr Tardif: Melba Copland certainly. Telopea Park school. I could get you a list of the others.

MR SMYTH: Does it currently provide a threat to students and staff that we have got underground damaged stormwater drains?

Mr Tardif: No.

MR SMYTH: And the sewerage pipes?

Mr Tardif: No.

MR SMYTH: So there is no health risk from contamination from sewage?

Mr Tardif: No.

MR SMYTH: How did we become aware that these pipes are damaged? Is it just part of the regular maintenance program?

Mr Tardif: Yes, that is right. Doing the condition assessment reports on all the schools is part of the regular maintenance and capital works upgrades.

Mr Whybrow: And we find out these things from—we have the unblocking of those sewerage pipes, like people in any household who have roots creep into their pipes. It will reduce some of our ongoing costs of cleaning those out every few months in some of the worst affected schools.

MR SMYTH: So is this work reactive or proactive? Are you saying that this is to clear the known blockages or do you regularly survey to ensure that they do not become blocked?

Mr Whybrow: Within each of those school environments, part of it is both ways. Sometimes you will clean the blockage when it becomes blocked. Where we have got a regular known problem, we regularly service those within the schools.

MS BURCH: I have no questions.

THE CHAIR: In that case, we will move on to the CIT.

MR SMYTH: Before we go on—

THE CHAIR: I am sorry; I thought you were finished.

MR SMYTH: On page 32, the projects for next year, for the 2009-10 capital upgrade, the older school refurbishment—what is involved in both of those at Alfred Deakin and Canberra high? It is page 32, straight under the bold “Department of Education and Training”.

Mr Barr: They are part of our overall school upgrade package, so they all involve extensive works in all areas—painting, carpeting, looking at lighting fixtures. It really is a comprehensive upgrade of school facilities. Those older school refurbishment programs tend to be more on the internals; then there are larger individual projects that are funded as part of the \$90 million 2006-07 budget initiative that involves significant pieces of work. This program has been in operation for some time and in fact was pretty much the extent of regular older school upgrades prior to the \$90 million injection. It has been a rolling program that has been going for some time. There are a number of schools. I think last year Campbell high school, for example, had such an upgrade. That involved their front office and retiling—as I say, new carpet and repainting. It is that sort of work.

The scope of each project is done in consultation with the school community, obviously led by the principal and the school board. A discussion is had. Obviously, within the allocated budget you cannot always achieve everything that the school wants, but there is a high premium placed on upgrading older infrastructure, particularly in some of these high schools that date back to the 1950s in terms of their original construction.

MR SMYTH: And the older preschools—when will it be determined? We are being asked to approve \$500,000 here on sites that we are not being told about.

Mr Tardif: This \$500,000 is not additional funding.

Mr Whybrow: This is a break-up of capital upgrade programs; it is giving surety to our overarching program. Every year we have an amount in the order of \$12 million which we break up during the year. This was giving some clarity about those early, but as to the exact number and nature of works I would have to confirm where that is up to.

MR SMYTH: So it is a matter of “We want to spend this much and we will find projects” rather than—

Mr Barr: We do this; we allocate this amount or thereabouts every year. It is simply a case of—

MR SMYTH: So same, same?

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr Whybrow: I should point out that, as normally is the case with these things, we have a larger list of bids for what is wanted to be done by each of the preschools and then we allocate through priorities of what we can actually achieve year in, year out.

MR SMYTH: Is it possible to provide the quantum of the bids from the current financial year—how much was asked for?

Mr Barr: I presume so.

THE CHAIR: While we are on this section, you have got \$1 million for ESD upgrades for various schools. It is on the next page, at the bottom—building services improvements. Can you give me an idea of what sort of things you will be spending that money on?

Mr Barr: There are a range of programs that we have funded in the past. Those have principally involved focusing on our biggest energy-using schools, so they have traditionally been the high schools and colleges. It has involved work around replacing single-flush toilets with dual-flush toilets. It has been around replacing energy inefficient light bulbs with energy efficient ones. There is a range of those sorts of measures. It is also looking at shading to reduce thermal heat gain through summer and all those sorts of measures.

It fits into a broader government strategy that by 2017 all of our public schools will be carbon neutral. We have provided a significant 10-year funding program for that, and we are also picking up on elements of that through the capital upgrades program. In addition to our thinking around the 2017 target, I have sought to redirect funding within the capital upgrades program to also address sustainability issues.

THE CHAIR: From what you were saying, this one is basically a housekeeping program—light bulbs and toilets.

Mr Barr: Exactly. This capital upgrades program is small, minor works throughout. Obviously there are a couple under other headings. There are some significant projects there, but a lot of it is that minor work, and we then have other programs in place. This is a general comment, but schools are taking a significant leadership role both in terms of their own infrastructure and in terms of the curricula in leading on sustainability issues.

THE CHAIR: Good.

Mr Barr: We have some challenges with some of the very old school buildings, undoubtedly. They were built at a time when these sorts of issues perhaps were not as prevalent as they are today. Again, another general comment is that as we move forward, both in terms of the design of new schools and in terms of how we approach our refurbishment of existing schools, we are building more and more sustainability principles and are working with the Green Building Council, for example, on how we can retrofit older buildings to improve their environmental efficiency. This is an example of that sort of work and funding being directed to achieve that end.

MS BURCH: Also on that page, disabled—

MR SMYTH: Before we get onto that one, can I ask: the \$1 million is part of an ongoing program?

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SMYTH: So there would not be a list of what it is you intend to do. That is the allocation and you will keep it going to reach the target in 2017?

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SMYTH: So there is no list.

Mr Barr: There is a list of works, but it is a rolling program. I think it was commenced in 2007, so it is a decade-long program.

MR SMYTH: Is there a list of the works that will be done next financial year?

Mr Barr: Yes, we can provide that.

MS BURCH: I have a question around disabled access and the two colleges with disabled access. Is that an enhancement of what is there or is that providing better access for new students or more students?

Mr Barr: It is an enhancement of services, yes.

MR SMYTH: Are all of those schools currently compliant with the disability access standards?

Mr Barr: I would have to take that on notice. One would hope so and, if not, this would be addressing and enhancing those.

MR SMYTH: If you could take it on notice that would be fine.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR SMYTH: In relation to the security upgrades under building services you have nominated four schools. Is there a particular reason they have been chosen? Are they schools that were particularly targeted from vandalism or are there emerging needs that have led to them being included?

Mr Tardif: It is likely that they are schools that have been targeted more than others from vandalism, break-ins, where we have identified some need to upgrade that security.

MR SMYTH: What would be involved?

Mr Barr: It varies. Sometimes it is fencing, sometimes it is security grilles over windows. Obviously they are site specific. In some instances the vandalism on schools is just wanton smashing of windows for the sake of smashing windows. Other times it is smashing windows to get into computer labs, for example. As you would notice in schools at the moment, there are thousands of new computers so there is—

MR SMYTH: Apparently.

Mr Barr: Yes. There are, of course, requirements to ensure that they are protected. There can be a range of things, obviously site specific, and depending on a number of instances where schools have requested it.

MR SMYTH: Will it go to things like electronic motion sensors, cameras?

Mr Tardif: No.

Mr Barr: We have tended not to support CCTV type security. There are a range of issues that come with that. Whilst it might provide effective surveillance, sometimes there are also significant privacy issues around the filming of young children that we need to bear in mind when looking at that sort of electronic security. Our preference has been to look at alternative solutions rather than going down that path.

MR SMYTH: Is it possible for the committee to have a list of all of the schools and the number of incidents or security breaches at each of the schools over the last calendar year?

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Not just these four, but all ACT schools.

Mr Barr: Yes. That is not a problem.

THE CHAIR: Regarding your glazing improvements—this is the same page, under health and safety—are we going to double glazing or is it going to be reinforced glass?

Mr Barr: We might have to take that level of detail on notice, Madam Chair.

MR SMYTH: Does the department have a policy on glazing? Is it standard glass, toughened glass, armoured glass, double glazing?

Mr Tardif: I think it would be case by case. The problem with double glazing is that the windows tend to get broken and it is more expensive to constantly replace that. So we tend to go more for the toughened glass or for safety mesh—

MR SMYTH: With the safety glass. And at Florey and Lake Tuggeranong college, is it too much dancing or is it just fair wear and tear?

Mr Barr: We know down in the valley people love a dance.

MR SMYTH: They love their dance down in Tuggeranong, don't they, Joy?

Mr Barr: They are very happy in the electorate of Brindabella, yes.

MR SMYTH: We are very, very happy. Is it just fair wear and tear, maintenance?

Mr Tardif: I assume so; that is right.

MR SMYTH: At the top of the page, the specialist teaching area improvements, can we have a breakdown of which area it is for each of the schools listed?

Mr Tardif: Yes, we can do that. They tend to be science labs, home science, art

facilities, industrial technology—those sorts of areas. You will note that we are focusing on the high school-college sector. There is obviously a pretty significant commonwealth program around primary schools next year.

MR SMYTH: There is.

Mr Tardif: So we will focus our efforts in high schools and colleges.

MR SMYTH: The last one I have is—

THE CHAIR: Transportable classrooms.

MR SMYTH: transportable classrooms. How many transportable classrooms does one get for \$478,000?

THE CHAIR: And where are we transporting them to?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Barr: That is one.

MR SMYTH: That is one?

THE CHAIR: One?

Mr Barr: One, but they are effectively double units. Where do they go? They tend to go to new areas, so I imagine Gungahlin will be the location. We have one a year, effectively. Of course after a period of time we have to replace older demountables from times past. We have been relocating demountables out of Tuggeranong and into Gungahlin because that is where the growth in school enrolments is. School enrolments at Tuggeranong are declining and have been for some time. The growth is phenomenal in Gungahlin. I visited Amaroo last week and they are really at peak enrolments at this point.

MR SMYTH: Perhaps that line, just for the future, should read “location dependent on enrolments”, rather than “locations”.

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Regarding the shade structures at the two special schools, is that new or is that replacement of existing? It appears under health and safety improvements, halfway down the page.

THE CHAIR: You have got Black Mountain and Woden.

Mr Tardif: They would be new.

Mr Barr: New.

MR SMYTH: New?

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Fantastic. And what do you get for \$50,000?

Mr Tardif: I would have to take that on notice.

MR SMYTH: Just the size. Is it a big area?

Mr Barr: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You are going to get a lot of shade cloth for \$50,000.

Mr Barr: Yes. You would get good playground coverage for it. This is not like a domestic sized two-by-two triangle. This is something more significant than that.

MR SMYTH: My last question is about the Florey soft fall. What is that? Is that the new absorbent material?

Mr Barr: It is the spongy surface you have under playgrounds. In my day, and probably in yours, Mr Smyth, we had to fall on tanbark. This—

MR SMYTH: You were lucky; we had bitumen.

Mr Barr: You had bitumen? There you go.

MR SMYTH: It was good bitumen in Sydney.

Mr Barr: It was good bitumen? So when you were going to school barefoot in your coal sack—

MR SMYTH: No, we had given up the coal sacks—

Mr Barr: You had given them up, yes.

MR SMYTH: There was a growth spurt and we were all getting wheat sacks at that time.

Mr Barr: It is made from recycled material. It is, of course, under playground equipment, so if a student falls they are less likely to injure themselves.

MR SMYTH: Ultimately will every school have soft fall rather than tanbark?

Mr Barr: We are moving towards that. Certainly, in all of the refurbishments of school playgrounds that is the desired surface. We are moving towards that. I imagine under the commonwealth program in primary schools one of the elements that you can apply for is playground upgrades. I imagine that over the next couple of years we will see that completed through all of our schools.

THE CHAIR: And those are the recycled tyres, aren't they?

Mr Barr: Yes. It is certainly a recycled material. It is proof that everything old can be new again—even Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any more questions?

MS BURCH: No, I am done.

THE CHAIR: We will move on to the CIT then. Good afternoon, CIT gentlemen. I imagine there are no opening statements.

Mr Barr: No opening statements, other than there is \$2.67 million, which is effectively the bringing forward of the capital upgrades program for the CIT. Mr Kowald and Dr Adrian are here, and Ivan as well.

Mr Radic: I am the acting facilities manager at CIT.

Mr Barr: They can answer your questions in incredible detail.

THE CHAIR: My question is about the bore. How did you work out that you had enough water and what impact is this going to have on groundwater in the area? And how do you get a licence for it? I guess you know the government, and that probably helps.

Mr Radic: The bore is already licensed. We have had the bore in place since the early nineties. The initial licence allocation was for 15 megalitres per annum. Recently, Environment ACT has approved an additional 14 megalitres per annum, so the total capacity at the moment is 29 megalitres. With the existing pump, the existing bore, we can pump 15,000 litres per hour.

THE CHAIR: Have you done any work to make sure this is sustainable? I am aware that the Raiders have just opened a new bore there. Is there enough water to have—

Mr Radic: The Raiders do not have a bore. The Raiders are basically tenants on our site. We own the bore. We plan to, as part of this funding proposal, reticulate existing bore water to the Raiders' oval.

Dr Adrian: The current arrangement with the Raiders essentially means that they operate on the town water system, so the additional \$500,000 there, as Ivan has indicated, will enable us to do further capture of stormwater on the full CIT site, and the bore water that we can capture as well, which will mean that in large part we would envisage that the Raiders would be able to use that water as opposed to accessing the town water.

THE CHAIR: How much of it is going to be stormwater and how much of it will be bore water?

Mr Radic: I explained the capacity of the bore water. We have additional approval from Environment ACT to harvest 35 megalitres of stormwater run-off, which will be collected in a dam which we are currently building. We also propose to capture roof

run-off, clean water from the roofs, which will entail putting some tanks around the campus and reticulating that clean water to glasshouses and other horticulture needs.

MR SMYTH: You said you have got a licence for 50 megalitres?

Mr Radic: We have a licence for 29 megalitres for bore water.

MR SMYTH: And it is going up to what?

Mr Barr: It was 15—

THE CHAIR: It was 15 and they have got an extra—

MR SMYTH: 15, not 50? Sorry.

Mr Radic: It was 15—

Mr Barr: Going to 29, yes.

THE CHAIR: It was 15; they have got an extra 14.

Mr Barr: Yes.

Mr Radic: It was 15 and it has been increased recently to 29.

MR SMYTH: What is the existing use of water at the CIT at Bruce? Do you know how many megalitres you use a year?

Mr Radic: Our previous bore water allocation we have used for irrigating existing grounds. We do not use any potable water for ground irrigation; it is all bore water.

THE CHAIR: And that includes the Raiders? You were saying before they were on the town water supply?

Mr Radic: In the past they were on town water. We just did not have enough water to give to the Raiders. We plan to change that.

THE CHAIR: That would be enough to make the Raiders not need town water anymore, I assume?

Mr Radic: It will go a long way towards making them less dependent on town water.

MR SMYTH: And at the same time, it will allow for the establishment of the horticultural facility out there, to have adequate water to—

Mr Radic: That is right. The idea is to make the new horticulture facility drought resistant. We want to “proof” the new horticulture facility, if there is a stage 4 or stage 5 water restriction.

MR SMYTH: I am curious about water proofing the stairwells. Do they currently

leak? Are they outdoors?

Mr Barr: The stairwell roofs, isn't it?

THE CHAIR: It does say "roofs".

MR SMYTH: If the roof is not waterproof then the stairwell is not waterproof.

Mr Radic: The Bruce campus is almost 30 years old. For some reason, in the late seventies, mid-seventies, when it was designed, they went crazy with bitumen membranes as a means of waterproofing roofs. So all of our stairwells were waterproofed by using a bitumen compound. On top of that, they put gravel, which made it worse, and every time tradesmen walked on the gravel, they actually punctured the membrane. What is happening now is that just about all of them leak, and we have a rolling program to replace them.

THE CHAIR: And you have got installation of solar hot-water systems. Will that mean that the whole campus in Reid is solar—

Mr Radic: No, it will not. Initially, we plan to do buildings F and G and totally replace existing electric hot-water systems in those buildings with solar. I do not know the exact number, but we have a lot of electric hot-water systems spread throughout the campus. Ultimately, it would be nice to be able to replace all of those, and it is something that we probably need to look at in the future as part of our strategy to meet the climate change targets as outlined in *Weathering the Change*, so that is what we aim for.

THE CHAIR: Would you have an idea of what proportion of your hot water you are replacing with this \$150,000? Is it a drop in the ocean or—

Mr Radic: We will probably be replacing around a 4,000 to 5,000 litre capacity hot-water system.

MR SMYTH: And how much hot water capacity is there in total at that campus?

Mr Radic: If we include tourism, which is a large consumer, I am only guessing here now, but probably triple that.

THE CHAIR: So that is about a third—

Mr Radic: It is significant.

THE CHAIR: So you are doing about a third of them?

Mr Radic: Correct, yes.

THE CHAIR: That is good.

MR SMYTH: I am curious about the replacement of kitchen taps. How many—

Mr Barr: I was going to do a demonstration of turning them on with elbows!

MR SMYTH: Tap dancing?

Mr Barr: We have had this joke upstairs already.

MR SMYTH: How many kitchen taps are there for \$140,000?

Mr Radic: Yes, it is a lot of money. Unfortunately, we do have six kitchens. The way the tapware is designed, it is actually sealed with stainless steel sheets. You cannot access existing twin for hot and cold to adequately service these taps, and they leak all the time. We get calls all the time from students and staff. It is a continual battle to keep them in working order. So we are proposing to replace them with minimum four-star water rating mixer type taps, which will save maintenance costs and reduce water consumption. A lot of the cost is not just in the tap; it is actually digging that tap out and making it good because it is encased in a stainless steel wall.

MR SMYTH: The water tanks at Reid and Bruce: how big will the tanks be?

Mr Radic: At Reid campus, we are only proposing to put in less than 20,000 litre tanks. There will be at least half a dozen of those. The idea behind that was to avoid development approval. Anything under 20,000 litres, you do not need it.

MR SMYTH: And at Bruce?

Mr Radic: At Bruce campus we are proposing to put in a lot larger tanks. Each one of those will be a 120,000 litre tank. The aim is to install at least seven of them, depending on the tendering process—at least five. We know we can afford at least five for the money.

MS BURCH: I have a question on page 23, at the end of the table, replacement of the dust extraction system at Bruce. Is that in one of the teaching units?

Mr Radic: That is in the teaching carpentry workshops. The existing system is almost 20 years old. The latest equipment requires a lot more suction, a lot more vacuum, to extract all the dust. This system just cannot provide adequate suction if you have more than three pieces of equipment running at any one time.

MR SMYTH: You said you were going to put in six 20,000 litre tanks at Reid, but somewhere between five and seven 120,000 litre tanks at Bruce, but it is going to cost the same amount of money. It seems to be an extraordinarily good deal.

Mr Radic: For Bruce campus, all up, we are actually spending \$620,000.

MR SMYTH: Okay, so how much will this \$120,000 buy?

Mr Radic: Roughly, depending on the tendering process, half a dozen tanks. You have got to remember it is not only the tanks; it is also the reticulation, pumping system—

MR SMYTH: So \$120,000 will buy six tanks for Bruce?

Mr Radic: No, for Reid.

MR SMYTH: Six tanks for Reid. How much will \$120,000 buy for Bruce?

Mr Radic: At Bruce, for that amount, you would probably only get a couple of tanks because of distances involved in reticulation.

MR SMYTH: And the other five to seven that you want to put in you will get from other sources?

Mr Kowald: We are spending \$620,000 all up, and at Reid we are spending \$120,000.

MR SMYTH: But you have already got \$500,000, or are you asking for \$500,000 next year?

Mr Kowald: No, the third appropriation gives us \$500,000 for Bruce in addition to the \$120,000.

MR SMYTH: So it is the \$500,000 at the top—

Mr Kowald: Yes.

MR SMYTH: for the implementation of stormwater plus—

Mr Kowald: Yes, implementation of stormwater and bore water reticulation at Bruce campus.

MR SMYTH: Okay.

Mr Kowald: So both of those combined makes \$620,000.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, gentlemen. Mr Smyth may have some questions on notice.

Meeting adjourned from to 3.02 to 3.31 pm.

Appearances:

Corbell, Mr Simon, Attorney-General, Minister for the Environment, Climate Change and Water, Minister for Energy and Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Department of Justice and Community Safety

Manson, Mr Gregor, Commissioner, ACT Emergency Services Agency

THE CHAIR: I formally declare open this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3). On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the minister and officials for appearing before us this afternoon, especially given such short notice. The committee is examining the appropriation bill in relation to the items which fall within the responsibility of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, who we have here with us. I imagine you are all familiar with the contents of the privilege card which is in front of you, so I will not bore you by reading it to you.

Mr Corbell: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Minister, do you have any statement to start with?

Mr Corbell: No, I do not have an opening statement, but I and the officials will be happy to try and answer your questions.

THE CHAIR: I have got the opening broad question. We have got half a million for minor emergency services, agency stations and sheds. Can you give us a bit more detail on that?

Mr Corbell: Yes. I will ask Mr Manson to give you a bit more detail, but generally speaking these upgrades are designed to rectify a range of issues with the current condition of both ambulance and fire brigade stations and also RFS and SES sheds and other buildings. They are a result of inspections that have been ongoing through the development of the ESA strategic asset management plan and also identify a range of measures to ensure that the buildings meet the relevant Building Code of Australia standards.

They are, in the main, minor works, but the beauty of this package is that it allows us to address those, rectify those issues in those buildings and provide work to a range of trades that deal with small-scale jobs that will allow them to stay employed and engaged and with a healthy work program—which of course was the purpose of the package: to provide a level of activity to local tradespeople for a defined period of time. It certainly meets those criteria very well. I will ask the Commissioner to give you some more detail on the specific elements of the program.

Mr Manson: As the minister indicated, we did a strategic asset management plan in about 2006. From that plan, we identified high-priority health and safety and building compliance issues across all of our facilities in the ACT. The ESA's internal budget and some assistance from special appropriations have provided us with an opportunity to work through that list on a priority basis. This initiative brings forward some of the remaining issues on that list, so that we can bring all of our stations up to full

compliance with the Building Code and with health and safety.

I might add that our volunteers make a huge personal contribution in hours to the ACT. Providing them with good facilities is a way for the government and the community to provide them with a thankyou for the numerous hours that they put in.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Smyth is PAC's resident expert in this regard.

MR SMYTH: You said that there was a list of work that had not been able to be carried out previously. Can the committee have a copy of the list of what this half a million dollars will go on?

Mr Manson: Certainly. We do have a list of the stations and works. As I said, it comes from the strategic asset management plan. That is the basis for it—and some work done in the station relocation study, which confirmed the minor works list. Last year there was a confirmation of that list again. We are happy to make that document available to the committee if it wishes to see it. Each building has a sheet and a list of activities to build them up to compliance.

MR SMYTH: Do you happen to know the split between the stations and the sheds?

Mr Corbell: Yes. The information I have on that is that, of the total million dollars appropriated over the period in question, ambulance stations will receive approximately \$140,000 worth of work, fire brigade stations \$110,000 and RFS and SES sheds in the order of \$420,000. There is then a component for design supervision, project management and procurement.

MR SMYTH: How much is that?

Mr Corbell: Design and supervision are in the order of \$165,000; project management is \$125,000; procurement and other associated costs are \$40,000.

MR SMYTH: So 33 per cent of the total appropriation will go on supervision, design and procurement?

Mr Corbell: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Is that the standard for these sorts of projects?

Mr Manson: Yes, that is a standard percentage that we use on our project management costs. "Design and supervision" is the draftsman's works for some of the drawings that need to be done; contract specifications in some cases where building code compliance is required; and project management to ensure that these projects are carried out in full consultation with the occupants of the buildings, particularly in the case of talking to brigade captains and commanders of SES units. We want to make sure that there is proper consultation there. We have allocated a very experienced person, Darren Smith, to manage this project. He has a great deal of knowledge of our facilities. We need to backfill his position; it covers the whole of department maintenance costs.

MR SMYTH: Has the split been done as to how much will be spent on labour, how much will be spent on materials and how much will be spent on fittings?

Mr Manson: I do not have those figures, but we could take that on notice and give you an idea. I would say it is probably about half and half, as a guesstimate. Most of these are small to medium jobs where we will use the panel providers that we have in the ACT government—so we can do these jobs quickly because we do not need to go through the full tender process.

MR SMYTH: And all RFS sheds will have something done at them?

Mr Corbell: Not all RFS sheds. There are a number of RFS sheds that require more major work, which falls outside the scope of this appropriation. The government is giving consideration to those works as part of the budget process.

MR SMYTH: Which ones will miss out?

Mr Corbell: Rivers RFS and SES facility, the Jerrabomberra RFS facility and Tidbinbilla RFS.

MR SMYTH: Of all the sheds, Tidbinbilla is probably the oldest and the most in need of attention. Why is Tidbinbilla not on the list? Is the government actively considering a larger project for Tidbinbilla?

Mr Corbell: I will ask Mr Manson to give you some background on this. I should just indicate, though, that I have recently received some representations from the Tidbinbilla brigade, and I am in the process of arranging a time to meet with them to better understand the issues in relation to their facility. Mr Manson can give you more information.

Mr Manson: The Tidbinbilla shed is actually on private property. While the owner is happy to have it there, it is a very old facility. As part of the station relocation study looking strategically ahead for the next 30 years, we have identified that Tidbinbilla should probably move to a new location somewhere in the same area. The reason that we have not put forward any expenditure right now is that we need to negotiate a new location. We would be proposing, in a major station relocation project, that we provide a new shed for Tidbinbilla, preferably on government-owned land which may be available in the area.

At the moment we are just trying to be prudent in making sure that we do not spend any money that we would not be able to recoup later on. However, as the minister suggested, there are a number of minor works that can be undertaken at Tidbinbilla—not necessarily from this budget but from within our internal maintenance budget. That will be subject to some advice, no doubt, from the minister when he speaks with the brigades, but we have also had it on our list to look at.

MR SMYTH: For the information of the committee, and if the minister has not been out recently, let me say that Tidbinbilla is a very old shed. Tidbinbilla currently has a tanker, two light units, a command vehicle and a quick fill. They can get only a tanker and a light unit into the shed. And it is on a crest, which has traffic problems,

particularly when they train. That somebody has not been killed out there is nothing short of a miracle. If you want to use the toilets, you have got to crawl under a stage to turn on the pump to make them work. And the thing is absolutely infested with spiders. Any other organisation in the country would have shut it down as an OH&S disaster area. If there is active consideration of a new shed, that is probably a very good thing.

Mr Manson: Certainly that is our intention at the moment. It sounds as though I might need to go and do an inspection myself and perhaps bring forward any urgent maintenance there.

MR SMYTH: You have not been out to Tidbinbilla recently?

Mr Manson: Not in the last year or so.

MR SMYTH: You should. I know that the members of the brigade are very concerned about it—particularly about safety on training nights. At night that road is bad enough, but this is on a rise and they are very concerned.

Mr Corbell: I am familiar with this location and I appreciate that there are issues there. Again, it is important to stress that this appropriation was designed to deal with immediate issues, relatively small-scale issues where expenditure could start occurring well within this financial year. The expenditure that has been identified is related to those projects where we know we can get started and get the expenditure happening in this financial year.

Obviously some of the larger issues, such as a potential relocation of a facility, are a much larger budget issue and it is most unlikely that it would be able to be commenced with expenditure occurring before the budget itself was brought down in May. In those circumstances, there are a number of stations where, on the advice of the ESA, I took the decision that it was appropriate to allow those matters to be dealt with in the budget context and not through this special appropriation.

MR SMYTH: If there is any maintenance money available, I am sure they would appreciate at least a fumigation of the shed.

Mr Corbell: The ESA does have an ongoing maintenance budget. I will take that on notice and we will get someone to deal with those issues.

MR SMYTH: Which stations will not be looked at? We have done the sheds. Which stations in this case will not be covered?

Mr Corbell: I do not know which ones are missing. I think they are pretty much all dealt with. I can tell you which stations will be dealt with. How about we do it that way, Mr Smyth? The ambulance services at Calwell, Kambah, Gungahlin, Belconnen, Dickson, Woden, Fyshwick and Curtin. With the fire brigade it is Fyshwick, Greenway, Belconnen, Charnwood, and the training facility at Rae Street.

MR SMYTH: So nothing for Ainslie and nothing for Fyshwick.

Mr Corbell: No. Fyshwick is included for the fire brigade.

MR SMYTH: I am sorry, I missed that.

THE CHAIR: Any more questions?

MR SMYTH: Just on the technical adjustment. Can you explain the bringing forward of the \$180,000 and what it achieves?

Mr Corbell: That is in relation to the AFP?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Gungahlin station.

Mr Corbell: As part of the implementation of the government's election promise to make the Gungahlin station a 24/7 facility it was necessary to provide some additional funding for the modification of a range of spaces within the existing station to accommodate the additional policing staff. The scope of works includes conversion of a garage at the rear of the station to office space and additional secure storage, modification to the front office, including a relocation of the front counter, and a number of other modifications to the office layout. This is all within the existing roofline for the building, so it is basically reconfiguring within the existing building footprint and better utilising space.

The payment recognises that there are some additional costs to ACT Policing from doing this. Policing, as I understand it, bore these costs in the first instance and the government is reimbursing ACT Policing for those costs. That is my understanding. Is that correct? That is correct.

MR SMYTH: So when you say "converting a garage to office space", it is a garage inside the building itself. It is not a tin shed out the back that is being converted?

Mr Corbell: No. There is a garage under the roofline of the building at the rear of the station. That space will be converted to a part of the station itself with the office accommodation and so on.

THE CHAIR: You have also got here environmental initiatives as part of your spending. This is on page 32, about halfway down—\$65,000 on environmental initiatives.

Mr Corbell: I am sorry, which—

THE CHAIR: Page 32, approximately the middle of the page.

MR SMYTH: Part of the bill is the 2009-10 capital upgrades programs. So it is your minor capital works for the coming financial year.

Mr Corbell: Yes.

THE CHAIR: If you do not know you can just take it on notice.

Mr Manson: I think it is something to do with the environmental works on removing some old fuel tanks from some of our old sites. I had better take it on notice and make sure that that is the exact amount that is referred to there. I am sorry I have to do that.

THE CHAIR: Okay. In a similar vein, just underneath that, the Winchester Centre is getting an air-conditioning upgrade. Can you tell us a bit more about that and have you done any other works at the same time, like insulation or shading?

Mr Corbell: The Winchester Centre is a very old building, a relatively old building, now and was not purpose built as a police headquarters. It was originally a TAFE building. When the Winchester Centre was established in the mid-1990s a significant refurbishment of the building occurred, but it is not entirely fit for purpose. As to the details of the air-conditioning upgrade and other measures to improve energy efficiency, I do not have that information in front of me. I would need to take that on notice and provide it to you.

The only thing I would say, though, is that the ongoing future of Winchester is a matter that is currently being deliberated upon. There is a need to take a decision about what to do with that site, and potentially to replace the building with a new building is an option that is currently under consideration. No decisions have been made in that regard yet. Given that that prospect is there, the government would be loath to spend large amounts of money on the building until a decision is taken in relation to its ultimate future.

I should stress, in terms of energy efficiency, that the new Belconnen police station, which is being constructed immediately adjacent to the Winchester building, is being designed with a very strong emphasis on energy and water efficiency. The latest designs that I have been advised of is that that building is aiming for a six-star green star rating. I am very optimistic that we are going to get a good outcome in relation to new facilities. I would expect that would be a similar consideration once we take a decision in relation to the future of Winchester.

MR SMYTH: In the area just above, under ESA, there is \$30,000 for security upgrades. What is to be upgraded and where?

Mr Corbell: I would imagine—and again I will take that on notice—that is just a range of security improvements for various stations and sheds. It might be as simple as ensuring secure fencing, padlocks, door locks, alarm systems and so on for the various facilities, but I will take that on notice.

MR SMYTH: Thank you. And the station refurbishments above that at \$131,000?

Mr Manson: I had not taken note of this page and I apologise for that. We have a range of smaller projects and they seem to be in a category, as I was saying before about our major refurbishment program of maintenance, where we have been spending around \$1 million a year on recurrent and government initiatives. Those look to me like a smaller list of those projects which have been set out as security which were to upgrade the database for our automatic entry system—it looks like that

bill there—and the electrical upgrades.

Going back to the environmental initiatives, we did have a program where we were looking at improving some of our water usage and storage on-site and some solar panel initiative type arrangements, a pilot program which we were working with Territory and Municipal Services on. I think I would rather take that on notice and provide you with a full explanation of that just to make sure I have got that correct.

MR SMYTH: All right. So for each of those four you will take them on notice and give us a list of what has been done and where?

Mr Manson: Yes.

MR SMYTH: And the last one there would be the police station facilities upgrades at \$132,000.

Mr Corbell: Again, it is a range of minor new works to upgrade facilities in existing stations. The exact details I can take on notice and provide to you, but it is similar works to those which have been funded in this appropriation for ESA stations and sheds.

THE CHAIR: Thank you all for your help.

Mr Corbell: Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned from 3.54 to 4.05 pm.

Appearances:

Porter, Ms Mary, Acting Speaker

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory Secretariat

Duncan, Mr Tom, Clerk

Kiermaier, Mr Max, Deputy Clerk

Duckworth, Mr Ian, Manager, Corporate Services

Skinner, Mr David, Manager, Strategy and Parliamentary Education Office

THE CHAIR: I formally declare this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3) open. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, Ms Porter, for appearing in your capacity as Acting Speaker and the relevant officials for appearing at such short notice. At this point in time, we will be examining the appropriation bill in relation to those items which are relevant to the Legislative Assembly Secretariat. I am absolutely sure that you have all seen this card before.

Ms Porter: I was going to ask you to explain it, but I can tell you that I do understand it, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Porter.

THE CHAIR: Before we proceed to questions, do you have an opening statement?

Ms Porter: Thank you for the opportunity to make an opening statement on your inquiry into the Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3). The bill appropriates an additional sum of \$251,000 to the Secretariat this financial year. These funds will be used to replace an ageing piece of capital equipment, namely the main chiller unit which forms the basis of the Assembly building's air-conditioning system.

The main water-cooled chiller unit has been operating for more than 15 years. By modern standards it is inefficient, using outdated technology and an ozone depleting reagent which is due to be phased out by 2016 under the 1989 Montreal protocol. Significantly, a number of the evaporator tubes in the chiller have been plugged due to fractures; and there have been many compressor failures. The chiller has reached the end of its economic life and has been recommended for replacement by the Assembly's maintenance contractor and an external consultant engineering firm.

Replacement of the chiller with a modern, high-efficiency model was also identified as being desirable in the environmental sustainability audit commissioned by the Secretariat at the end of 2007. That audit estimated that a replacement unit could reduce chiller energy consumption by about 33 per cent or 10 per cent of the building's total annual electricity consumption. This would equate to a saving of 120 tonnes of CO₂ and \$15,000 per year.

I welcome questions from the committee.

THE CHAIR: Is it a reverse cycle unit or purely chilling?

Mr Kiermaier: If I can just explain how the HVAC system in the building works, we have a chiller in the basement which pumps water throughout the building at six degrees, so the chiller actually gets the water down to six degrees. It pumps it through a network of pipes through the ceilings and all kinds of conduits around the place into the ceiling fans. Essentially it works then like a car's radiator, so the water comes through a radiator-type set up. Fans blow that air through it and the cold air comes through the vents in the ceilings. The water itself then continues going through to the cooling towers on the top of the building and then is recycled back into the chiller. The chiller itself is a closed unit which just pumps cold water throughout the building.

THE CHAIR: So this will not change the towers on the top?

Mr Kiermaier: No.

THE CHAIR: This is just the bit in the—

Mr Kiermaier: This is the infrastructure in the basement.

THE CHAIR: Given that you have towers at the top, if it is cool overnight we are not actually using any power for chilling apart from pumping?

Mr Kiermaier: There would not be pumping during the—unless we are sitting, for instance. The building's air-conditioning services go off, generally, about 5 or 5.30—they are programmed to do that—and come on, say, at 6 o'clock in the morning.

THE CHAIR: From what you are saying, we must have a separate heating and cooling system.

Mr Kiermaier: Yes. The heater is a completely separate unit. It is a gas boiler. It is the only consumer of gas in the building. It is completely separate.

THE CHAIR: Have you looked into doing any additional shading? I have got a nice west-facing window in my office, and I could certainly cook on it in the afternoon?

Mr Kiermaier: Window tinting is certainly on the horizon. However, it is a very expensive operation. You can imagine tinting and applying film to every single outside window on this building. Also, bear in mind that all the offices do have venetian blinds and by just closing the venetian you get a sort of insulating effect. It would have a very major impact on our energy efficiency in the building if people used their venetian blinds to better effect. We probably need to instigate more of an education campaign around the building about using the venetian blinds.

MS BURCH: There is some window filming in the capital upgrade program?

Mr Kiermaier: Yes.

MS BURCH: Is that separate?

Mr Kiermaier: We tend to only be able to do things piecemeal in this place. We do not get lots of money in budgets to do something completely. We certainly have some

money set aside in the future budget, in the 2009-10 budget, to do some window film work.

MR SMYTH: That is security reflective or tinting?

Mr Kiermaier: It is more tinting. Hansard are going to hate me for this, but the area where a lot of the—in the members courtyard, there is tinting on those windows there and we were going to extend that to, say, this courtyard or the windows outside where the committee area is, because that gets a lot of westerly sun or northerly sun. That was our primary aim in the next budget—to do that sort of tinting.

Ms Porter: Am I allowed to ask a question in clarification of the people who are asking us questions?

THE CHAIR: Certainly.

Ms Porter: I wanted to ask a question for clarification. Was Mr Smyth asking if we are going to install a security standard of film on the windows at the same time? Were you asking that question?

MR SMYTH: I was asking what the film was—for an explanation of the film.

Ms Porter: Okay.

Mr Kiermaier: I think I have answered that.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Porter: That is fine.

MR SMYTH: That is now going on the western face of the eastern quadrant of the Assembly at the lower level.

THE CHAIR: At the lower level.

MR SMYTH: Only.

Mr Kiermaier: It does not go very far.

THE CHAIR: And, hopefully, in years to come will we move up the wall?

Mr Kiermaier: Yes. We do tend to look for hollow logs in our—we find some cash.

MR SMYTH: How many have you found?

THE CHAIR: I do not think that is the sort of statement you should really be making in this.

MR SMYTH: Mr Duckworth, are you hoarding hollow logs?

MS BURCH: On the chiller—

MR SMYTH: No, no, hang on. He was about to answer. How many hollow logs have you got, Mr Duckworth?

Mr Duckworth: I am not aware of any, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: You need to talk to the Deputy Clerk then!

Ms Burch: On the chiller there is \$251 for this year and then \$189?

Mr Kiermaier: Yes.

MS BURCH: It comes in pieces, or—

Mr Kiermaier: No, the \$251 essentially is the procurement of the unit. When you order these things, there is about a 10-week ordering time frame and they want progress payments. So the \$251 is primarily paying for the unit and the \$189 would be the installation costs and the demolition costs.

MR SMYTH: You make the claim that it will reduce energy costs. What is the expected saving and therefore return to budget?

MR SMYTH: Is that money being surrendered or will it be used for other things in the Assembly?

Mr Kiermaier: We have offered it to be surrendered.

Mr Duckworth: I am sorry to chime in on my colleague.

Ms Porter: I will defer to you, Mr Duckworth.

Mr Duckworth: The submission that the Speaker made to the Treasurer for appropriation No 3 did indicate that \$15,000 worth of savings were estimated. In a subsequent letter that the Speaker wrote to the Treasurer in the course of the normal budget for 2009-10, the Speaker identified a number of areas of cost pressure that could be expected to emerge next year, and in broad terms proposed that the savings that were expected from the implementation of this unit might be applied first by the Assembly to those cost pressures to offset the need for additional funding next year. So in a roundabout sort of way, the Speaker's position with the Treasurer has been that the savings that would be forecast here would need to be firstly applied to cost pressures next year.

MR SMYTH: And has the Treasurer responded favourably?

Mr Duckworth: There has not been a response yet. I should add that that letter has not been with the Treasurer for a great length of time. It was signed not long before the Speaker went overseas.

MR SMYTH: And the greenhouse gas emissions reduction will be how much?

Ms Porter: It says that it will equate to a saving of 120 tonnes of CO₂.

THE CHAIR: I assume we have got insulation in the roof?

Mr Kiermaier: In the ceilings, yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, good.

MR SMYTH: And who is going to put their name to guaranteeing that we will have a reliable cooling capacity?

Ms Porter: The manufacturer would need to guarantee the material, I would imagine, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: I would assume the Speaker, but he is not here.

MR SMYTH: Given the history of the building—

Ms Porter: I do believe that it might be the manufacturer of the particular components.

Mr Kiermaier: We certainly would be entering into a warranty period with the manufacturer.

MR SMYTH: The *Hansard* could record at this stage a number of wry grins appearing before the committee.

THE CHAIR: I don't think *Hansard* can actually record wry grins, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Well, it can now!

THE CHAIR: Have we any more questions to ask?

MR SMYTH: On page 29 you have got your capital upgrade program for next year. Who is getting the carpet? Which parquetry is being replaced and where is the payment going? Or is this just general maintenance?

Mr Kiermaier: No. I will just give you a bit of background. Over the last two years there has been a carpet replacement program in the building. The year before last it was the second floor, essentially. Last year, at around election time, we did the entire first floor. Most of the ground floor has—the chamber has been done and a number of the corridors have been done. There are still some offices on the ground floor that have not been done and that will be part of the building restoration program—the painting and carpeting of areas like the corporate area and chamber support.

THE CHAIR: What criteria do you use to decide that the carpet is worn out? The carpet that I saw being removed looked in pretty good nick to me, I must admit. I do not want to deprive any of the people downstairs of their—

Mr Kiermaier: The pile was certainly very worn away. There was not too much pile there on a lot of the carpet that came out. Obviously, some areas have more traffic than others, for instance corridors, and various parts of offices are more heavily walked over than others. You can't just take bits and pieces of carpet out. It is easier to do the whole lot.

THE CHAIR: Have you looked at carpet squares? Many commercial buildings do something like that for that reason, because you get very worn areas and not worn areas.

Mr Kiermaier: I must admit it is not something I have looked at.

MS BURCH: I have a question around forward planning beyond your minor capitals. I imagine the Secretariat forward plans maintenance, replenishments and refurbishments. I am clarifying that there is a maintenance refurbishment plan.

Mr Duckworth: We have a document called a strategic asset management plan that was put in place five years ago in response to a Treasury requirement that went hand in hand with getting a regular capital upgrade funding each year. We try to review it every five years. I think it was last reviewed in 2005; it might have been in 2006. The review process focuses very much on the next five years, bearing in mind that it is the next three years that are put into the budget papers.

So we have got a stated program for 2009-10 and for our internal budgeting we never really go much beyond the next year. So whereas we have developed a program of maintenance or expected maintenance for 2009-10, we would look at 2010-11 during the next six to eight months. It is very hard to go much beyond that, simply because, as Mr Kiermaier was indicating earlier, there is a scarcity of funds. It is often about applying the priorities.

With issues like carpeting, because of the scale at which we are replacing large areas, when we did the ministry on the second floor there were quite significant areas of severe wear. That is not to say that there are not areas in that very same room that, because desks sat over them, have not been worn at all. But the logistics of carpet replacement are a real issue in a parliament that never stops; hence the timing of the changeover to coincide with the election and painting of offices. For painting and carpeting of members' and ministers' offices, if we do not do it at a particular time, we lose opportunities, and in this particular instance four years was not seen as a durable thing. So I hope that answers the question.

THE CHAIR: You are upgrading the building management system software. Can you tell us a bit about that? How much is actually automated in this building?

Mr Kiermaier: With respect to the building management software that is referred to there, I will try to explain how it works. We have a computer that has a number of sensors in every room, for instance, so that we can tell the temperature. But on various pieces of equipment like the boiler and the chiller, we know the temperature of water going in and the temperature of water coming out. We know the temperatures of the air coming through the various units.

That projected expenditure will be to upgrade the sensors in the various parts of the building—what they call the field units. So we are looking at about \$20,000 to conduct an upgrade of all those field units. The building is highly automated. In terms of giving feedback, if we are getting erroneous readings we need to look at what is causing that erroneous reading, for instance. Often it is an indication of a sticking valve in a ceiling unit or something like that.

THE CHAIR: And is the building management system actively driving the building or is it mainly just giving you information?

Mr Kiermaier: The particular one we have at the moment is giving information, but it certainly does turn off heating and air conditioning in the evening. We have not hooked up the lighting to it because we feel that we can probably achieve the same result with some smarter lighting around the building. But it certainly will. I suppose it does give us a lot of indication as to whether there are problems and then we can take from there how to react to those sorts of problems—calling in our maintenance people, for instance. A lot of alarms will go off. We will know that something needs attending to.

MR SMYTH: Just on the last one there, the external paving upgrade, which area is being looked at?

Mr Kiermaier: That is probably outside here, where the paving is a bit rough in places and there is a bit of a trip hazard.

MR SMYTH: So under the eaves is the responsibility of the Assembly?

Mr Kiermaier: Yes, just to smooth out some of the surfaces there that have become trip hazards.

THE CHAIR: This is not so much a question as a plea: could I put in a plea for a bit more bike accommodation?

Mr Kiermaier: Bike accommodation, yes.

THE CHAIR: Even if it is not undercover. Over in Civic Square, which is where I park my bike, it gets totally full; underneath the stairs gets totally full.

Mr Kiermaier: I can give you some pleasing news on that. Any day or any week now, you should see some more bike racks appearing in our car park, up towards the entrance end, which is much more secure. Obviously, we have a presence out there. And it is just outside my window, so I will be looking very intently.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thank you all very much for attending and I now declare this hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 4.26 pm.