



**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**

**FRIDAY, 13 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

<b>Chief Minister’s Department</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>Cultural Facilities Corporation</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>Department of Territory and Municipal Services</b> .....	<b>72</b>

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*Amended 21 January 2009*

## **The committee met at 10.31 am.**

Appearances:

Hargreaves, Mr John, Minister for Disability and Housing, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Corrections

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services  
Hehir, Mr Martin, Chief Executive  
Collett, Mr David, Director, Asset Management

**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 today at such short notice. We will be examining the appropriation bill in relation to those items which fall under your responsibility as Minister for Disability and Housing. Specifically, I believe that is the additional appropriation of \$2.5 million provided to Housing ACT for the homelessness initiative. I am sure you have all read this and do not wish to hear me read it.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Correct.

**THE CHAIR:** Before I proceed to questions from the committee—do you have an opening statement, minister?

**Mr Hargreaves:** A very brief one. Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear. The \$2½ million allocation is part of the homelessness package. The ACT government is in partnership with the federal government to deliver a large amount of infrastructure out there across the country in order to attack the issue of homelessness, as you quite rightly pointed out. This \$2½ million represents the price of the land on which the buildings will be constructed. It should realise, we would hope, 20 properties as part of this arrangement.

This is part of a suite. There are already initiatives that the ACT government did itself as part of our affordable housing strategy, but in particular our public housing stock and the need for us to increase the stock as we can, as our portfolio allows, for the purchase and construction of properties. We then entered into this particular exercise with the commonwealth. And the third tranche was the \$102 million stimulus package share for the ACT in terms of public housing. That will be \$96 million worth of construction, if you wish, and \$6 million worth of renovations and refurbishments. Off the top of my head, I think it is something like 140 properties or thereabouts that will be refurbished or renovated, which we would ordinarily have been evaluating for sale or removal and therefore the construction of other properties on that site. The remaining amount of money is for I think about 285 properties, but it can vary, with the remaining \$96 million.

Depending on what properties we construct, we are required to construct new properties, not buy established ones. The idea of it is that it will have a stimulus for the residential building construction industry. But for us, on the social level, it allows

us to grow our stock by something of that order. That may very well mean a four-bedroom stand-alone property for a family that has a high-needs member of the family and a large number of children.

It may also mean that we have a series of older persons units, because, if we have land available or under construction, we can do that. We can, for example, buy six townhouse development units in this sort of package. The sorts of things you might like to have in your mind's eye are some of our properties at Lambrigg Street in Farrer. You would not see them as you go down the road. For those who know the area, you come up Lambrigg Street, cross the road at the petrol station, go just up a bit, and on the right there is a driveway. When you go in, it opens up and inside there are some older persons units. They are townhouse developments.

We have the opportunity within that \$96 million worth of envelope to do that. We are well advanced on that particular project, because we can do the construction for properties where the construction plan is well advanced. For example, if we are only at the development application stage, remember that we have a lot of freedoms to move in greenfield sites and less freedom when we are doing urban infill. But there is the possibility that, with some of the developments, we could go through—the properties are already well advanced in terms of construction: not actually bricks and mortar on the ground but where land is already there, the building plans are already approved and all that sort of thing. So we can move quickly.

I expect, in fact, that Housing ACT is much better placed than some of the other jurisdictions. If we are as successful as we hope to be, we may very well have a share of moneys that are coming from the commonwealth in addition to that money. The story is that the \$42 billion in there, the housing package, is apportioned to the states. If people actually spend the money they are allocated, so be it. If people underspend because they have got delayed projects, those moneys may very well be available to those people who are overachieving. We are hopeful that it may very well be that at the end of this process—it is a 3½-year project—we may be in a position to pick up a number of other additional properties.

Thank you for the opportunity, Madam Chair. I am happy to talk about housing any time you like.

**THE CHAIR:** Could I just clarify something? All that money in the third approp, forgetting the federal package, is just for the purchase of land?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. Mr Hehir will give you a better idea of how it works.

**Mr Hehir:** By far the majority of that money will be used to purchase the land. If we are able to have some construction money there, we will utilise that. It will depend on the timing and where we are up to in the planning of that. My understanding is that we will have a small portion of this set aside for the initial stages of construction. This \$2½ million in the third appropriation is only a small increase on the actual agreed time line with the Australian government. The initial agreement was for each party to provide \$1 million per year over five years. In terms of that total sum, \$10 million, we are bringing forward \$2½ million into the 2008-09 year. We are conscious that it does take time to get construction underway, but having the land available and planning

undertaken enables us to at least begin that process and certainly be well advanced early into the financial year.

**Mr Hargreaves:** For some years, we have been trying—I am sure that Mr Smyth, when he was responsible for housing, had a similar approach to it—to have land allocated for public and community housing processes rather than having to purchase it from the LDA. That conversation continues.

**THE CHAIR:** I am not in any way speaking against this, but I thought the Treasurer said at the beginning, in terms of the third approp, that it was all going to be what she called shovel ready—immediate implement.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That is right.

**THE CHAIR:** You are buying land; you are not doing that.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It is the land underneath the package that is already there. You have got to buy a house and land package.

**Mr Hehir:** This is part of the Australian government's election commitment. "A place to call home" is this particular election commitment. The agreement from the Australian government was that they would provide 50 per cent of the funding and the states would match that. But that was for new construction only. So we had to purchase the land to do the construction. That agreement was signed as part of the COAG processes. That money was for 2008-09 as part of that process, but that does mean that it needs to be appropriated. So this is certainly part of this appropriation. This is the first opportunity to bring this capital forward as part of that.

**MR SMYTH:** In that regard, what percentage will be spent on land and what percentage therefore will be spent on construction?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Of the \$2½ million.

**Mr Collett:** Our expectation, and it is yet to be finalised, is that it will be around \$2 million on land and about \$500,000 on construction.

**MR SMYTH:** After the third approp is passed and you have purchased the land, how quickly will construction start? When will we see shovels going into the ground?

**Mr Collett:** The government is looking at a range of measures to get that money out as quickly as possible. We will be looking at a design and construct tender. Depending on how long it takes us to get through the approvals process, and the minister has already noted that that is much more timely on greenfield sites than it can be on infill sites, we would be expecting to make a start within six weeks of the appropriation.

**MR SMYTH:** Where will they be built? Will it be greenfield or will it be infill?

**Mr Collett:** No, it will be greenfield.

**Mr Hargreaves:** This 20 here will be greenfield. What I was trying to do before was to give the committee an overall view. Whilst this is a specific program that we entered into with the federal government, called “A place to call home”, and it was a quite specific thing to target homelessness and quite specifically to construct new homes, with the passage of time, from the signing off and the agreeing to it between ministers and at COAG, we had the stimulus package done. So I think it is important for the Assembly to see it as part of the jigsaw. It is a discrete part, and we are addressing that discrete part here. But please understand that we can now apply our thinking to infill as well as greenfield, even though this particular part is part of our greenfield approach.

**MS BURCH:** Have you identified sites that you would be targeting or looking at?

**Mr Collett:** Yes. In order to make sure that we do take advantage of the advance and get out to the site as soon as possible, we have had quite detailed discussions with the Land Development Agency about sites in Gungahlin. We have identified sites, both for the initial tranche and for the ongoing program.

**MR SMYTH:** Will those sites be contiguous or will they be scattered?

**Mr Collett:** No, we will scatter them, as is our norm. We will avoid concentrations of public housing. Some of them may take the form of townhouses. They will be on contiguous blocks. But wherever we have got detached houses, they will be scattered.

**MR SMYTH:** Minister, I think I heard you say 20 properties. Is that two buildings per block?

**Mr Hehir:** The agreement with the Australian government requires a minimum of 20 properties to be delivered. We will be working at improving that where we can. So it is not necessarily two per block. This program will actually come in over a number of years. As I said earlier, the actual original program was \$1 million from each party per year for five years. So we are trying to bring that forward and develop it slightly faster than was the case with the original program.

What we have agreed with the Australian government is that we will do a minimum of 20. Some of these properties are likely to be for families that are slightly larger. The homeless families that we have more difficulty finding appropriate properties for are the larger ones. So we will be looking at the designs and the spaces and a number of these will be reasonable size properties—four-plus bedrooms—potentially there. It is the group that we have the most difficulty finding appropriate accommodation for. I am sure you would be aware of the model whereby the family are placed into the house direct from their homelessness and there are supports in place and over time the tenancy is transferred to them. So a support provider would have the initial tenancy and then, over time, as the family addresses some of the issues that have led to homelessness, and they are more able to sustain a tenancy in their own right, that tenancy will be transferred to them.

**MR SMYTH:** So there are 10 houses on 10 blocks of land in Gungahlin?

**Mr Hehir:** It will be 20 houses over the life of the project, a minimum of 20 houses.

**MR SMYTH:** This money is for 10 blocks of land to build 10 houses?

**Mr Hehir:** The \$2½ million won't build 10 houses on 10 blocks of land. Some of next year's funding will be for that.

**THE CHAIR:** You talked about your clients having high needs. Am I understanding correctly that it will be managed by community housing providers to begin with—the Billabong Aboriginal Corporation and those sorts of community organisations? Is that what you were saying?

**Mr Hehir:** No. When I said a support provider, it is more likely to be a specialist homelessness support provider, so a SAAP service. Without wanting to specify particular organisations, they would include organisations such as Lowanna, and those support agencies that specialise in working—and the Canberra Men's Centre would be another one—with individuals to address issues that lead to homelessness, and support them to be able to develop their skills to the point where they are able to sustain a tenancy in their own right.

**Mr Hargreaves:** One of the things that are worth noting for the record is that the paradigm shift in public and community housing which has been effected over the last four or five years has been to address the reasons why people are seeking public and community housing, and the worst, of course, is imminent and actual homelessness, and get away from the notion that as soon as you give people a property the job is done and we walk away. That was the case in the past. I do not think as a community that we realised we really needed to address the underlying cause of these things against a background of having some bricks and mortar from which to springboard into those solutions.

The same thing applies with our public housing waiting list. We actually fit the property to the people on the list. The reason why there will always be a couple of weeks delay, even at the best possible time, is that when a person goes into crisis, we look at all of those supports that have to be brought to bear—some of them are lifelong, some of them are short term and some are medium term—with a view to sustaining those families in the community. As Mr Hehir said, we work out the package for the people, then allocate the property which suits them and the package and, over time, if we are successful, we then slowly move away and leave them to it. But we, within the bureaucracy, if you wish, understand that the best way to have success is to have people's esteem at an all-time high. Having the notion of a government or territory giving you money is the notion of charity. If in fact we engage with the non-government sector and people who are their own peers and bring them into the program of support, then it is not charity; it is assistance.

So that is where we are at. These particular properties, and in fact the properties we will get for our \$96 million, will be attacked in that way. You might find that one property will cost us five-hundred-and-something thousand dollars; you might find that another one will cost us \$400,000, and some of them may be even less than that, maybe \$350,000, depending on what solution we are trying to achieve. This is where we come back to the notion of 20 actually being a minimum, and that is going to be a challenge, but we reckon we can better that, anyway.

**THE CHAIR:** With designing the new houses, it sounds like you might have some specific consultants as far as disability and environment issues are concerned?

**Mr Hargreaves:** We have.

**Mr Collett:** We are building on the work that we have already done both in terms of understanding what the impacts of energy costs are for our tenants and in terms of the impact on the environmental houses that we build. We are working through the funds that have been provided separately by the ACT government around energy efficiency and water saving measures. So all of the things that we have learned through that process will be applied to these houses—water flow reduction, valves for the taps, dual-flush systems. We will be achieving a five-star energy rating for these facilities and we will be looking at fitting the energy efficient appliances that we have purchased on the bulk contracts to support our programs.

**THE CHAIR:** Including solar hot water?

**Mr Collett:** We will be looking at that.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It may be solar hot water. Is that the most appropriate, Madam Chair, or is instantaneous gas?

**THE CHAIR:** It probably depends, but in general—

**Mr Hargreaves:** What we are saying is that the old days of having electric water heaters is something we are trying to get the heck away from. We want to go into energy efficiency. We want to go into renewable energies, where we can, having regard to the cost as well in the interregnum. That is front and centre in our minds.

**THE CHAIR:** Great.

**Mr Collett:** You asked about accessible housing.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Collett:** We are generally moving towards the universal design principles. There is a not insignificant cost involved in retrofitting our properties for disability modifications, given the profile of our tenants. That is money that we are not spending on maintaining the dwellings currently. It is coming out of our maintenance budget. We would like to move progressively to having houses that do not require modifications for disability. In terms of the door widths, the passageway widths, hobless showers, bars—having strengthening studs put in for grab rails in the bathrooms—and minimum clearances between benches in the kitchens, we will be incorporating all those as a matter of course.

**Mr Hargreaves:** What you need to understand, against that background, Madam Chair, is that the ACT has got the oldest stock in the country in general terms. Some of the properties that we have are particularly robust—the ones in the older suburbs, Turner, Ainslie, O'Connor: those sorts of places. Some of the properties we have in

the west of Belconnen and in Kambah and Wanniasa are not as robust by a long shot. They were also designed at a time when it did not lend itself particularly easily to modify for accessibility without substantial cost. We have the intention, we have the old stock, and we have a challenge.

**THE CHAIR:** Of the new stock, is it all being designed to be accessible?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I would hope so. One of the things that we are finding is that it is a real pain trying to retrofit something when we have someone on the waiting list. I will just go back to the original point that I made. We try to fit the property to the needs of the people on the list. Sometimes those properties will require additional bedrooms because of the nature of the family. Some of them will require widening of corridors because there is a wheelchair involved. Ramps will be required. In fact, we have one gentleman who is in a rather large electric wheelchair. He requires very wide hallways. He also cannot turn the doorknob so he has an electric door opener for his front door. For that property, whereas normally we would pick it up and modify it and so on for just \$40,000 or something like that, because it is only two bedrooms, it would be around the \$380,000, \$400,000 mark. So we do try to tailor that. Going forward, in terms of the construction, as Mr Collett just said, we make sure that there is sufficient strength behind the gyprock to take the grab rails. We do it now rather than try and retrofit it. Does that make sense?

**THE CHAIR:** It does make sense.

**MR SMYTH:** The ground upgrades under Disability, Housing and Community Services on page 32, the waterwise landscaping: what is that going to involve?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Where is that? Where in the appropriation bill do you see that?

**MR SMYTH:** It is page 32 of the appropriation package, under the 2009-10 capital upgrade program.

**THE CHAIR:** The big one.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The 2009-10 capital upgrades? Can I respectfully suggest, Madam Chair, that we are supposed to be talking about Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No. 3). I do not wish to avoid the question. I would need to take it on notice because, quite sincerely, I did not actually prepare myself for that particular approach. I am happy to get the answer for you, but I cannot give it to you right now.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, take it on notice.

**MR SMYTH:** I am surprised because the minister made great store of saying that the capital upgrade program was also in the appropriation bill and that we could get those projects ready so they could roll quickly as well.

**THE CHAIR:** That is the big version.

**Mr Collett:** I suspect it is a different minister. I think you might find it is Minister Gallagher.

**MR SMYTH:** Okay, housing and disability. Which capital upgrades are yours in the 2009-10 capital works?

**Mr Collett:** For housing and community services—

**Mr Hargreaves:** It has got the same line, hasn't it?

**Mr Collett:** Housing does not typically get—

**Mr Hargreaves:** We do not have capital upgrades.

**Mr Collett:** capital upgrades.

**MR SMYTH:** Okay. If you have got nothing there, you have got nothing there; that is fine.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. This is one of the reasons why you have thrown me a bit. I do not have the same document. You and I know that we take it all through the single line appropriation.

**THE CHAIR:** Do you want to have a—

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, I do not really care about that, Madam Chair, with respect.

**Mr Hehir:** My chief financial officer advises me that they are Minister Gallagher's—

**MR SMYTH:** It is all Minister Gallagher's part of the portfolio. Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** As a result of this investment there will be a net increase in stock, because you are buying new—

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, there will.

**THE CHAIR:** Good.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You might like to know, just for the record, that today I asked what is the actual number of dwellings that we have and as at 28 February 2009 there were 11,567 properties. That comprises freestanding houses, 6,252; and multi-unit dwellings, 5,315. I will give this piece of paper to the secretary so that it is easy for you. The multi-unit dwellings are in fact defined to include everything that is not a stand-alone house—that is, townhouses, flats, aged persons accommodation, units in small complexes, multi-units in large complexes and dual occupancies. Also, remember that in that group we may very well own an apartment in a privately owned block of flats—for example, Kimberley Gardens at Wanniasa. I think we have about five of them or something of that order. That may be a background in terms of what our increases should be.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. There are no further questions. Thank you all very much for attending today.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Thank you very much for the entertaining audit. Before you close the meeting, Madam Chair, I would like to—I customarily do it—officially express my appreciation to the officers of Housing ACT and the department for the work that they do in supporting homeless people in the ACT.

**Meeting adjourned from to 10.59 am to 1.33 pm.**

Appearances:

Stanhope, Mr Jon, Chief Minister, Minister for Transport, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs and Minister for the Arts and Heritage

Chief Minister's Department

Cappie-Wood, Mr Andrew, Chief Executive

Dawes, Mr David, Deputy Chief Executive, Business and Projects, Business and Projects

Tomlins, Mr George, Deputy Coordinator General, ACT Stimulus Package Taskforce

Franklin, Mr Alan, Acting Executive Director, Strategic Project Facilitation, Business and Projects

Neser, Ms Kate, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance

Whitney, Mr David, Director, artsACT, Arts, Communications, Events & Protocol

Cultural Facilities Corporation

Elvin, Ms Harriet, Chief Executive Officer, Cultural Facilities Corporation

Knight, Mr Andrew, Chief Financial Officer, Cultural Facilities Corporation

Department of Territory and Municipal Services

Byles, Mr Gary, Acting Chief Executive

McNulty, Mr Hamish, Executive Director, Environment and Recreation

Gill, Mr Tony, Director, Roads ACT, Community and Infrastructure Services

Watkinson, Mr Russell, Director, Parks, Conservation and Lands, Environment and Recreation

Ryan, Mr Stephen, Director, ACT Property Group, Community and Infrastructure Services

**THE CHAIR:** Good afternoon everybody, and welcome. I now formally declare open this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into the Appropriation Bill 2008-2009 (No 3). On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, Chief Minister, and your agency officials for appearing at such short notice. The committee is examining the appropriation bill in relation to the items under the responsibility of the Chief Minister, followed by the Minister for Arts and Heritage and we will conclude with the Territory and Municipal Services portfolio. I am sure that you have all seen the privilege card. If anyone would like, I am happy to read it to you.

**Mr Stanhope:** I know it by heart, Madam Chair.

**THE CHAIR:** I thought that might be the case, Chief Minister. Before proceeding to questions, is there an opening statement, Chief Minister?

**Mr Stanhope:** I don't have an opening statement. I think the items are self-evident. I believe all members are aware of the outcomes that the government is seeking to achieve through this third appropriation bill. It is very much an attempt at providing some stability and extra certainty within the community in relation to the financial

environment we find ourselves working in. I and all the ACT government officials are happy to provide whatever additional explanation or advice we are able to.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Chief Minister. I would like to start with the international arboretum. How are the trees going in the drought and how far are we through the project?

**Mr Stanhope:** The trees are surviving well. As everybody knows, there were some initial issues, most particularly with the Wollemi pines, and that was not really an issue around the drought or water; it was, we believe, an issue in relation to perhaps some root binding with the Wollemis. Certainly, there was some learning to be done there, and that learning has been taken on board. I am not sure that I have the latest numbers with me here today in relation to the survival rate, but I do recall from the last or the latest briefing—and Mr Cappie-Wood can assist in relation to that—that the survival rates are equal to or exceed those of a measure that is usually applied to large-scale plantings. The survival rate is very good.

The department has engaged as an arboretum curator Adam Burgess, who is one of the principals of Urban Contractors, the leading ACT landscape firm. Adam Burgess, whose father, I understand, is the owner or principal of Urban Contractors, is engaged and is devoted to ensuring the survival of all the plantings. The last advice I had was that the level of survival was exceptionally good. I understand that Mr Cappie-Wood may have some more information on that matter.

**Mr Cappie-Wood:** With anything as significant as the extent and complexity of plantings in the arboretum, the expected survival rate is something which we are quite interested in, particularly following the experience with the Wollemi pines. We have asked a range of people, experts in the field, including the major contracting firms as well as experts from the arboretum, about the likely survival rates from mass plantings such as this, or any commercial plantings on a large scale such as this. Our survival rate in terms of the losses is half that of normal commercial arrangements, which indicates the care and attention that the plants are receiving. It is in the order of four per cent. Most loss rates are around eight per cent. We received this advice from about four different sources, so we have verified that from the commercial as well as the arboretum experts.

With the losses that have taken place, the largest was in the Wollemi arrangements, and since then there have been very few losses, and they have been largely associated with drainage questions in the original layout which have been rectified. The onsite water system which is keeping water up to the plantings is ensuring that there is a very good survival rate, and we are very pleased with the results to date.

**THE CHAIR:** What proportion of the project has been done?

**Mr Stanhope:** In terms of the plantings—

**THE CHAIR:** In terms of the trees and the plantings, yes. I know we have not finished.

**Mr Stanhope:** it is one-fifth, just on one-fifth, in terms of the long-term vision, so

20 per cent. At this stage it is anticipated there would ultimately be 100 forests. I understand at the moment there are 22, but two of the 22 are the Himalayan cedars and the cork oak plantation, which have been incorporated into the arboretum. It was always intended—and Mr Tomlins might be able to advise me on this—that one of the 100 blocks would be a remnant block of radiata pine, a block of those that have already been planted. It is a proposal that I support but I am not quite sure exactly where that is at in its implementation. It is probably fair to say that there are 23 blocks, because it was always intended that one section of radiata would be retained.

**THE CHAIR:** I understand there is currently some pedestrian cycle access through the block. Is that going to continue when all of the blocks, all of the forests, are planted?

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes, it is my intention. In relation to ongoing management and access, they are not issues that I have ever had a discussion on, but it has been very much a construction site in recent times, so access has been restricted. My hope and expectation is that it will be an open park that will be used every day by all Canberrans. So we would be looking for open access for walkers and certainly for cyclists. I would see no reason, but it is probably a conversation I would have to have, as to why there would not be access for horses, equestrian access et cetera. But I have to say it is not a conversation I have ever had.

**MS BURCH:** On page 14 it talks about some money around modelling design for picnic areas. So it is the intention to have—I do not know about cycle tracks but certainly areas where people can come in, stay, walk and enjoy it?

**Mr Stanhope:** With respect to a significant proportion of the funding that has been voted to date—and I think that is reflected in the answer I have just provided to Ms Le Couteur, in that only 20 per cent of the forests have been planted—more money has been expended on civil works than on plantings, whilst we try to create a structure around which the arboretum might grow. I refer, for instance, to the dam, the roads and some viewing areas—Dairy Farmers Hill.

Trees do take some time to grow, and it is an exemplary site with respect to the views, I believe. There are wonderful views from a number of vantage points around Canberra, such as Ainslie, Black Mountain and Red Hill, but there is a quite stunning and very different view from Dairy Farmers Hill. I believe the aspect from Dairy Farmers and from the arboretum site is one of the best. Over and above that, it does allow for a mass attendance. One of the issues with Black Mountain, Red Hill and Ainslie is that it is not possible to get large numbers of people onto those sites for events or occasions, whereas that possibility does exist on this site.

There is an issue in relation to accessing the site for the sake of the view, but as of today, for instance, there are no seats there, let alone barbecues or other facilities. There is not even a bench yet on the site, although that is being addressed. So that proposal is to provide a picnic facility, to provide some tables, some barbecues, some benches, to actually make it of itself a site that people would visit just for a picnic or a barbecue.

**MR SMYTH:** In terms of the \$750,000, how much of that will be delivered this year

and how much of it goes into capital works as materials and capital works as labour?

**Mr Tomlins:** The intent is that it will all be capital works of one sort or another and expended this year, certainly committed. Obviously, if there are problems, if we are blessed with a lot of wet weather or something like that then there may be some delay. Half a million of it would go into the direct construction of a six-hectare central ceremonial planting garden for dignitaries to plant trees in.

**MR SMYTH:** Has that work commenced on the central valley?

**Mr Tomlins:** No, it has not. There have been some works that you would have noticed on the central valley, but they tended to be more “make good” works associated with the construction company. The other \$250,000 is to do with some fine tuning of the design modelling and master planning documentation.

**MR SMYTH:** It says there are other high priority works, and it lists three. Is there a complete list of what the other high priority works will be?

**Mr Tomlins:** Yes; we can provide that. The issue is that there will be a choice. It will not be all of the others. There will be some selection from the list.

**Mr Cappie-Wood:** The central valley earthworks are to commence within 2009. There is work on the picnic facility pathways and access ways to Dairy Farmers Hill. There are also the additional plantings to take place as well.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could I just interpose? Are we actually going to build picnic areas or are we going to model, design and do documentation for the picnic areas and pathways?

**Mr Tomlins:** We are going to do both.

**MRS DUNNE:** Because here the money seems to be for the documentation and the planning for it. Mr Tomlins, I think you said there was \$250,000 for that. Where is the money coming from? Is it in this?

**Mr Tomlins:** No. There is money in the initial budget and in a previous appropriation that will attend to the works that Mr Cappie-Wood outlined.

**MRS DUNNE:** So they are budgeted for next financial year?

**Mr Tomlins:** No, they are budgeted for this financial year.

**Mr Cappie-Wood:** This is an add-on.

**Mr Tomlins:** What we are looking at is an enhancement.

**MRS DUNNE:** What is being enhanced? I do not have a feel for what is being enhanced.

**Mr Tomlins:** We are adding to the totality of arboretum works by building the central

valley. Then we are putting in some picnic facilities.

**MRS DUNNE:** But not out of this money?

**Mr Tomlins:** Some of those picnic facilities will come out of this money, yes.

**MRS DUNNE:** You said earlier that there was half a million dollars for the central valley and \$250,000 for documentation.

**Mr Tomlins:** For modelling, yes. Yes, that is right.

**MRS DUNNE:** So where are the picnic tables coming from?

**Mr Cappie-Wood:** The picnic tables will be in association with the Himalayan cedars area, which is already in existence. It is only for that area. It is not extensive but it is the first of picnic related facilities in the arboretum. It is starting that process. It will not deliver them all, but it is starting that process. So the \$250,000 would be off that. There is \$500,000 worth of works; there is \$250,000 worth of planning, design, documentation and modelling works associated with that. And that is the total for the preparation package.

**MRS DUNNE:** I still do not know where the money for the picnic tables at the Himalayan cedars is coming from. Is it coming out of the \$500,000 or is it appropriated somewhere else?

**Mr Tomlins:** It is coming out of the budget that we had for this year, so it is out of a previous appropriation.

**MRS DUNNE:** Thank you.

**MR SMYTH:** That raises the question of why we appropriated money for something we had not planned.

**Mr Stanhope:** We do it in combination often—the planning, the design and the delivery over a single appropriation. To design and deliver is not unusual. I must say that I am not across some of the detail of exactly where the money has gone; I just respond generically—not in relation to this specific issue—that we often design and deliver through a single appropriation.

**MR SMYTH:** Except that it sounds as though it was appropriated before purchase but you had not done the planning, so how did we know what we were going to purchase?

**Mr Tomlins:** There is a master plan that won the national competition. It was refined. Now we are talking about two things—some further refinements in taking into account the four years experience that we have had and also some more detailed work.

**THE CHAIR:** Chief Minister, you mentioned that most of the money so far has gone to into civil works.

**Mr Stanhope:** A significant amount, yes. I am not quite across all the dollars and

cents precisely; others may be.

**THE CHAIR:** Over the whole project, I assume again that most of the money is going to go into civil works, not into trees? Is that correct and do you have any idea of the proportion?

**Mr Stanhope:** I would think the effort from now, in addition to the sorts of facilities that we have just been discussing in relation to picnics—I would hope that at some time in the near future we could look at picnic facilities, a playground et cetera. My intention and my desire now is that we simply plant trees. I have personally found the very necessary concentration on essential civil works a bit frustrating, because I love the idea of planting trees, but it is essential and it is necessary. My determination now is to plant the trees. I think that future appropriations or allocations should be devoted, to the greatest extent that we can, to planting trees.

**THE CHAIR:** Any more on the arboretum?

**MRS DUNNE:** Just one question.

**Mr Stanhope:** Indeed, just in relation to that imperative, an additional forest, the 24th forest, commences planting tomorrow. That is the STEP forest, the southern tablelands ecological park. That will commence on Sunday. That will be the 24th forest. And I believe that there will be a significant extension of the sequoia and ginkgo forest, which are at the bottom, to encompass the area around the dam. That will be within the next few weeks as well. Our expectation is that between now and the end of this calendar year there will be an additional 20 forests. So the number of forests will go to 43 or 44 by the end of this year.

**MRS DUNNE:** Can someone tell me about where the water comes from? I notice that there are tanks and that there is gabion work that runs down into the dam which will fill if we get rain, but currently where is the water coming from?

**Mr Tomlins:** All the water used is non-potable water. That is the requirement. It is up to the contractors as to how they source it. I do not know the full details of the sourcing. I think that some has come from the lower Molonglo and some is bore water.

**MRS DUNNE:** So there is a bore on site?

**Mr Tomlins:** There is a bore on site, but the water that is being used is not from that at the moment.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could you get back to the committee about what the water arrangements are?

**Mr Tomlins:** Yes. Could I just add that contractually we can tell you what the contractor is using now. They are bound.

**MRS DUNNE:** And that may change from time to time.

**Mr Tomlins:** That might change, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Do we have any other questions on Manuka Arts Centre?

**MR SMYTH:** How advanced is this work and what will be delivered for the \$50,000 this year?

**Mr Stanhope:** This is Manuka, is it?

**THE CHAIR:** Manuka Arts Centre.

**MR SMYTH:** This is Manuka arts.

**Mr Whitney:** The \$50,000 is design work that is undertaken. Some work has already been done on preliminary design work, and this is now refining that so that we can get to construction documentation to move into the next financial year.

**MR SMYTH:** What consultation was there with the existing tenants?

**Mr Whitney:** I believe the consultation happened in a previous financial year with the tenants about the area around that site. The work had been done when we did the original preliminary sketch plans.

**MRS DUNNE:** So that is when ArtSound and PhotoAccess first moved in.

**Mr Whitney:** Correct.

**MRS DUNNE:** I declare a conflict of interest; I am a member of ArtSound. So when ArtSound moved in was when the discussions were undertaken?

**Mr Whitney:** That is correct, yes.

**MRS DUNNE:** Are the works landscaping works or are there other works as well?

**Mr Whitney:** In the broad world of landscaping, they are landscaping. There is a little bit of masonry along one of the boundary lines and there is some car parking work to be done to enable the cars to be in a car park rather than parked all over the gardens as they are at the moment. That is the nature of the work. Then there is planting of borders and things like that.

**MRS DUNNE:** There was painting as well.

**Mr Whitney:** Painting is a separate arrangement altogether. This is purely about the landscape design and implementation of that design.

**MRS DUNNE:** Do the works require any sort of approvals?

**Mr Whitney:** They certainly will be requiring approvals, yes, but we need to get the works from a preliminary sketch plan phase to a construction design phase. Then that work will need to be approved.

**MRS DUNNE:** Do you have an indicative time line about when that will be happening?

**Mr Whitney:** This \$50,000 will allow us to get to that point within this current financial year so that in the next financial year we can roll the work out. The plan is to move on that program.

**MRS DUNNE:** So the plan is to be ready to go to works approval by the end of the financial year?

**Mr Whitney:** Correct.

**THE CHAIR:** I just note that we have moved to the minister for arts and we are now talking to the Chief Minister. Have we any other questions on page 14? No. In that case I think the next part for the minister for arts is the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Does anyone have any questions on that?

**MRS DUNNE:** Yes. This may be covering ground that has been covered with the Treasurer, but I refer to the entries in relation to the Cultural Facilities Corporation. It says for both initiatives, for both upgrades, “This initiative will allow the corporation to engage local contractors to undertake particular works.” There seems to be an emphasis on local contractors. Chief Minister, while I do not necessarily have a problem with that, does that contravene the purchasing guidelines to say that this is work for local contractors?

**Mr Stanhope:** I honestly do not know, but—

**MRS DUNNE:** It just struck me as strange to see that sort of terminology in the initiatives descriptions. It is not my understanding that we must employ local contractors.

**Mr Stanhope:** No. We have given some consideration in recent times through the roundtables that we have convened—representations have been made to the government about the development of such a proposal. Other places, I think South Australia and some others, have such embedded requirements in relation to some of their procurement. Whether it is in contravention, Mrs Dunne, I am afraid I simply do not have with me sufficient knowledge or capacity to respond. I do not know whether or not Ms Elvin does.

**Ms Elvin:** I think the description was simply saying that these are very basic built-in works that could be undertaken by local tradespeople.

**Mr Stanhope:** Aspirational more than directed.

**Ms Elvin:** Yes, indeed.

**MRS DUNNE:** You are saying, Ms Elvin, these are basic initiatives. So what sorts of things are we talking about?

**Ms Elvin:** They are all very small, basic built-in packages, if that would be helpful.

**MRS DUNNE:** Yes, thank you.

**Ms Elvin:** Refurbishing and repainting the foyer of the Playhouse, which needs some cosmetic improvement, refurbishing some of the backstage areas at the Playhouse, a whole range of different works at each of the three historic places that we manage—for example, some drainage works, some plastering works, damp-proofing, roofing, attending to cracking walls at Calthorpes House, which has been quite a problem after the recent drought conditions, damp management, plumbing works, timber works, brickwork and so on.

**MRS DUNNE:** Do you have a list of those?

**Ms Elvin:** We do.

**MRS DUNNE:** Could you provide those for us?

**Ms Elvin:** Yes, of course.

**MRS DUNNE:** On that list are there things that you are ready to go with, essentially?

**Ms Elvin:** Yes. We have assessed that all of these can be done this financial year.

**MR SMYTH:** Just in regard to the Canberra Theatre, Chief Minister, there was a report on the future of the Canberra Theatre. Has that been completed?

**Mr Stanhope:** It has not yet concluded. You are not doing that, are you, Harriet?

**Ms Elvin:** I am involved. David and I can do a joint answer, if you like.

**MR SMYTH:** I hope you are involved, Ms Elvin. If you are not involved I will be very worried.

**Mr Whitney:** You are not involved in doing work.

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes, I think Mr Whitney is driving the process.

**MR SMYTH:** So it will be a mobile theatre then.

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes.

**Mr Whitney:** It is a study of the Canberra Theatre feasibility and there is a steering committee that is working on that. There are two options that are being worked on at the moment. We are looking forward next week to a presentation from the consultants about those two options. A third option is also being considered and will be delivered to the corporation board and then to the steering committee in mid-April. So we are hoping that by the end of April we will be in a position to have that report complete.

**MR SMYTH:** And when will that report go to government?

**Mr Whitney:** I think at the end of April we will have it and it should be able to proceed to government soon after that.

**MR SMYTH:** Does that mean it will miss out on this year's budget?

**Mr Whitney:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it with a view for inclusion in this year's budget or not?

**Mr Whitney:** I do not think we will be in a position to put it to this year's budget.

**MR SMYTH:** The committee is also looking at the 2009-10 capital works. The fire door upgrades in the Canberra Theatre centre, is that just standard maintenance or is there a problem that necessitates their upgrade?

**Mr Knight:** Could you repeat the question, please?

**MR SMYTH:** On page 34 of the document entitled "Local Initiatives Packages" it looks at the 2009-10 capital works upgrades and there is an upgrade there to the fire doors in the Canberra Theatre. Why do they need to be upgraded and what is involved?

**Mr Knight:** I would probably need to take that on notice and get some further information. I know the fire doors are currently compliant so there are no issues with them being uncompliant. I imagine it would be more in relation to enhancing them to make them better—so a better than basic, a better than compliant, requirement.

**MR SMYTH:** Also on page 34 at the bottom, Ms Elvin, historic places, there is an upgrade to the Lanyon security system and you have obviously got works immediately for Lanyon as well. What is happening with the Nolan building? Is there an update? I look to see work being done on the Nolan but I cannot find it anywhere.

**MRS DUNNE:** Weren't you here during the annual reports?

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes, we did cover this issue in the annual reports hearings a couple of weeks ago.

**MR SMYTH:** I must have missed that. I will read the *Hansard*. Is there a 30-second or 30-word summary for this committee?

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes. Essentially, Mr Smyth, the collection is a committee collection held and maintained in trust by the ACT government. It is something that we are very happy about. The ACT government's position is that the decision that we came to after very deep and serious consideration was that the collection would be better housed and displayed at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. We have put that position to the commonwealth—some time ago, I might add—because of the commonwealth's overarching stewardship. We have asked the commonwealth for its views on the appropriate maintenance and showing of the collection and the commonwealth is yet to respond to us. We have been waiting for some time now. But, as you are aware, in a previous budget we did appropriate funds to make the necessary improvements to

the Canberra Museum and Gallery to allow the Nolan collection to be appropriately displayed and housed there.

**THE CHAIR:** As there are no further questions for cultural facilities we will move to the Minister for Territory and Municipal Services. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement in this regard?

**Mr Stanhope:** No, not specifically, thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** I will start off my first question by asking about the stormwater augmentation program. I recently visited some people in Deakin. I think the Chief Minister may also have done so, given he is smiling. Deakin clearly has some serious problems. What determines the priority of this work? Are these people really worse off in Deakin? And, if they are worse off, how many other people are worse off than the people in Deakin?

**Mr Stanhope:** I visited those same constituents, Ms Le Couteur. They present a very genuine concern to the government in relation to security from flooding of their homes. The government is seeking to respond to that particular family's issues, as we do, of course, to all of those Canberrans who have particular issues with stormwater and particularly where there is flooding.

With respect to Territory and Municipal Services across the board—I will just say this as an opening statement, without wishing to delay, and turn to Mr Gill—I am deeply impressed with the effort which all sectors of Territory and Municipal Services engage in in trying to appropriately prioritise work so as to be fair to all Canberrans. An easy response would be to perhaps respond to the most convenient, perhaps the most able presenter or that group or organisation with the best capacity to represent or to put pressure on. And we do need systems that ensure that we are rigorously fair in the order in which we allocate resources. So it is not just in relation to stormwater; it is in relation to a whole range of municipal services that we provide.

The department has developed methodologies—often very complex ones; in fact I have challenged them to explain them to me in simple language from time to time—for determining priorities. I invite Mr Gill to advise you about the methodology used for stormwater priorities. But it is very difficult, and I have to say, having visited this same place in Deakin that I think you are referring to, one cannot help being struck by just how significant an issue it is for those families. You asked the question whether, if this is not the first priority, you would like to see the one that is.

**THE CHAIR:** Basically, yes.

**Mr Stanhope:** I made the same observations. But Mr Gill has a response to that.

**Mr Gill:** As it happens, I was out in Deakin yesterday, probably speaking to the same lady that you spoke to, and her mother. Last year we undertook an assessment of about 120 locations in Canberra that were impacted by stormwater issues to a greater or lesser extent. Through that process we have identified 40 sites that we consider to have an extreme risk in terms of stormwater issues. An extreme risk in our definition means that there is a very high likelihood that there will be repeated flooding of that

residence and that there are some public safety concerns.

In the case of Deakin and how we assess it, with respect to the number of residences affected, in the case of Deakin at this point in time there are two residences that are directly affected. The solution to that problem in Deakin in terms of investment will cost about \$1.8 million. To take another example, in Chapman, near Chapman hill, there are 25 households affected. The order of cost to address that issue there is in the order of a million dollars.

**THE CHAIR:** Did you say a million or a billion?

**Mr Gill:** A million.

**THE CHAIR:** It sounded like a billion.

**Mr Gill:** Maybe the overall program is a billion but at this point in time—

**Mr Stanhope:** Perhaps it's an ambit claim! I knock them down!

**Mr Gill:** So in terms of making the assessment in ranking, in that particular case Chapman would be allocated priority initially because you are improving the amenity of 25 households as opposed to two. In the case of Deakin, the third appropriation has been positive in that respect inasmuch as it has been able to bring forward work in Deakin; as it has in Fyshwick, in Wiluna Street; as it has in Weetangera; in Page, in Petterd Street. We have a documented process and we have a listing, if that helps you.

**MR SMYTH:** Yes, if we could have the list, that would be good.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, we would like the list. If you have 40 at extreme risk, how long is it going to take you to get through the 40? If I was living in one of these, I would be really wanting—

**Mr Gill:** In the case of Deakin, for instance, while we are addressing the situation at De Chair Street, we are also picking up other instances on Newdegate Street and Nathan Street, which are further down. So we are trying to look at an overall solution rather than a solution that might address one issue but shift the problem to another area.

**Mr Stanhope:** The simple solution for De Chair Street was to address the issue for the two residences affected, but it would have simply moved the issue—

**THE CHAIR:** Transferred it.

**Mr Stanhope:** further down the pipe. That is why it is a significant cost of \$1.7 million. The pipe simply does not have the capacity to deal with the volume of water that it is being asked to deal with. So that entire pipe has to be replaced. So it is a significant exercise. And that decision has now been taken so that De Chair Street has now moved to the top of the priority list.

**Mr Gill:** De Chair Street is basically programmed—the tender is to be called in July

and work is to be completed over that six-month period to December.

**Mr Stanhope:** So it will now be completed this year.

**THE CHAIR:** The 40 people, and instances, how long will that take?

**Mr Gill:** To answer your specific question, we have put a proposal to government last year for additional funding for stormwater augmentation, and that has resulted, through the capital upgrade program, in \$3.4 million in each year. To address the 40 cases, we are talking about two to three years, depending on the actual capital cost of the final project. Beneath that there are other stormwater projects that need attention, too.

**Mr Stanhope:** So this \$2.2 million is on top of \$3.4 million that was appropriated.

**Mr Gill:** It is in addition.

**Mr Stanhope:** So it is a \$5.6 million program this year.

**THE CHAIR:** Given that it is only \$3.4 million each year, have you looked at bringing it forward, because the people affected are seriously affected, if the people in Deakin are typical, and I assume they are?

**Mr Gill:** In terms of bringing it forward, to some extent the third appropriation reflects we were in a position to bring it forward. We were ready to respond when additional funding became available.

**MR SMYTH:** I have a general question. The \$1.6 million that will become available this year: how much of that will actually be spent this year?

**Mr Gill:** For stormwater?

**MR SMYTH:** On page 15 there is a chart at the top that says the total appropriation of the third approp for TAMS will be \$1.6 million.

**Mr Stanhope:** That is for all items in the third approp.

**MR SMYTH:** Perhaps this is more of a question for Mr Byles: will all of the \$1.6 million be spent this year?

**Mr Byles:** It will be spread over two years. I can give you the exact figures soon after this hearing.

**MR SMYTH:** In 2009-10 you have also got an additional \$4,040,000.

**Mr Byles:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** So of the \$1.6 million, will that be spent this year?

**Mr Byles:** The aim is just to expend the \$1.610 million this year. That is the aim.

**MR SMYTH:** How many jobs will it create, enhance or retain, and what percentage of that money will be spent on labour and what percentage will be spent on materials and equipment?

**Mr Byles:** Can I take that on notice?

**MR SMYTH:** Sure. And you will take the jobs on notice as well?

**Mr Byles:** Yes, absolutely.

**MR SMYTH:** On page 16, I notice we are going to demolish part of 141 Canberra Avenue. Why are we doing this, and I see planning will be completed for the future demolition of other buildings on the site. So is it the objective to clear the entire site, and what is the purpose of that?

**Mr Byles:** I will ask Mr Ryan to join us at the table. He is the Director of the ACT Property Group.

**Mr Ryan:** 141 Canberra Avenue was the old city parks depot, next door to the fire station. We have been looking at clearing the entire site, but the building we are demolishing is the actual old admin building that was used, but there are also a number of sheds on the site, and Mr Watkinson has still got staff occupying those buildings. The fire station wants to expand, so by effectively demolishing the building, it gave us the opportunity to subdivide the site and add the land to the fire station site, which will enable them to improve the services that the ESA is delivering out of the Fyshwick site.

**MR SMYTH:** Is the rest an empty block?

**Mr Ryan:** We are seeking funding in the longer term to do a study and analysis and do the demolition of the remainder of the buildings. There is a greater risk of contamination on the other part of the site because of the way it has been used over the years. So there will be some contamination studies done. We have also got to find an appropriate location for the staff that are still in that part of the site.

**MR SMYTH:** Once all the buildings are demolished, what is the intention?

**Mr Ryan:** That area is zoned commercial, so the intention would be at that stage that the site would be sold. There is a little bit of a complicating factor. Under the Burley Griffin plan, there is a road that has never been completed. It is a circular road that goes around behind the hotel, through between the two schools, and it just goes around. So if you look on the map, you will find that on the old Burley Griffin plan there is a circular road. I understand that, as part of the Griffin legacy, it was designed that that road would be completed. Our work would enable part of that road to be built.

The problem we have got is that some years ago the rest of the site was sold off and there is now a private owner. It would require buying back part of the site from the private owner, which is the site immediately behind ours. But if that was to occur, that would enable them to complete the road. So that will be a bit of a challenge. But it

still enables us to free up a block that could actually be sold by the LDA for commercial purposes.

**MS BURCH:** There are various things like footpaths and park signage upgrades. What is the process for identifying areas of need for that?

**Mr Byles:** I might ask Mr Gill to rejoin us at the table.

**Mr Gill:** In terms of the footpath program, it is based on community request. There is quite a large listing of projects to be progressed on an annual basis. When additional funding became available for new footpaths, it was relatively easy to identify locations. In terms of prioritisation, there is public safety, proximity to facilities, shops, schools, missing links, access to bus stops, no alternative routes—those are the sorts of criteria that we use in assessing locations.

**THE CHAIR:** And there are a number in this year and next year so this is in addition.

**Mr Gill:** This is an addition. This is half a million dollars for the construction of new footpaths.

**THE CHAIR:** What percentage of the stock are we replacing? Basically I want to find out whether we are fixing them as quickly as they are falling to pieces.

**Mr Gill:** The half million dollars will construct about 2.5 kilometres of footpath.

**THE CHAIR:** Some 2.5 kilometres.

**Mr Gill:** That is the reality. The territory has responsibility for over 2,000 kilometres of footpath and cycle paths. We call them community paths. On an annual basis, we probably replace five kilometres. That gives you a fairly long cycle for total replacement.

**THE CHAIR:** Is it too long? Do the footpaths last that long?

**Mr Gill:** Basically there is a program for replacing footpaths. There is also a program for repairing footpaths. When there are some depressions or increases we go out and we machine and grind it down. We get, I would suspect, between 40 and 50 years out of a section of footpath, which, based on the initial investment, is quite a good return.

**MR SMYTH:** At the bottom of page 16, the road safety message signs—what are we actually identifying when we say we identify a priority list of locations?

**Mr Gill:** There are two aspects to that program. There is the actual construction of permanent road safety signs with a road safety message. We have looked at other jurisdictions, including New Zealand, as well as having just completed an overall program or media awareness strategy. Basically, for instance, there might be a simple sign that might say, “Drink and you die”—that type of stronger message that to some extent is in your face. That is one component of the signpost package.

The other component is the installation of a permanent variable message board sign,

which is a sign that can have a variable message in it. Under general circumstances, it can provide a range of community advice to people. For instance, if it was located on the Tuggeranong Parkway it could provide a range of information but if, for instance, there was a crash on Tuggeranong Parkway near Cotter Road, if the sign was located south of the Hindmarsh Drive interchange it could say, “Crash Cotter Road. Detour via Hindmarsh Drive and Adelaide Avenue”. We could install an arrangement that would enable the bus lane on Adelaide Avenue to be available for general traffic during that incident. So it is an instant management tool and the start of an overall program where we are looking at improving our responses to incidents in the territory.

**MR SMYTH:** What is the split there? How much goes on developing the list and how much on the sign?

**Mr Gill:** The permanent variable message board is in the order of \$300,000 of that \$400,000.

**MR SMYTH:** So \$100,000.

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** So it is just one sign?

**Mr Gill:** One sign in this instance, yes. It is expensive. On the face of it, it is relatively high cost, but in terms of the ability to provide information to the community and to be part of a wider instant management system we think it is a good investment. Other jurisdictions, as far as their instant management systems are concerned, are going down this track.

**MR SMYTH:** But it is just one sign.

**Mr Gill:** It is one sign.

**Mr Stanhope:** At this stage it is one. I must say that I am strongly supportive of this. This was an initiative that I asked for advice on. I received advice from Mr Gill—the advice that he has just provided. It is the first step in the development of a new tool.

I was minded to take advice on this, to pursue the issue, for a number of reasons. First, there is the opportunity to provide a range of variable community messages in relation to, for instance, bushfire warnings and other community campaigns in relation to water restrictions, but most particularly those incidents where, as a government or as managers, there is an opportunity to provide a range of messages in relation to road safety and in relation to other appropriate community messages around bushfire warnings, water safety and perhaps even other community events—but, most particularly, in a growing city, a city of now 350,000, where we are beginning in the peak periods to experience some stress, particularly when there is an accident and the dislocation that is caused now by, say, an accident at Glenloch. That impacts all the way back to the Tuggeranong town centre, all the way through to the Gungahlin town centre. We and every other major city or city with major networks now has that capacity, through permanent directional signage, to redirect traffic away from particular areas. But they are expensive. It is \$300,000.

These are the signs—there are a couple at Batemans Bay. Do you know the signs as you are driving to Batemans Bay? They are the big above-road permanent signs. We are starting with one. It is about seeing what its utility is. I am certainly in favour of progressively expanding a network of permanent variable message signs.

**MR SMYTH:** What will happen for the long term with the mobile trailers that are permanently stationed on our major roads?

**Mr Stanhope:** They could probably be removed.

**MR SMYTH:** Is it possible to find out what it has cost the territory to have them in place?

**Mr Gill:** The cost of the temporary—

**MR SMYTH:** The signs that tell us how much water is in the dam.

**Mr Stanhope:** I did have costs for those. They are Actew signs.

**MR SMYTH:** Yes, I appreciate that.

**Mr Stanhope:** But they have been sublet to us on a couple of occasions for road safety campaigns, particularly the pre-Christmas road safety campaign. We hired the signs. I think that is correct, Mr Gill.

**Mr Gill:** We have hired them. We have also just recently been in the process of purchasing two ourselves for roadwork requirements, so we will have that capacity in the future.

**Mr Stanhope:** I will get the costings for you, Mr Smyth.

**THE CHAIR:** I want to go back to the Glebe Park pavement replacement. Can you tell me a bit more about that? In particular, would it include, for instance, additional recycling facilities?

**Mr Watkinson:** This is part of implementing the Glebe Park master plan, which was finalised last year. The project is to replace ageing and variable paving. It is not addressing recycling as such in this particular exercise.

**THE CHAIR:** Any more questions on Glebe Park?

**MS BURCH:** Not on Glebe Park. I have a question on bill poster silos—60 new bill poster silos around town, both this year and next year.

**Mr Watkinson:** That is correct.

**MS BURCH:** What is the process for selection? And where will they be and what will they be?

**Mr Watkinson:** They are looking at about 12 going into the Belconnen-Gungahlin area and around 10 into Woden, Weston and Tuggeranong. There are a number of preliminary sites which we have identified where we are still going through the exercise of checking the appropriateness of the sites. I can give you a rough indication if you want that level of detail.

**MS BURCH:** Yes, I would be interested. And are they going to be the same size as the ones in Civic?

**Mr Watkinson:** The ones in Civic were specifically designed, but they will probably be of a similar size to those. The locations we are looking at are Belconnen between Northpoint Plaza and the library; two around the Jamison centre; and the Hawker shopping centre. At the Gungahlin town centre we are looking at two. We are looking at one around the Holt shopping centre, one around Charnwood shopping centre, one in the Florey shopping centre.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Watkinson, maybe just give us a list.

**Mr Watkinson:** Sure.

**Mr Byles:** Could I confirm those numbers with a question on notice, please?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Byles:** I just want to make sure the number the committee has been given is correct.

**THE CHAIR:** That is quite appropriate.

**Mr Gill:** The number 60?

**Mr Byles:** Yes, 60 is not correct. My advice is that it is probably more like 20. I would like time to confirm that and I will also confirm the locations.

**Mr Stanhope:** Everything is expensive. You should see what they ask for—

**THE CHAIR:** It cannot be 20,000 a silo.

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes, it can. Why do you not ask an official how much a bus seat costs? Ask Mr Gill.

**THE CHAIR:** The bus seats come with buses around them, I imagine, which would make them expensive.

**MR SMYTH:** Perhaps if you could provide a list and then we will get some specifications and an outline of what each of the silos will look like and cost.

**THE CHAIR:** 20,000 a silo seems—

**Mr Byles:** I am happy to provide that breakup with a question on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** On page 29, given Mr Gill is still with us, there is a lot of money for roads. I notice that today you have now announced the successful tenderer for the upgrade of Flemington Road.

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** Are you confident you will spend the \$5 million that was appropriated for expenditure in this year this year?

**Mr Gill:** Yes, we will spend \$5 million this year.

**MR SMYTH:** You will spend \$5 million this year?

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** And complete it next year on time?

**Mr Gill:** Construction works will commence in early May. There have already been some preconstruction activities in terms of purchasing materials.

**MR SMYTH:** And the \$15 million allocated for next year will be expended as well?

**Mr Gill:** Yes. It is targeted to be finished by May next year.

**THE CHAIR:** Just going back to the silos: that is purely silos? You are not going to do any notice boards?

**Mr Watkinson:** No. It is for design and construction of the silos.

**MR SMYTH:** They are very nice silos.

**THE CHAIR:** They would want to be for 20,000 each.

**Mr McNulty:** Could I make a comment on that?

**Mr Stanhope:** Don't be provocative!

**Mr McNulty:** No, I am just trying to explain the cost. Those silos have to have a substantial foundation underneath them to prevent them blowing over in strong winds, so there is a significant cost in that also.

**MR SMYTH:** And to keep them vandal-proof?

**Mr McNulty:** To make them as vandal-proof as possible, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** So errant staff cannot graffiti them.

**THE CHAIR:** Keep on going, Mr Smyth.

**MR SMYTH:** In the capital upgrades starting on page 29, I notice there is money for libraries. There is no mention of any work being done for a new library in the inner south. Where would we find reference to that?

**Mr Stanhope:** The government has not yet taken a decision in relation to that. That is an issue that is under active consideration. At this stage the government has not concluded its consideration of options that present for the establishment of that facility.

**MR SMYTH:** When will that information be made available?

**Mr Stanhope:** We are currently developing the 2009-10 budget. I am not at this stage disposed to reveal what may or may not be in that budget, but there is currently of course a budget process in train.

**MR SMYTH:** You will not say whether or not there will be something about the library?

**Mr Stanhope:** At this stage those are decisions for cabinet and it would be inappropriate and premature of me to pre-empt a cabinet decision. I think people are aware of the government's commitment in relation to a library, but it is a decision for cabinet and cabinet has not yet made a decision and, even if it had, I am not at liberty to reveal what decision it may have made. I can reveal that it has not yet made a decision, but I can also reiterate the government's commitment to a library facility in the inner south.

**Mr Byles:** If I may, Mr Smyth: just further to that, the \$95,000 allocated will allow us to equip our eight libraries with that WiFi connection and provide that internet access.

**MR SMYTH:** That is the networking upgrade.

**Mr Byles:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** There is also for public libraries at Tuggeranong, Erindale, Woden, Dixon and Belconnen condition audit works worth \$320,000. What will that get us?

**Mr Ryan:** The existing libraries are part of the portfolio that we manage. We have done condition audits on most of our properties—all of our properties—and we continually do condition audits so that we can upgrade our works program. This year out of our various works program come the public libraries, and essentially the \$250,000 worth of work will be things like plumbing, water, painting. It is a range of minor maintenance. It is just simply that we have building inspectors go through all our properties and develop works programs. It is just a long list. We can produce a list of the items, if you like.

**MR SMYTH:** You said \$250,000. Do you mean \$320,000?

**Mr Ryan:** \$320,000, sorry, yes.

**MR SMYTH:** So \$320,000 is to carry out works; it is not for an audit, as such.

**Mr Ryan:** No. The condition audits have been done. It is essentially from the condition audits that we were doing a range of works to meet what has come out of the condition audits.

**MR SMYTH:** A list would be fine, thank you.

**MS BURCH:** Just on that page, sporting facilities, improvements, 1560. So they targeted ovals and parks?

**Mr Stanhope:** Mr Barr is the minister responsible.

**MR SMYTH:** But if you are responsible for street lighting, I notice there is \$205,000—it is at the head of the page—for street lighting.

**THE CHAIR:** On the other page as well?

**MR SMYTH:** Yes. I have had some complaint or concerns raised about Mugga Way, an older suburb with different lights, older lighting, lots of nice high trees but a very busy thoroughfare. Is there any consideration of works being done in that area to improve the lighting?

**Mr Gill:** I suppose in terms of street lighting there are two issues there. There is normal street lighting and there is street lighting within heritage areas. Probably the Mugga Lane issue that you are talking about is an older suburb that has a particular style of lighting. We are working closely with the Heritage Council to come up with a new street light arrangement to accommodate maintenance in heritage areas. The figure listed in the capital upgrade program for 2009-10 is just part of the ongoing program for street light improvements basically generated by either community request or inspection from our own staff.

**MR SMYTH:** If you are working with the Heritage Council to come up with an appropriate light for those areas, when is that outcome likely to be?

**Mr Gill:** That will be implemented through the same program on an ongoing basis.

**MR SMYTH:** On an ongoing basis?

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** But we do not have a new heritage light—

**Mr Gill:** No, we do not have a new heritage light agreed as such.

**MR SMYTH:** When will agreement be reached?

**Mr Gill:** During this calendar year.

**MR SMYTH:** During this calendar year?

**Mr Gill:** Yes, it is a current discussion we are having with the Heritage Council.

**MR SMYTH:** At one end of the spectrum, from the community's perspective, you have got a large school on Mugga Way and later in the year when the weather is not so bright the lighting is ineffective and, at the other end of the spectrum, there are security issues with some high profile and business—

**Mr Gill:** If there is a safety consideration we can clearly put in an interim arrangement. If you just bring to our attention the specific location we can look at it, but in terms of getting a permanent solution we would obviously seek to get one that was acceptable to the Heritage Council and the heritage values of the particular area.

**THE CHAIR:** With traffic light upgrades and road safety improvements, are these going to be smart lights, so that they are in synch with each other?

**Mr Gill:** In terms of traffic lights coordination?

**THE CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr Gill:** We operate a similar system to New South Wales in terms of traffic light coordination, so the answer is yes, it would be coordinated. But also there will be LED lanterns, which basically are low-energy use lanterns.

**THE CHAIR:** On that subject, how much of our street lighting has moved to energy efficient LEDs?

**Mr Gill:** As part of this year's program, there was \$3 million allocated by the government to install low-energy lamps. That represents about 25 per cent of the total stock. As part of the 2009-10 program, there is an additional half a million dollars, so that will continue towards making improvements. At the moment we have replaced in the order of 27 per cent older, more energy using lamps with low-energy lamps.

**THE CHAIR:** With respect to public transport infrastructure and the bus stop disability improvements, what do you do to a bus stop to meet disability standards, and how much are buses actually used by disabled people? You possibly can't answer the second question.

**Mr Gill:** I can't answer the second; I can answer the first part in terms of infrastructure. In the first instance there is provision of a concrete slab, there is the provision of some ground tactiles to help a person with sight impairment to get to the head of the stop. There is the provision of seating. There is the provision of a footpath with reasonable grades to accommodate wheelchair access. So there is a range of requirements. Each year we would basically improve in the order of 30 to 40 sites. There are still quite a number of sites to be improved but we are making a reasonable amount of progress in that regard.

**THE CHAIR:** I guess you do those on the basis of demand?

**Mr Gill:** Basically the government is committed to the Disability Discrimination Act, and by 2020 there is a commitment that all public transport facilities, buses and infrastructure meet requirements. So we have a program rather than it being a matter of demand.

**THE CHAIR:** Good.

**Mr Byles:** And there are some interim targets. From memory, it is 55 per cent by 2012 for our bus disability standards.

**Mr Stanhope:** The latest purchase of buses actually keeps us on track to meet the targets in relation to buses. I think we need to maintain our effort in relation to bus stops to ensure that we meet that target of complete compliance by 2020, and our next target is in 2012, which I think is 55 per cent. And we will meet that with our buses. They are on target, and I think as long as we maintain our effort with bus stops—

**Mr Gill:** We are currently at about 30 per cent, so we have some ground to make up in that area.

**Mr Stanhope:** In the last couple of years we have spiked our investment in relation to bus seats and bus places. It has been an interesting exercise.

**MS BURCH:** I have a question on city centre infrastructure upgrades. This is on page 30 for next year's—

**Mr Stanhope:** This is the capital upgrades?

**MS BURCH:** Yes.

**Mr Stanhope:** This is the indicative program, of course. This has not been appropriated. This is the idea, so we will be going through this again in the next estimates process.

**MS BURCH:** But it is just around the Civic area?

**Mr Stanhope:** Yes. Three years ago the government increased the capital upgrades annual budget allocations significantly. That resulted last year in a capital upgrades program of \$42 million, this year it is proposed to be \$44.3 million. We have released the anticipated capital upgrade program with the third appropriation in order to simply signal that the government, in addition to the third appropriation, and the support that it provided to certainly ACT-based business around a capital, an ACT government capital program which is important to business, of course. We do intend, in the 2009-10 budget, similarly to appropriate \$44 million for these works, to send a signal to most particularly local industry, of the work that we anticipate being available.

In relation to the city centre infrastructure upgrades, that is precisely what it is, Ms Burch. This appropriates, and it will probably be repeated again next year, a million dollars for city centre infrastructure. In recent years, however, the government has, in the budget, in addition to the capital upgrade program, appropriated funds separately for, for instance, upgrades within the city, as well as in suburban shopping

centres. For instance, in last year's budget we appropriated funds for Bunda Street—I think three-point-something million dollars—and similarly in the same budget we appropriated significant funds to continue the upgrade of Childers Street. Without indicating that this was a cabinet decision yet, we would intend to continue that program in relation to the city over and above the capital infrastructure funds that are identified in this proposal.

**THE CHAIR:** Moving along to the local shopping precinct upgrades, can you give us a list of which shopping centres will be involved?

**Mr Stanhope:** Through the local shopping centre precinct upgrade proposal—

**THE CHAIR:** You have got Lyons that you are actually going to do; that is the bulk of the money.

**Mr Stanhope:** That has been funded, yes.

**THE CHAIR:** But you have got forward design projects. I notice an “s” on it, so it is presumably more than one of those. Where are you aiming next?

**Mr Stanhope:** We have just begun, as I think you may be aware, the public consultation process for Red Hill and I believe we are also consulting in relation to Scullin. At the moment works have commenced at Garran, works are about to commence at Ainslie. The public consultation on the design for Deakin is well advanced. Public consultation has just commenced for Red Hill; public consultation has just concluded at Lyons. My understanding is that public consultation is underway at Scullin, and I believe the only other active or live upgrade proposed at the moment is I think at Wanniassa—I am not sure about Wanniassa. But that is the list into the future as it currently stands. Red Hill has not yet been funded. Some work has commenced but with respect to the design work and consultation, I am not sure if the design has been funded. So we are working into the future.

**THE CHAIR:** With ACT NOWaste, we have got the household hazardous waste drop-off facility. What will that encompass?

**Mr McNulty:** It is a facility where residents can drop off things like paint and other chemicals that they are not allowed to take into the landfill or put in their recycling bin or garbage bin. It is just a service to allow people to get rid of those chemicals rather than storing them in their houses.

**THE CHAIR:** Basically, if I am a household, I can put anything there, in effect? I am talking about a household; I have got no nuclear bombs or anything like that.

**Mr McNulty:** It would be unusual to get something that you would not be able to put there. I am not sure that I would commit to absolutely anything.

**THE CHAIR:** What else do I do with it? If I have got something like—

**Mr McNulty:** With things like paint, paint is a good example where it is not supposed to go into landfill or in your bin, so you can drop it off there, and various other

chemicals that you might have around your house as well—pesticides.

**THE CHAIR:** It will not be asbestos because that goes to—

**Mr McNulty:** No, not asbestos. Asbestos has specific handling requirements and we would not encourage residents to take asbestos to the site in their car under any circumstances.

**MR SMYTH:** Could you outline what the reuse facility and shed will be?

**Mr McNulty:** That is an expansion of the current Aussie Junk shed at the Mitchell site and I understand some sort of portico for a better drop-off facility.

**THE CHAIR:** Will they pay more rent or anything because of this?

**Mr McNulty:** No, I do not believe so. But clearly it is in our interests to make sure they can recycle as much stuff as possible.

**MR SMYTH:** The State Circle clockwise bike and footpath, what does that actually involve?

**THE CHAIR:** It is a big treadmill that goes around—

**Mr Gill:** The on-road cycling facility?

**MR SMYTH:** No, it is called—and it is at the bottom of the page—the cycle lanes and paths, State Circle clockwise lanes. So do we only have anticlockwise lanes and paths at this stage on State Circle?

**Mr Gill:** My understanding is it is the provision of an on-road cycling facility. I think that is just describing the direction of the cycle path. It is the provision of a formal, on-road cycling facility, in a clockwise direction.

**MR SMYTH:** Do we currently have it—

**Mr Gill:** No, we do not.

**MR SMYTH:** We do not have an anticlockwise—

**Mr Gill:** We do not have a formal on-road cycle lane on the other side, but cyclists can obviously travel on the other side. But this is the provision of a formal on-road cycling facility.

**MR SMYTH:** And it will obviously be going clockwise. So we will come back later and do anticlockwise? Is this a two-stage process?

**Mr Gill:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** It will be, so a clockwise lane—

**Mr Gill:** Yes, but the decision to progress it in a clockwise direction was because the paving allows for it to be done without major construction activity. It is wide enough to achieve. On the other side basically the paving width would involve additional construction. It is not as wide. So it is expedient, but there is future work there.

**MR SMYTH:** And we will just travel clockwise.

**Mr Gill:** Most of the development is clockwise.

**THE CHAIR:** So will you have signage explaining to cyclists it is a one-way ride?

**Mr Gill:** It is de facto at the moment; it is being used in that practice. This is formalising an existing arrangement.

**THE CHAIR:** Do we have further questions?

**MR SMYTH:** I have some but, given the time, I will put them on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** In that case thank you very much for your attendance. I believe we will have some questions on notice for you very shortly. I would appreciate it if you could get those back to us as soon as possible and at the maximum five working days because, as you would appreciate, we have only a week and a half in which to write the report.

**The committee adjourned at 2.47 pm.**