



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2019-2020

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2019-2020 and Appropriation
\(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Bill 2019-2020](#))

Members:

**MISS C BURCH (Chair)
MS B CODY (Deputy Chair)
MRS G JONES
MS C LE COUTEUR
MR M PETTERSSON**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 24 JUNE 2019

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms Annemieke Jongsma (Ph 620 51253)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

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Privilege statement

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.30 am.

Appearances:

Berry, Ms Yvette, Deputy Chief Minister, Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, Minister for Housing and Suburban Development, Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister for Women

Education Directorate

Brighton, Ms Meg, Acting Director-General

Efthymiades, Ms Deb, Deputy Director-General

Matthews, Mr David, Executive Group Manager, Business Services

Hawkins, Mr Ross, Executive Group Manager, Service Design and Delivery

Huxley, Mr Mark, Executive Group Manager, School Improvement

Daly, Ms Lynette, Chief Finance Officer

Moysey, Mr Sean, Executive Branch Manager, Early Childhood Policy and Regulation

Howell, Ms Elizabeth, Acting Executive Branch Manager, Enrolments and Planning

McAlister, Ms Coralie, Executive Branch Manager, Strategic Policy

Gotts, Mr Robert, Acting Executive Group Manager, System Policy and Reform

McMahon, Ms Kate, Executive Branch Manager, Learning and Teaching

Seton, Ms Sam, Executive Branch Manager, Student Engagement

Bray, Mr Rodney, Executive Branch Manager, Infrastructure and Capital Works

THE CHAIR: Welcome to the seventh day of public hearings of the Select Committee on Estimates 2019-2020. The proceedings today will examine the expenditure proposals and revenue estimates for the Education Directorate in relation to budget statements F, the Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate in relation to budget statements E and the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment in relation to budget statements E.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast and webstreamed live. When taking a question on notice it would be useful if witnesses used the words, "I will take that as a question taken on notice." This will help the committee and witnesses to confirm questions taken on notice from the transcript.

Witnesses are also asked to familiarise themselves with the privilege statement provided on the table. Could you please confirm that you have read the privilege card and you understand the implications of the privilege statement?

Ms Brighton: Yes.

Ms Berry: Yes.

Mr Matthews: Yes.

Ms Efthymiades: Yes.

THE CHAIR: As we are not taking opening statements we will proceed straight to questions.

Ms Berry: Just before we do I mention that the Director-General, Natalie Howson, has retired from this position. Meg Brighton will be acting in that role for the next three months and will be taking questions in reference to that area today, just in case the committee was not aware of that. I also acknowledge the work that Natalie Howson has done within the Education Directorate and her assistance in my role in implementing some pretty big strategies across the education and childhood sector.

THE CHAIR: In relation to the future of education strategy, which is outlined under your priorities, and the four foundations outlined there as well, how are schools changing in order to ensure that students are engaged in their learning and how success is being measured against these foundations?

Ms Berry: Did you say in early learning?

THE CHAIR: No, to ensure that students are engaged in learning.

Ms Berry: From the very start of the development of the future of education strategy, through the consultations, we had over 2,400 students engaged in the development of the strategy. From the very start, student voice, as part of the development of the strategy and how the strategy is implemented moving forward, is very important for education in our schools in the ACT. That is why one of the pillars of the future of education strategy is that student voice and engagement play an important role in that. Meg, would you like to add to that?

Ms Brighton: The future of education strategy outlines the plan over the next 10 years. As you mentioned, the four foundations are really critical for that. We are in the process of finalisation of implementation of that strategy and the plans that we will outline over each of the phases over the next 10 years. Those four foundations will have a series of activities against them which will enable us to make sure that there is a strong opportunity for students to be very involved in their learning and have a high degree of confidence and say in their learning.

We are empowering our learning professionals, ensuring that teachers are well equipped and have the opportunity to participate in a whole range of professional development that will continue to mean that in front of every classroom across this city our students have a teacher who is strong, capable, equipped and who can help them go to the next stage in their learning.

A third dimension of this strategy, around strong communities for learning, is important because the old African adage that it takes a village to raise a child is very true in education. We know that, as a sector, we have a key part in that. But when we partner with our families and with the not-for-profit sector those communities come together and create communities for learning.

That fourth foundation is around making sure we have the right systems and practices

to support learning. That is everything from business systems right through to diagnostic tools to make sure that we have got the right orientation and the right services meeting the needs of every student.

One of the core foundations of empowering learning professionals is the deep work we are doing on building the capability of our school leadership team. With the committee's agreement, I invite Mark Huxley to say a couple of words on that.

Mr Huxley: As Ms Brighton and the minister have mentioned, school leadership and the capabilities of our school leaders are really important across not only our principals but also our school leader As, our deputy principals, as well as our school leader Cs, which is basically the equivalent of faculty heads. We are really doing a lot of investment in their capabilities to make sure that they can put students at the centre, and that they are in a position—

MRS JONES: Just to clarify, the question asked how the schools are changing.

Mr Huxley: Yes.

MRS JONES: I understand that you are getting to that. But also, how will it be measured; so what changes and how will they be measured?

Mr Huxley: School leadership is one of the things we are strengthening. That is one of the investments we are making to continue to strengthen the ability of our school leaders to—

MRS JONES: How?

Mr Huxley: Through professional development, through symposiums, through bi-annual conferences. We are focusing on two main areas for our school leaders. One is on evidence-based decision-making, so strengthening the ability of our school leaders, our principals, our deputies and our school leader Cs to look at the data available to them at the school level, which is allowing them to be more precise about meeting the needs of all the individual students that they have in our schools.

MRS JONES: In all that you measured, have you got ways of measuring how these conferences will improve? I am sure they will, but how will you measure it?

Ms Brighton: I can talk at the global level about measurements. You would have noticed in our budget papers that our strategic indicators have changed—

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms Brighton: I will ask Mr Gotts to speak to those. That is the first pillar of that articulation and measurement about how we are tracking.

Mr Gotts: Just for the record, I have read and understood the privilege statement. As Ms Brighton has indicated, we are putting in some new strategic indicators that flow through to schools at the end of the day. These indicators are a measurement of the things that are important. The things that are important are growth in students'

learning, the strength of engagement of students in school and also around the—

MRS JONES: No, I think we have moved from the changes to how senior executive within the schools are being educated to a broader discussion about your indicators for the whole of education. I am wondering how you are going to measure the improvement at the executive level.

Ms Brighton: The broader measures that Mr Gotts was just talking about—engagement, equity and gain—are the foundation measures. Then underpinning that is a range of mechanisms we are using to track our improvement overall.

MRS JONES: But what are they?

Ms Brighton: On school leadership—the work that Mr Huxley is leading around school improvement, which goes to leadership of schools—we do a review of schools every few years. That school review is a thorough assessment about how that school is tracking, and that is—

MRS JONES: So let us just take one example, Ms Brighton. The evidence-based decision-making, for example, is one area where you are going to improve your principals' capacity. Is that in that measure?

Ms Brighton: Yes. Evidence-based decision-making is assessed when we do school reviews. Part of what we look at when we do a school review is evidence-based decision-making. We look at how that is exercised in the school and what evidence the review team can see of that. Are teachers equipped to understand that evidence and apply that evidence in the classroom?

The school review team, which is usually three or four people, looks quite thoroughly at those domains. If I can follow your example of evidence-based decision-making, at the end of that review they have a report. They will identify where, on a maturity scale, that school is in respect of evidence-based decision-making. They will either affirm that school as really strong and needing to go further and further or identify areas where it needs to strengthen up.

MRS JONES: What are the other specific measures you are implementing to get the change that you referred to? There are senior executives getting better training and focusing more on evidence-based decision-making. What are the other things?

Mr Huxley: The other key area where we are investing with school leadership is around professional learning communities. That is the ability to have more precise uplifting in teacher quality at a school level. It is to make sure that all teachers are supported and receiving quality feedback at their place of work. All the research suggests that professional learning, in and of itself, outside of school is not the most effective uplift for teacher quality.

MRS JONES: So within the environment of the school they work in, you have more professional development for the teachers. Is that what you are saying?

Mr Huxley: Yes. It is supplementing the professional learning that teachers might

seek outside the school and make sure that at their place of work they actually have school leaders who are providing direct feedback on the classroom practice of that teacher and the next steps for their improvement. That is delivered through our professional learning communities program.

MRS JONES: Are you rolling out an education package for teachers within each school? Is that what you are saying?

Mr Huxley: With our school leader As Bs and Cs, part of the development of professional learning communities is to improve their ability to have better professional feedback for teachers to ensure that all teachers are receiving it at the school level.

MRS JONES: Are you talking about reviewing teachers' performance or are you talking about—

Mr Huxley: A lot of that can be done through classroom observation. It can be those teachers bringing some exemplar lessons to faculty discussions, to their professional learning communities.

MRS JONES: When you say “professional learning communities” do you mean teachers getting together within one's—I mean, can we just have it in plain English? I know you deal with all these high terms all the time but we need this to be understandable to those who do not work professionally in that field. Are you putting teachers together in little groups within each school to improve each other, are you having better supervision and assessment of teachers, or what?

Mr Huxley: It is teachers getting together at the school level talking about the way they teach kids.

MRS JONES: Right; so the sharing of ideas of what is working—

Mr Huxley: So it is small groups of teachers—

MRS JONES: Right.

Mr Huxley: Yes. They will be sharing exemplar lessons. They will be sharing what has worked well.

MRS JONES: And that is something new?

Mr Huxley: It is actually valuing it and it is strengthening it more. At the moment teachers have always talked about their practice—

MRS JONES: I am sure they have.

Mr Huxley: We know through the research and evidence that there are actually specific ways of doing it which are far more productive and enduring—

MRS JONES: Like what?

Mr Huxley: It can actually be singular focus; so instead of jumping from a range of different professional conversations—

MRS JONES: Are these conversations managed? Is there a pro forma they go through in a meeting?

Mr Huxley: The professional learning communities is part of the training that we are giving to school leader As, Bs and Cs, which is how to have those conversations.

MRS JONES: How to have those groups, yes?

Mr Huxley: What does the evidence say about professional learning communities? Those that focus on student evidence, data and impact, and that are focused on a smaller number of things over time, are the most effective. That is what we are prioritising in our schools.

MRS JONES: The school leaders will be trained in how to run those small groups of teachers?

Mr Huxley: Yes. As a key part of that, last year we actually had all of our school leader Cs—over 450 of them—go through a professional conversation—

MRS JONES: What is a school leader C?

Mr Huxley: It is like a faculty head. So they executive teach. They might lead a small group in a high school, it might be science or English for example.

MRS JONES: So you are taking them off site to train them in how to run these small groups, then they are going back into the school, running the small groups, and hopefully they are sharing with each other what works best?

Mr Huxley: Yes. The reason we have our As, Bs and Cs involved is that there are things the principals can do in the way they timetable and organise staff meetings, all of those things, to make it work effectively in the school.

MRS JONES: Do you have any paperwork about the training those school leaders are doing that you can supply to the committee and how those small groups will be run?

Ms Brighton: The minister launched last year a leadership plan for our principals, our deputy principals and our executive teachers in schools. This is outlined in that leadership plan. We can provide that to the committee. I think it is on the Education Directorate website, and we can provide the link to the committee. That works through the different dimensions.

MRS JONES: Can take on notice the actual documentation that is used by teachers to run those group meetings?

Ms Berry: It might be different across every school. I am sure we can probably get it—

MRS JONES: I am not talking about in every school; I am talking about when you take those leaders away and teach them how to run these groups there would be some kit they take back to use. We would like to see that.

Ms Brighton: We can provide the committee with the professional learning and the structure around professional learning communities, that last year we worked with schools on.

THE CHAIR: What additional funding has been directed towards empowering learning professionals as that second foundation?

Mr Huxley: Some \$5.4 million has been put forward to that. That encompasses all school leaders—As, Bs and Cs—in the professional learning. That also is employing additionally what we call instructional, mentors or peer coaches, people who are available to go out to schools and assist schools in their implementation. We have employed four of those.

MRS JONES: Will they go to individual teachers or to these small groups?

Mr Huxley: They will go to the leadership teams, because that is the point that has the most impact. Basically we are upskilling school leadership teams to be able to provide that assistance to individual teachers at the school level.

Ms Berry: That was in last year's budget.

MS CODY: Minister, a little while ago you announced that school cleaners were moving from being contracted to being direct employees. Can you expand on how that will make a difference in their lives and also in the school community?

Ms Berry: Yes. Since I have taken on the portfolio of education we have done some work around how cleaning was happening in our schools and whether that workforce was being provided with the best opportunity to do the best clean in our schools. Despite putting in changes that required cleaning contractors to implement a certain number of hours work, so putting workforce standards within the contracts, that still was not occurring and schools were not being cleaned appropriately. In some cases some cleaners were not being paid their workplace rights entitlements.

Despite a number of conversations with the Education Directorate and the contractors, there was no improvement. We then decided the best way forward for our school communities and for this particular vulnerable workforce was employing them directly by the government as that would provide a number of outcomes we have been looking for as part of the cleaning contracts in our schools.

Obviously we want our schools cleaned appropriately and to a high quality. If your workforce is being treated respectfully you are likely to get a better outcome. The majority of this workforce is made up of migrants and refugees from particularly disadvantaged backgrounds. Some are on very modest incomes and have been working in our schools for many years, 10-plus years some of them.

I offered them employment with the ACT government as part of this process and dignity for them comes with that as it recognises the pride they have in their work. Knowing that they will be treated respectfully and paid on time and be provided all their entitlements meant something for that workforce.

They will start employment with the ACT government in term one 2020. That is an excellent outcome for this group of about 300 cleaners who will now be employed by the ACT government. I will ask Mr Matthews to expand.

Mr Matthews: We are in the transition process at the moment. We have existing contracts in place with cleaning companies. The initial two-year period of those contracts expires on 30 June 2019. We have negotiated extended arrangements with a number of the companies to take us through to the beginning of the 2020 school year. So we will have a continued outsourced cleaning arrangement until the beginning of next year.

We are working through the transition process both with the companies and the employees currently engaged by those cleaning companies and looking at setting up an operational model within the Education Directorate to deliver those cleaning services. We have contracts in place to ensure that cleaning services will be provided until the new arrangements take effect and we will be working over that upcoming period to manage the transitions.

MS CODY: Minister, you mentioned that some of these cleaners have been doing this work for up to 10 years. Are we able to transition their entitlements over?

Ms Berry: Yes. It is a process. Bringing workforces back into direct employment has more challenges than contracting it out, that is for sure. But we have had some time in these past 12 months or so to work through how those entitlements will transfer. All of those can transfer across, including long service leave and superannuation and all those kinds of entitlements. I do not think there is any issue; it is just making sure that we have everybody's details so we can make sure that the transition happens as smoothly as possible.

Mr Huxley: The general policy guidance from the minister is that cleaners are no worse off in the transition from outsource to directly provided services. That means wages and conditions, but it also means the transfer of entitlements. We are working through with the companies who are, of course, responsible for those entitlements under the current contracts.

In terms of the cleaning workforce, many of them have long service arrangements through the Long Service Leave Authority so they are lucky to be able to take advantage of the portable long service leave. The technical issues around how we can recognise those conditions and transfer them into a government context are issues we are still working through, as well as the enterprise agreement and employment arrangements for individuals.

As the minister said, it is a mixture of working with each individual cleaner and understanding their needs and circumstances and wishes, but also placing that within the public sector employment framework. We are working with our colleagues in the

Chief Minister's directorate to make sure we can manage that transition.

MRS JONES: Are the employers obliged to give you that data, just so that we understand clearly?

Mr Matthews: The current employers are acting very cooperatively with us and making sure that we can get the information that we need. We will also be directly engaging with the employees. We obviously want to begin a relationship with them. In the very near future, we will be doing a registration of interest process, where we will ask people to register their interest in working for government. Then we will find out all of their individual circumstances.

MRS JONES: Some may or may not stay in the long run. That is the reality, I guess.

Ms Berry: Also because of their status—a lot of them are of migrant and refugee status, with different visa arrangements—and where they sit in life more generally and what their personal circumstances are. That is another level of complication that we are working through: their refugee and migrant status or visa status, where they sit on those, because there are so many different ones.

MRS JONES: Yes, that would be very important. How many different companies are you dealing with across all of the schools? Is it just the one?

Ms Berry: Four.

Mr Matthews: There are currently four; the minister is correct. From 1 July, for the remaining seven months until the insourcing occurs, we will be working with two cleaning companies. As I said, we are working very cooperatively with them to—

MRS JONES: So for that interim time, the two have had to expand to do the whole job, and they are the ones who are working most cooperatively with you, presumably?

Mr Matthews: Yes. We are very pleased with their level of cooperation to date. The key thing that they have to do is to make sure that the services continue to be delivered in accordance with the contract.

MRS JONES: Yes, of course. Absolutely. That is what contracts are about.

Mr Matthews: And then, of course, looking after their employees. They have a strong interest as well in making sure that that occurs.

MS LE COUTEUR: I understand that programs are now running in schools on respectful relationships. How are emerging topics such as intimate image abuse incorporated into these programs, particularly given the recent laws passed by the Assembly on this subject?

Ms Berry: There are a couple of things. Respectful relationships is part of the Australian curriculum, so it is not a new requirement. School teachers and leaders are qualified to be able to deliver the respectful relationships programs that are required under the curriculum.

The school communities work very closely around the e-safety place and how students and young people are provided with all the tools that they need to be respectful online and how they work online with regard to their schoolwork and outside of schools; and provide advice to parent communities through the eSafety Commissioner. Sam Seton can provide some more information on how school communities keep up to date with emerging challenges.

Ms Seton: As the minister just said, respectful relationships have been part of the Australian curriculum, so it has been something that schools have been working through. Each school approaches it slightly differently to meet the needs of their school community. Obviously there is a base level that is covered, but, for example, if there is an emerging issue with a particular year 9 cohort, they might ramp it up. They might also bring in external programs. We work with YWCA; PCYC; the Canberra Rape Crisis Centre; The Line, which is an Our Watch program; and Sexual Health and Family Planning. We have lots of different groups who can support the work that schools do. Schools will also work more with individual students, depending on what is happening for them.

MS LE COUTEUR: I assume that you saw the young women's attitudes to violence against women and gender equity survey that was put out from the 2017 national community attitudes towards violence against women survey, which was pretty depressing. Have you changed anything as a result of that?

Ms Seton: Which aspect of that?

MS LE COUTEUR: It talked about community attitudes around women, gender-based violence and—

Ms Berry: There are a number of things, as Ms Seton has referred to, where school communities develop or bring different resources into their schools depending on that particular school community, as well as implementing the curriculum requirements.

An example of where school communities are taking the lead for themselves, particularly the students and young people, is that this year we ran a conference on International Women's Day where students came along with ideas that they wanted to present to their school communities and their school leadership about the improvements that they wanted to make in their school communities. A lot of it went to this respectful relationships conversation in their school communities, but also the kinds of things that they wanted to see in their schools.

One school said that they wanted to have male mentors come and talk to the boys in the schools about respectful behaviour. They did not think it was something that a program delivered, where a program would influence boys' behaviour. They thought that somebody that the boys could look up to and respect would make a difference to how they behaved. Other students were talking about making sure that there were opportunities for women and girls to be involved in decision-making at the school level around making sure that they had everything that they needed in their schools around sanitary items: tampons, pads and things like that. Our schools do provide that at no charge to students.

And it is through the front-line worker training. Every teacher and school staff will be provided with training, just the same as every other public service employee. Some 20,000 employees of the ACT public service are being provided with that training; I know we will probably talk more about that later in the week. That will make a change within our school communities and the culture within our schools about an understanding of domestic and family violence and the kinds of supports that are available for people who are experiencing that, both children and their families.

MS LE COUTEUR: Have you done any work specifically about sexual consent in these trainings?

Ms Seton: It is covered in a variety of training. Obviously, it is done at an age-appropriate level and also a developmentally appropriate level. One example is Sexual Health and Family Planning, which runs the Sosafe program for students with disability, and is very clear on teaching students about consent in terms of okay and not okay, and really breaking it down. Obviously those students can be quite a vulnerable group, and it is getting them to understand what is okay and what is not okay, and also teaching them to voice when they need to say stop.

MS LE COUTEUR: What about other students, your more mainstream students?

Ms Seton: As I said, it is part of the Australian curriculum. Different groups will bring that in, and it is covered in different training. As I said before, if it is an emerging issue in a school, it may be that we run a smaller targeted group with a group of students, which may involve the student wellbeing team—school psychologists, school nurses, et cetera—for a smaller group. Or it may be a broader delivery.

MRS JONES: Going to early childhood education and today's announcement, first of all, could I clarify whether the ANU demographics analysis that is being undertaken is in any way connected to how this is being rolled out, or is that separate?

Ms Berry: The information that is gained from that will inform the development of the strategy and how we plan for our future growth.

MRS JONES: So that is more about future growth. The original announcement was to get to a point of universal access, obviously, for three-year-olds.

Ms Berry: Yes.

MRS JONES: The announcement that you made is more targeted and smaller, to start with. Is there a plan for getting to the ultimate outcome? If so, where are we going to house all of those classes?

Ms Berry: That is part of the strategy that is being developed. There is a lot of detail in this. It is quite a big task to bring universal access to three-year-olds, and it will be done across a range of different ways. We have engaged experts in the field to help with the development of the detail of the strategy.

When I first announced universal access for three-year-olds—extended to include three-year-olds—I always said that it would be phased in, and that the start would be a targeted process, first for those students who most need that support, who might be vulnerable and need those extra supports—

MRS JONES: That is what you have announced now.

Ms Berry: That is what I have announced today, the start of that targeted first phase, if you like, of the process to bring universal access to three-year-olds. We have Dr Richard Denniss and Dr Deb Brennan. Deb Brennan was the author of the *Lifting our game* report. They have been engaged to assist with the development of the strategy. Clearly, we cannot build 300 new preschools across the city within a few years.

MRS JONES: No, or indeed expand the ones we have.

Ms Berry: That is right. It could include some of that, infrastructure upgrades. It will also be about developing partnerships with the early childhood sector regarding how that can be delivered in their facilities. Sean Moysey might want to expand on that

Mr Moysey: The minister has outlined the key points. Clearly, the most important thing is people, collaboration and connecting.

MRS JONES: What do you mean by that?

Mr Moysey: It is really about collaborative relationships, trust in relationships. Interactions with children are really driven by people, so the most important thing we have been focusing on is that people relationship.

MRS JONES: What we want to talk about here in this estimates process, although I am sure you are very collaborative, is logistically how it is going to occur.

Mr Moysey: The minister formed an Early Childhood Advisory Council. We have been conferring with the council. We also have an inter-directorate committee, to make sure that we do not miss those other important relationships around health and community services in that process. There is the logistical side. The minister made the point that it is about looking at that, and there is the people side of it, which is within the sector as a whole.

MRS JONES: With the people side of it, do you mean the staff required? What do you mean by that?

Mr Moysey: Yes, that is right.

MRS JONES: Every department has its own way of speaking. We are just trying to get to the information.

Ms Berry: I will have more to say once the strategy is developed, and we release it later on. We talked about this with Sam Page, who is the CEO of Early Childhood Australia, about how to get this right, to make sure that it does work properly and that we address these kinds of logistical issues that we will have in building these

partnerships with the community. It will be with parents; it will be with early childhood educators. The workforce will be a challenge for us as well, and making sure that we have quality early learning opportunities for these three-year-olds as well.

Part of what we have been starting to work on is the prep for pre program. That program has already been working with three-year-olds and their families, identifying particular challenges that they might have. It might be different kinds of speech or learning difficulties for which they need extra support. If we can get that extra support to them before they start school, they are more likely to start school on a more equal level with everybody else. All of these things are rolling out together. But for universal access to be expanded to three-year-olds, there are a lot of things that we need to work through. We are phasing it in, taking our time and making sure that we do it carefully, because we do not want this to fail.

MRS JONES: Of course. To be able to picture how we might get there in the long term, you could be delivering it through ELCs; you could be delivering some of it through existing preschools. Could you be delivering some of it through childcare centres or family day care? What is the intention there?

Ms Berry: These are the kinds of logistics that we are working through with our advisory group and with Richard Denniss and Deb Brennan, having them advise us about all of these kinds of challenges that we will need to overcome, the different partnerships that we will have to make, and being ready to be able to deliver early childhood education, and having the workforce to be able to deliver that. We do not want to do it fast because we want to have quality.

MRS JONES: In my case I am not pushing for the specific time frame but I am wondering how—

Ms Berry: Yes, so did we when we first thought about it.

MRS JONES: The main thing is that we have obviously had big professionalisation in the childcare workforce. They have all gone off and got greater training. Some of that has gone brilliantly and some of it has created a logistical nightmare for people who are working in the sector. There is still lots to iron out there.

Ms Berry: Yes.

MRS JONES: That does flesh out better how it might be delivered, if you do have some of it coming through childcare centres and so on. There is no federal funding at the moment for three-year-old preschool, is there? Have there been any conversations with the federal government, or with the opposition ahead of the last election or something like that, to push this up the agenda of political parties?

Ms Berry: Every time I meet with any of them, I have pushed for an expansion of preschool to three-year-olds. All of the expert advice and research say that if you get those two years before they start kindergarten, they are more likely to have better outcomes when they start school.

MRS JONES: How will you select the group, to start with, this group you have

announced now? Will that be using CSD data?

Ms Berry: Again it is about having these partnerships within the government, with the Community Services Directorate, child protection and Health.

MRS JONES: Do you have criteria that you are using to identify who should be there, or will each department put forward what they think?

Ms Berry: I can ask Mr Moysey to provide you with some more detail, but the ACT government already funds places in early childhood settings for—

MRS JONES: Koori preschool.

Ms Berry: No, for vulnerable children in the ACT. There is already a certain cohort that is funded for early childhood, but that is from birth to four.

MRS JONES: You want to expand it at the three-year age mark?

Ms Berry: We have already got a program in place. We almost know already who all the young people are and who the families are. That is why we have come out with this up to 400 figure. We have already got a program in our Koori preschools. We are expanding that. In some of our Koori preschools it is only nine hours for three-year-olds. It had always been three to four. We are expanding that to 15, because, again, 15 is the minimum amount that the evidence and the research say is the best number to start with. Did you want to give some more information about how we are locating these?

Mr Moysey: It is really the connection, as the minister pointed out, with colleagues in Health and Community Services directorates. There are already programs there.

MRS JONES: Is there no name for these programs that already exist?

Mr Moysey: The childrens services program is one. If we think of the connection with the childhood family centres, ACT Health has a range of programs that are targeted. We have connected with ACT Housing in relation to families that need the most support, particularly those in the domestic violence context. It is connecting with those and making sure that we have got those trusted relationships.

MRS JONES: I understand that but Minister Berry said that there is a group that exists that is going to be expanded. What is that group? How is that referred to? What is the name of that program or discussion?

Mr Moysey: It is really the—

Ms Berry: It is through all those different directorates within the government. This will be working across—

MRS JONES: They have a working group or something already?

Mr Moysey: Yes. We have a working group under the inter-directorate committee.

And that is where we have talked about and engaged with what is there and how we can actually make it a process for that three-year-old cohort.

MRS JONES: You want to expand what is already there essentially, which is great, but what is what is already there called? Do you want to take that on notice?

Ms Berry: It would be across all directorates. Different directorates would have different names for it. But the funding comes out of Community Services Directorate.

Ms Efthymiades: For the children support program.

Ms Berry: For the children support program.

MRS JONES: What is the name of that?

Ms Efthymiades: There is not a single one. There is a variety of things and what we are trying to use is existing referral services. For example, it starts with Health, as you might imagine—maternal health programs. They offer a universal, a selected and a targeted service. As you go up, that is more intensive and enduring support.

MRS JONES: You are going for the targeted group?

Ms Efthymiades: Correct. And then those families within the maternal health program get referred to a range of Community Services Directorate programs. We are connected with all those so that we can best identify the pool that will make—

MRS JONES: You set some criteria or something in Education that is based on referrals that already exist?

Ms Efthymiades: Correct.

MRS JONES: You have been creating a new little cohort out of those pre-existing identification tools that are—

Ms Efthymiades: Yes. We will progress, as the minister says, until we get to 400.

Ms Berry: I did say 15 hours. It is actually 12 hours. It is 15 hours preschool education for four-year-olds. We pay the majority of funding for that and the federal government contributes to it.

MRS JONES: All my kids have been through the government sector and it has been fantastic. Before I hand over to Mr Pettersson I point out that the article in the *Canberra Times* today said that in the past children learned early skills playing in the street with neighbourhood kids and as part of a larger family brood. I think that is right. We do not let our kids go and play all around the neighbourhood like our parents and grandparents did because of worries and stresses and so on.

Ms Berry: And we are all working now.

MRS JONES: I know my kids have developed a lot of very strong behaviours

because they are part of a large family brood but not every child has that opportunity.

Ms Berry: That is right. And that is what early childhood education is. When people say, “It’s too soon to start school,” it is not about that. It is social and emotional. It is relationships.

MRS JONES: And it is play-based learning, I think.

Ms Berry: That is right.

MRS JONES: It is not that dissimilar to what we do in the preschools but a bit more targeted, is it not?

Ms Berry: Yes.

MR PETERSSON: How is the government investing in Gungahlin to meet additional demand for school places?

Ms Berry: We are building new schools and we are providing more capacity within existing schools. There is a new primary school being built in Throsby; a new school in Taylor, Margaret Hendry School, which opened this year; a new high school for future years; and increased capacity across a number of schools in the Gungahlin electorate of Yerrabi, which I know you are very interested in.

I can provide you with all the numbers and details. Mr Rodney Bray can maybe break it down with the actual numbers across each school but also the increased capacity within the existing schools. Have you got those numbers? Who is doing the numbers? We will break down the numbers for the actual student capacity within the new schools that we are building: Margaret Hendry that we have just opened; Throsby; high schools—and into the future but also across the schools. Franklin Early Childhood School, for example, will have an increase of 400 places, from 200 to 600. It will move from an early childhood school to a P-6 school. But it will first of all manage the existing cohort numbers.

Ms Howell: I have read a copy of the privilege statement. The projects that have been funded in the 2019-20 budget for expanding schools in Gungahlin will provide for additional places across a range of schools. A new primary school will be built in Throsby which will commence with 450 primary school students and a 66 full-time equivalent place government preschool for four-year-old children. Master planning will allow a further expansion of that school as required in future.

There is a commitment to deliver a new high school in east Gungahlin which will allow for up to 1,000 places for years 7 to 10 students. There will be an additional 200 places at the Gold Creek School senior campus. The early childhood school at Franklin will be expanded to a full primary school capacity from preschool to year 6 with at least an additional 400 permanent places and master planning to allow for future expansion there as well.

MR PETERSSON: The phrase “potential expansion”, does that just mean you are leaving empty blocks of land at the school or are there works that go into future

expansions?

Ms Brighton: The government is investing over \$52 million in expanding schools across the city. The work we have been doing with the ANU around strengthening our forecasting model is allowing us to get quite specific as to future growth needs. We try to provide advice to the government about building for longevity but not building hard solutions or permanent structures to deal with the peak.

We try to make sure that we have some capacity in schools to put in additional infrastructure that might be more temporary in nature just to cope with the peak of enrolments that follows the change in demographics in communities and then relocate those temporary structures to other sites as they go through peaking. It is not empty blocks of land; as I like to say, it is an efficient use of territory assets.

MRS JONES: So we are moving classrooms around?

Ms Brighton: We are moving transportables around as one part of our many solutions.

MR PETTERSSON: When you say you are planning for it, does that mean you are purchasing moveable classrooms?

Ms Brighton: We have a number of transportables at schools across the city. We refurbish them as we move them to newer sites. But in this budget the government has invested \$8.5 million in new, high quality transportable classrooms.

MR PETTERSSON: The crux of my question is not so much about the classrooms. We have these new schools and we are talking about planning for future expansions. What do you mean by planning for future expansions? Are we saying that in a few years we are going to have moveable classrooms at that school?

Mr Matthews: When we look at a new school and a site we do master planning work. What we are looking at, as Ms Brighton said, is optimal use of that site over time. That includes both fixed and flexible infrastructure as well as outdoor space. I think a really good example is the Margaret Hendry School that opened this year in the suburb of Taylor. Obviously we have constructed the primary school at this stage but we have left provision for a high school expansion down the track.

That is an example where we have done the master planning in a holistic way to make sure that we can meet the changing needs of the community over time. That is a mixture of fixed infrastructure and flexible infrastructure through transportables.

When we are doing this planning, we are shifting to a longer term orientation. We are not looking just at the next three or four years in terms of population requirements; we are thinking long term to make sure that that can provide a local school option for every kid as the city continues to change and grow. Of course, in our city that includes both greenfield development but also urban infill.

There is funding in this budget to do ongoing future planning and master planning work at a range of different sites to make sure that we have the options up our sleeve to meet future demand in our city.

Ms Howell: We have done some work with ANU School of Demography in the past which has shown that the development cycle of regions being built across the ACT often goes in about a 20-year cycle and the population and demographics of that area will change throughout that time. So you will often start off in a new suburb with a peak of a lot of young children moving into an area and then they age over the years, obviously, and move through the different schooling levels from primary school through to high school and into college.

Eventually after that approximately 20-year period the suburb might go through a period of renewal as older families downsize and move out of the area and new families start to move in again. That is why it is important that we have this longer term planning for school sites so they are able to flex and grow and change as that demographic cycle shifts through so we are making the best use of those government assets.

MR PETTERSSON: In terms of this cycle of population going through, is there any thought as to how big a school should be?

Ms Howell: Yes. Again, we are doing some work this year to look at optimal school size across the different schooling levels that will provide the best outcomes both from an educational and a school planning point of view. New South Wales offers some benchmarking of about 1,000 for a primary school and about 2,000 for a high school. In New South Wales that is for years 7 to 12. This year we are looking at what that might mean in ACT schools as being a good size. Obviously there is going to be a range—there is no one-size-fits-all model—but to have some parameters around that.

MR PETTERSSON: Those numbers seem quite big. Do we have many schools that would match those New South Wales benchmarks?

Ms Brighton: This is why we are going to provide some advice to the government. When we build a school, as you will see in what the government announced in the budget, in our growth areas we are planning for schools in the order of 600 or so with capacity to scale up and scale back.

We will do this work and provide some advice to government. But because our education law is quite specific about being able to go to school in your local area and our enrolment policy is really clear that every child will be able to go to school in their local area we balance what happens in other jurisdictions with the needs of our community. We will give that advice to government in due course and we will work through that with them.

MR PETTERSSON: In terms of coming up with an ideal school size, is there any thought to making sure that schools have similar sized populations? In Gungahlin there are some very big schools but also some small schools. People are getting very different experiences just based on where they live.

Ms Berry: That is the whole conversation we are having around making sure we can provide schools locally for students and families to enrol in. Sometimes that means that they will have to be expanded so the local population can access their local school.

The most important thing with regards to school size is how our teaching workforce is supported in the work they do within their teaching environments. Whilst the size of a school from the outside might seem a little unusual for the ACT—our schools are just not the same size as those in New South Wales or Victoria—in our conversations with the education union and with our teaching workforce the main thing for them is not so much the size of the school but the numbers of students they are providing education to.

The main focus for the Education Directorate and the workforce is that they are supported to do what they do best in their teaching and learning environments. The size of the school is one part of it, but the size of the classroom and supporting teachers in their learning is the main thing.

MR PETTERSSON: In terms of the planning for student populations, do you know when the peak is coming for Gungahlin?

Ms Berry: This is kind of another portfolio area, but the development of Gungahlin is just about at an end. We have Taylor, Throsby and Jacka, and Moncrieff is pretty much complete. Gungahlin will finish and the growth will continue in Molonglo and out in west Belconnen. Gungahlin is almost at the end of growth as far as building new suburbs, so the future school announcements we have made in this budget and the planning for that with the work the ANU is doing with us will put us in a really good position to make sure that we have the best possible education opportunities for students.

Ms Howell: We are expecting the primary school student population to peak in about 2024, the high school population to peak in about 2027, and college-age students to peak in about 2032.

MR PETTERSSON: What does the planning work for another north side college involve?

Ms Brighton: We will be looking at what those future projections are, what the options are and what transport routes the older students in our population are using and we will take advice back to government. We will use the 2019-20 year and into some of the 2020-21 year to provide that advice and do that research. What it looks and feels like today I cannot tell you, but I will be able to by later next year.

It is really important as those students age through Gungahlin that we have good, solid options for them. Gungahlin College has already been doing an extended timetable. Every parent and every student I speak to loves those Wednesday night extra classes.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can I ask a very similar question about the south side? As you would be aware, some of the schools on the south side have the opposite problem: that their enrolments are decreasing. What do you do to manage that?

Ms Berry: Apart from encouraging people to have more babies, Ms Le Couteur—

MRS JONES: The Chief Minister had a very interesting opinion on that last week.

MS LE COUTEUR: I was not planning to go there, but—

Ms Berry: Tuggeranong is starting to go through that change. The change is starting to happen again. There is that cycle of Tuggeranong being a growth area, as it was a little while ago, and then that changing and people moving out, with demographic change. That is changing back again now. Younger families are moving in, with bigger blocks, and having families. That demographic in Tuggeranong is starting to change. And, of course, with the New South Wales students, as well as the changes in population around our region, New South Wales students are being provided with priority enrolment areas, which include Tuggeranong schools.

MRS JONES: That is an agreement with New South Wales, is it?

Mr Moysey: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: So the New South Wales arrangement is really the only active thing you are doing? Apart from that, you are just letting demography do what it does? Is that correct?

Ms Brighton: The other component of that is the work that we are doing across the schools to increase the capability of the workforce. We do a lot of work within schools about making our public schools attractive places to go, where kids can learn and feel connected and engaged. That in itself is driving a return. In our high school sector we have certainly seen families staying in the public system for high school. That shift has been happening incrementally over the past few years. That comes on the back of the work that we have been doing, at an individual class level and then at a school level and at a system level, to improve the quality of teaching and learning and support our educators to be the best they can possibly be.

MS LE COUTEUR: Anecdotally people say, “The school is getting really small; I do not want to be part of something that is declining which may or may not actually have issues. I would prefer to send my kid somewhere that is going up, not down.”

Ms Brighton: That is part of the work that our school leaders, our principals and deputy principals, do with their community. Some people think that a small school is optimum; some think that a large school is optimum. What the school principal and the deputy principal do with their school communities is about building confidence in their communities that what that school offers for their child is what their child needs. That is the connectedness, the rich learning programs. Our schools in Canberra are well-funded schools. What school A, which might be a small school, offers can have the same sort of depth as what school B, which is a large school, might be offering their student population. There is not a differential like that.

MS LE COUTEUR: Mr Pettersson asked about high schools in the inner north. People are starting to have that conversation about Woden. Woden only has two. It used to have three. The population has gone down but one would assume, particularly as an output of light rail stage 2, it will go up. It is currently going up. Have you got any plans as far as that is concerned?

Ms Efthymiades: Government is committed to a number of feasibility studies in this budget. One of those includes Woden town centre. There are big studies on exactly how the population dynamics are changing so that we can plan for any potential future infrastructure need. At the moment we have capacity in each region. Every student can roll up to their local school and be guaranteed enrolment. The master planning around the infill, from the north and the south down as far as Woden and out to Weston Creek, is all being considered.

MR WALL: On the school capacity issue, what are the key learnings of the directorate from the failure to account for population growth in the Gungahlin area that are going to be applied to the development out in west Belconnen and Molonglo Valley?

Ms Berry: I can get Mr Gotts to give you some information about that, but the first thing is that I do not think that the Education Directorate failed. It is about making sure—you missed the conversation that we were having earlier, Mr Wall—that we use the capacity around the schools in the best possible way. That is why transportable classrooms are used in growth areas and then can be used in other areas where there are growth areas. Transportable classrooms are not something new; these have been used over many years across the city before self-government.

MR WALL: I accept your response there, minister, but those transportables were put in because schools reached capacity that was not forecast when the schools were originally built.

Ms Berry: I can get Mr Gotts to provide some more information on the work that we are doing with the ANU and also how we have made sure that our schools have capacity.

Mr Gotts: I agree with the minister's comment that we did not fail. The obligation is to ensure that there is a place in every school for every student from that area. That is a commitment that is met every year. The planning for that is long-term planning.

We are very conscious of the growth of students in Gungahlin, but also the projected growth in Molonglo and projected growth along the central corridor where the infill is happening, as you have already heard. The relationship with the ANU is not a response to a failure of planning; the relationship with the ANU is specifically developed to provide us with greater access to demographic expertise when we need it, and specifically when we need it, rather than going case by case and asking questions. It was also provided to enable us to develop what I would call a small area projection analysis. When it comes to demographic planning, it is relatively easy at the whole of jurisdiction level: we know how many babies are born in the ACT every year; we know that they get older one year at a time; and we know when they will turn up in school.

MRS JONES: But it is where they are and where they are living.

Mr Gotts: Where they are. We can be pretty accurate at the regional level. Where it gets difficult is at the individual suburb level. People move; they do not stay in the same place. That means that it requires a more sophisticated level of analysis. That

includes, for example, for every single school in the ACT, looking at the children who come in and what pathways they take as they go to high school and college; understanding that thoroughly, and building the models that will enable us to be more accurate.

MR WALL: In your modelling, what portion of the population in these new greenfield areas do you envisage heading to government schools versus non-government schools?

Mr Gotts: That is one of the things that makes this planning more complicated. If you go back five or six years, or maybe to 2011 or 2012, 43 per cent of students were in the non-government sector and the remainder were in the public sector. That has now shifted to 61 per cent in the government sector and the remainder in the non-government sector.

MR WALL: To what extent has that been driven by a lack of land being released, a lack of space for non-government schools to establish in high-growth areas, particularly areas such as Gungahlin?

Mr Gotts: We do not think that that is a factor at all.

MR WALL: So the fact of schools being full does not influence government enrolments?

Mr Gotts: The non-government schools in Gungahlin are not necessarily full; some of those, such as John Paul College, are still increasing their population over time. I am not convinced that those schools are actually full. When I think about the release of land for non-government schools, there is planning around a school in Molonglo, in north Wright, but there is no significant demand that comes through to us—or certainly to me—for a non-government school in the Gungahlin region. If there were a later demand there—

MR WALL: Has the government gone to market to test that? The sense that I get from talking to various stakeholders is that it is very much a case of “A school must come to us as government before we will consider it” as opposed to you going out to the marketplace and saying, “What is the interest amongst other Catholic systemic system schools or independent schools to establish?”

Mr Gotts: That is very true. The first role in that belongs to EPSDD. That is the first point of contact for land use. We do have a role, as you say, but it comes along at the point of—

MR WALL: So it is not until registration really that you get involved?

Mr Gotts: That is right.

MR WALL: Don’t you think it is too late, by the time the school has or has not acquired land, for the Education Directorate to be getting involved?

Ms Berry: I will just say that I have not been contacted by either the Catholic

Education Office or the independent schools association to suggest that they have issues with being able to provide places for students in their schools. In fact, I think I would go so far as to suggest that for some of the schools, they have some challenges in getting students to those schools. It is the opposite kind of situation for some of those schools in attracting students when in public schools we are seeing a three per cent increase in enrolments. There is no indication that that increase in enrolments is because there is no opportunity for children or families to make a choice differently from attending a local public school.

Mr Gotts: To provide a little more detail, your question was about when the planning should happen for non-government schools. What I can say is that with the relationship that the Education Directorate has with EPSDD as the planning agency, as we look forward to the increase in students in different parts of the ACT—for example, the developments in Ginninderry, in west Belconnen—part of our consideration with EPSDD is the potential for sites for non-government schools.

MR WALL: Who is ultimately responsible for determining how many sites need to be in a development area? Is it the Education Directorate or is it EPSDD.

MRS JONES: EPSDD.

Ms Berry: Planning.

Mr Gotts: It is EPSDD.

MR WALL: Do you think that that is sufficient?

Mr Gotts: We provide them with advice as to the projected enrolment numbers over time; so it is not something that they do in isolation.

MR WALL: Are those enrolment projections as good as what we had for Gungahlin, or are they better these days?

Mr Gotts: Our enrolment projections are good and have always been good. I do not—

MR WALL: I think the people from Gungahlin might have had a different experience with that, Mr Gotts.

Ms Berry: I think it shows confidence with the parent community that they are choosing to go to public schools and public education, that growth in our public education system of three per cent. It has been consistently growing every year for some time now, which is a great testament to the work that our public schools do.

MR WALL: I have a couple more follow-on questions with regard specifically to the ANU report, which was touched on just before. It is the collaboration with the ANU demographic analysis. When is that due to be completed?

Mr Gotts: It does not complete in that sense because it is not a specific report. What we have established with the ANU is a relationship. At this stage it is a three-year relationship. The deliverables in that relationship will be agreed each year and will

relate to the specific elements that we are interested in seeing an additional layer of work on.

MR WALL: When was that relationship entered into, to use your language?

Mr Gotts: That relationship was entered into earlier this financial year. The state that it is in now is that the ANU have been recruiting the staff to provide additional support. The beginning of July this year will be the point at which we agree that we would like some specific work done. For example, it may relate to down the centre of the ACT and what we might consider there to manage the growth and demand. It could go to some specific details around Gungahlin; it could look at Molonglo—

MR WALL: This sounds very vague, Mr Gotts; it could do this or it could do that. When will the outcomes for this year actually be documented?

Mr Gotts: We will sit down with the ANU when they have the necessary staff on board. We will fine-tune that. From my perspective, the things that I am interested in are making sure that we have adequate capacity down the central core of the ACT and around Gungahlin as well. The arrangement will be able to handle more than one project.

MR WALL: What are the terms of the three-year engagement?

Mr Gotts: The terms of the three-year engagement are that there are two essential components to it. One is around the development of what I am describing as the small area projection model and the technical support to do that. We can put numbers in and do a more detailed layer of modelling. The other element of the project is specific studies to be done that we would request each year.

MR WALL: What is the value of the engagement?

Mr Gotts: It is around \$165,000 per year.

MR WALL: What has been spent—

Ms Howell: In specific terms, it is \$531,000 including GST.

Mr Gotts: Over the three years.

Ms Howell: Over the three years.

MR WALL: What has been spent to date on that?

Mr Gotts: At this stage, nothing. There have been previously—

Ms Howell: We have made some payments, some quarterly payments.

MRS JONES: Just to clarify, they will create a model that you will be able to use?

Mr Gotts: Correct.

MRS JONES: Will they maintain the back end of it for the data? Is that correct?

Mr Gotts: It will be a model that we will be able to maintain. The whole purpose of this is to strengthen our capability in planning. It will be a model we will use.

MRS JONES: Yes, and eventually once that is all set up and handed over to you, you can then plug in the ABS data, the EPSDD data or what have you?

Mr Gotts: Yes, we can do it and they can do it.

Ms Brighton: For the avoidance of doubt, we will provide to you the detail on the value of the contract and the expend to date.

MRS JONES: Thank you.

MR WALL: I am curious about that. You said that to date nothing has been done, given that it was signed early this financial year, and that we have been making some payments. What is the delivery on that? It seems odd. If the ANU is still at a stage of recruiting, as you have said, and we have been making payments, what have we actually received thus far for that money?

Ms Brighton: Mr Wall, just to clarify, we will come back to the committee in writing I will take that question on notice, just so we do not send the committee down the wrong path, and provide that answer to you.

MR WALL: Okay, because we have just heard contradictory advice here.

Ms Berry: No, it was not contradicting. We will clarify for that for you.

MR WALL: Well, no payments are being made, payments have been made.

Ms Berry: Alright, we will take it on notice.

THE CHAIR: That is taken on notice, thank you.

MR WALL: How many schools currently have the safe and inclusive schools program operating?

Ms Berry: It is not a program. It is a relationship with SHFPACT around tools that schools can use to support students, particularly students that are LGBTIQ, but also students in school communities who want to build more inclusive environments in their school communities. It has been very successful. We have also been working on different programs in school communities together to work on particular programs that they want to put to their—

MR WALL: Sorry, I may have gone in the wrong direction. Have we already covered off on parts of this?

THE CHAIR: No, we have not.

MR WALL: I received some notes when I came in. I was at a school assembly this morning. Sorry, my apologies.

Ms Berry: Yes, school communities have been working very well together with SHFPACT around different programs that students want to engage with their school communities around making sure that their school communities are more inclusive for all students, regardless of their sexuality or how they are identified. I have Ms Seton here. She can provide some more detail on the kinds of tools that are available.

Ms Seton: As the minister said, safe and inclusive schools is not a program. It is a resource for schools to access. We have had over 90 participants attend professional learning sessions with SHFPACT since March 2018. On the whole, those schools used that service as required. It may be an individual family that is seeking some support. They will link that family with Sexual Health and Family Planning. It may be a student who is transitioning and the school may have some question around how they support that student, either within the school setting or on the camp. They will work to ensure that they are looking after the needs of all students.

MR WALL: What is the relationship between SHFPACT and teachers in building capacity in this support mechanism?

Ms Seton: They run professional learning sessions and all staff can contact them to ask specific questions.

MRS JONES: It is specifically aimed at that LGBTIQ group, so is this not something that includes creating safe student environments for those who are experiencing bullying, or only if it is for those reasons?

Ms Berry: I do not think it would be used just for that particular cohort. It is a culture shift that we are wanting to be make in the school communities around being more inclusive, regardless of where you come from, what your background is or what your sexuality is.

MRS JONES: So it is more about who you are.

Ms Berry: It is, but the expertise behind it is about the kinds of tools that a teacher might need to be able to support a particular student who might be transitioning, another student who might want to support another student, a family, or a whole classroom or the whole school.

MRS JONES: I want to ask something about a restorative approach that was taken with a student. But that is under a slightly different heading, is it?

Ms Brighton: Probably, yes.

Ms Berry: If it is a particular detail, there is an inquiry, so we do not want to muddy the waters too much.

MRS JONES: I understand. I certainly do not want individual names or anything, or

schools for that matter, but I thought that safe and inclusive schools might cover it. What can you tell me?

Ms Brighton: Mrs Jones, taking your feedback from earlier on in terms of education speak, we have a policy, the safe and supportive schools policy, which outlines our expectations across the board to all schools about how they will create safe, strong, positive school cultures. There is a range of mechanisms in that as to how you are building these safe, strong, inclusive school communities where students can be well equipped to understand a common behavioural expectation to participate in schools. Then, for students that might need some more targeted work because of their circumstances or what is going on in their cohort or in their communities, there is a range of other specialised programs that augment that general approach that we take.

MRS JONES: I am sure we will get back in just a sec to safe and inclusive schools, but I want to ask something about safe and supportive schools, now that I have the terminology correct.

MR WALL: That was more the intent of my question as well.

MRS JONES: We are just trying to keep up with all the terminology. It was brought to my attention that a student wanted some help because that person had been involved in a frightening physical attack, then a restorative process was initiated but there was not enough time before the restorative process started, or access or information, for that student to receive counselling in order to deal with the restorative process.

The school that my children are at has a lot of restorative processes and it is great. But the kids have to be ready for it. Let us just use boring, basic terminology: a perpetrator can also be a victim, but let us just say the perpetrator and the victim. The perpetrator has to be in the right headspace to actually discuss what has happened and whether they acknowledge what has gone on, and the victim needs to be able to cope with that conversation so that it is not further traumatising.

The point was made to me that in this case the parents were quite stressed out because there had not been preparation. Then they went into restorative processes in which the perpetrator was not in a position to accept what they had done. Is there something very specific in safe and supportive schools where we can develop that and get better at that? Or is that—

Ms Berry: Let me use that as an example but not as a specific issue and, in the most plain English way we possibly can, describe some examples of how a restorative process might be engaged in in a school community. Of course every circumstance or situation will be different.

MRS JONES: A certain amount of wisdom has to be involved, yes.

Ms Berry: That is right. Parents are continually engaging in restorative processes in their own homes, so—

MRS JONES: Indeed.

Ms Seton: Broadly, restorative practice is around repairing the harm. It looks different depending on the circumstance. It may be a minor incident that has happened in a corridor and be as quick as a teacher having a conversation with both students. If it is a more serious issue, as you identified, we need to look at when the students are ready and what supports the students' needs. In some instances it might be that we bring the family in to work with the student. Other times they might prefer to identify a staff member they would like to be there with them. Ideally we spend a bit of time with both separately talking about what the process would look like and the sorts of questions we are going to go through. It does rely on the person running that process to stop it or change task if the student is not—

MRS JONES: Is there a diagram or something that those in charge of a more serious restorative process can use that is like, "Tick this, then you can move to this," or is it entirely intuitive? Are there tools that are being used?

Ms Seton: There is a significant training package for restorative practice that does step schools through that.

MRS JONES: Are you able to give the committee a summary of the process, on notice?

Ms Seton: We could get you a copy of that training, yes.

MRS JONES: That would be great.

MR WALL: Circle of friends is a program that we understand is being used in some schools but not in others. What is the basis of that program and why has it been chosen?

Ms Seton: I am not sure what that one is, sorry.

THE CHAIR: Can you take that on notice?

Ms Seton: We can.

MRS JONES: That is two on notice: one about the training for restorative practice for more serious situations and the other about the circle of friends program.

Ms Berry: Schools might bring in a different group of supports for individuals or students.

MRS JONES: I think circle of friends was about autism.

Ms Berry: Right. That might be the case for that particular circumstance or student. A lot of the schools engage with Menslink and have ongoing relationships with Menslink or bring that particular group of supports in as required. Some have a longer relationship. It is the same with safe and inclusive schools. There are different kinds of relationships with different organisations depending on the cohort and the supports that individual students might need.

THE CHAIR: How many schools now have the positive behaviours for learning program operating?

Ms Berry: Fifty-one now.

THE CHAIR: And how many staff have been trained?

Ms Seton: There are 51 schools. I cannot give you the exact number of staff because obviously staff move in and around our system. But that is 60 per cent of our schools.

THE CHAIR: Okay. All right. And what other jurisdictions have implemented this program?

Ms Seton: New South Wales and Victoria are doing it as a systematic approach, but you will find that in all states and territories in Australia. It is also in New Zealand and it has come out of the United States.

THE CHAIR: What measurement has been done to assess the success?

Ms Seton: It is an over time measurement. Positive behaviour for learning is a framework rather than a program. Schools are looking at their data that they are collecting to see how they are improving, and that will change over time. It is really more around making sure they understand what is happening in their school, how they are responding to it and how quickly they are moving forward.

MS CODY: Minister, how does the government fund students with particular and complex needs?

Ms Berry: The ACT funds schools based on the Gonski principles, so funding goes to students and schools based on need. Different students with different complex issues have other supports.

Ms Brighton: As the minister said, the funding to public schools is based on the Gonski principles. We call it the student resource allocation in Canberra. Schools are funded with a core amount of funding and then there is student funding that represents the cohort of students the school is responding to. Every school is funded to meet the needs of its particular cohort of students.

As part of that work we ask schools to ensure that, in meeting the needs of every child, they have regard to that child's particular circumstances and needs. There is a national consistent collection of data for disability which measures the adjustments individual schools across the country use to make sure they are meeting the needs of students.

MS CODY: You are funded both ways: through the individual units that operate for children who need a little extra assistance right through to mainstream classroom?

Ms Brighton: That is right. Parents can make a decision with their child about whether they want to be part of the mainstream school or whether they want to participate in one of our specialist units or do a combination of both. We make sure

that those units are funded but also that individual students as they are participating in the mainstream or the broader part of the school have access to the supports they need.

That might mean a student participates in the bulk of their classes with their peers and then they might have some time one on one or in a small group setting separate from their peers. That structure is all based around their individual learning plan the school works with the families and the students to create.

Ms Seton: Obviously the student's need changes over time and schools use that money flexibly to achieve that. As Ms Brighton identified, it may be around having an additional staff member. We often find some of our older high school students do not want the additional staff member so we might look at the technology that supports them so they can have that same level of independence as their peers.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are we talking about the money on page 101 of BP3, the \$41 million for more support to meet individual student needs?

Ms Brighton: That is right. On page 101 of budget paper 3, the table for more support to meet individual student needs, which is the \$41 million over the four years of the forward estimates. That funding is about accounting for growth in our student population as well as particular cohorts of students with particular needs. So that funding is about both things: to account for general growth but also the growth of students who might have a disability or might need more support with their English as an additional language or dialect.

MS LE COUTEUR: So that is what you were discussing with Ms Cody?

Ms Brighton: Partially. We have a level of funding in our base funding. This funding that the government has further invested is providing more funding in that domain.

MS LE COUTEUR: So it is what you were talking about.

Mr Matthews: I think the answer to your question is that the components around special needs learning is part of that funding item on page 101. That represents both school growth funding and also needs-based learning increases. The additional loadings for students with disabilities, for example, are included as part of that amount.

MS CODY: Basically what you are saying is that the yearly funding covers most of those special needs but because of the increased growth in the community, in schools and across the board there is now additional funding of \$41 million on top of the funding that has been identified to assist?

Mr Matthews: For absolute clarity, that includes both growth in student numbers and additional funding for needs-based learnings.

MR WALL: Which schools operate an LSU across the system? I am happy for that to be taken on notice because it is probably quite a list.

Ms Seton: That information can be found on our website. We will provide that to you.

MR WALL: I am keen to get a grasp of which year groupings have access to it. Is it for every year offered at the school?

Ms Seton: Yes, K to 12.

MR WALL: Are you able to provide numbers of students enrolled in the LSUs across the system? I am happy for that to be taken on notice.

Ms Seton: Yes.

MR WALL: What are the minimum qualifications or skills a learning support assistant needs?

Ms Seton: They can range. For our LSAs at the moment we are offering a cert IV in disability. A range of people take on the role of LSA. There is a reasonably sized group of students who are pre-service teachers who do the LSA work whilst they are studying. We also have others who worked in the disability sector and preferred to move into the school.

Ms Brighton: LSAs perform their duties under the supervision of a teacher, so they work as part of a broader team.

MR WALL: What autism-specific training is required as an LSA, if any?

Ms Seton: It is not required, however, we provide a range of opportunities. We have some online training, but we also work with targeted groups. So if a particular group needs additional training we have occupational therapists who can support, we have speech therapists who support and we have psychologists as well.

We also work with our NDIS partners. If there are particular behaviour supports that someone in the NDIS sector has arranged, we look at how we move those into the school sector and train our LSAs and the staff to ensure that students get the support they need.

MR WALL: What oversight does the directorate have of what skills are in what places? Is it up to the individual to manage their learning or do you know what the skill sets are in any given school?

Ms Brighton: The oversight monitoring of a learning support assistant is done at a school level initially by their immediate supervisor and then by the principal across the whole school. When the principal and the deputy principal look at the learning needs across staff across the whole school—be it learning support assistants, be it administrative staff or the teaching staff—they will have a plan across their whole workforce about the needs required. Every staff member is to have a professional development plan which outlines their individual learning needs.

MR WALL: So there is no direct line of sight from the directorate of any of that sort of thing?

Ms Brighton: We do not collect that data centrally.

MR WALL: One of the recommendations of the schools for all report—Shaddock as it is colloquially referred to—was that all LSUs have an appropriate quiet space or seclusion space for children. Has that been implemented in every LSU?

Ms Brighton: I believe the recommendation was around all schools having a quiet space, a withdrawal space, for students to go to.

Ms Seton: That is correct. It was around schools rather than LSUs.

MR WALL: My notes say all schools that have an LSU, but all schools is fine.

Ms Seton: Noting that different schools do that differently. What a quiet space might look like in a junior years primary school is very different to that in a college where it might be a garden barbecue area being utilised for that purpose. In a kindergarten classroom it might be a specific space with beanbags et cetera.

MR WALL: Has every school ticked that box in designating a space?

Ms Seton: They all have a space that can be utilised, whether it is or is not at the moment.

Hearing suspended from 11.03 to 11.15 am.

THE CHAIR: While we are on the LSUs and the LSAs, how many schools are currently offering LSU classes?

Ms Berry: I think we said we would take that on notice. It is on the website.

THE CHAIR: How many schools offer learning support units for autism? We talked about the learning support assistants.

Ms Berry: And the LSUs as well.

Ms Seton: We have taken that on notice because there are over 50. It is probably easier to provide it to you; and it is on the website.

MR WALL: Is there a differentiation between a generic LSU and an autism-specific one?

Ms Seton: There is a difference in criteria. An LSUA, which is an LSU for autism, is only for students who meet the disability criteria for autism. An LSU is autism and/or an intellectual disability.

MR WALL: The LSUA requires a formal diagnosis.

Ms Seton: Both settings require a formal diagnosis, yes, for either intellectual disability or autism.

THE CHAIR: We have just confirmed that the number of students enrolled was

taken on notice, not the number of learning support units. Can we confirm that you will take the number of units on notice as well?

Ms Seton: We will take that on notice, too.

MR WALL: We might put it in as a written question, just to be sure.

MRS JONES: With the diagnosis process in the public sector at the moment, where is that at? Minister Berry, when you were first elected, you talked a lot about the fact that the testing can be expensive.

Ms Berry: Do you mean the PIPS?

MRS JONES: I am talking about anyone who has a learning need who ends up needing a diagnosis, how that is going and what the process is. I know what the process is at my kids' school, as I have been through it with a couple of my kids. I am interested in the process for public schools.

Ms Berry: Part of what will help with that is the increase in psychologists in our school communities.

Ms Seton: In terms of a diagnosis for intellectual disability, our school psychologists can complete that. Some families choose to do that privately, and that is obviously an option for them.

MRS JONES: But it is available to every student—

Ms Seton: It is available.

MRS JONES: if they want it?

Ms Seton: Correct.

MRS JONES: That is good to know. We had some presentations on Friday about gifted and talented students, the fact that there could be a better relationship with the association, and the fact that gifted and talented can almost become a learning issue, if it is not picked up early, because those kids are not being engaged effectively; they might become disruptive or depressed et cetera. Can you let us know how you might be intending to target and offer options for the gifted and talented stream? It is a different ability. I know with my kids that it is almost like a disability at times.

Ms Brighton: Thank you for the question. We have a gifted and talented policy which provides systemic advice across all schools as to our expectation about how they meet the needs of children who are gifted and talented. Every school has a liaison officer for families, an identified position, specifically around gifted and talented students. The school principal is responsible for ensuring that students have access to programs that are developmentally appropriate. When I say programs, I really mean education strategies that are developmentally appropriate for the particular children. Ms McMahan, who heads up our teaching and learning area, can elaborate on what that looks like practically in a school setting.

Ms McMahon: I have read the privilege statement. Gifted and talented students are as unique as you can come. There is a broad spectrum of what their different abilities are. Schools will be able to identify those kids by a range of different methods. Parents can bring out identification. Parents can come to a school and say, “My child is doing this, this and this, and I think we need to investigate that a little bit more.” They might come with a psychologist’s report that would be able to indicate those talents and gifts. The school psychologist or the schoolteacher, the classroom teacher, may be able to identify that.

Depending on the needs of that child, individual learning plans can be developed, just like they are for students who have additional needs. We can do whole-grade acceleration. We can do single-subject acceleration. We can do specialised programs within classroom settings through differentiation.

MRS JONES: I want to pick up on one part of the answer. One of the things that was raised with us was that when teachers are not provided with additional training in how to identify these students, the students that they tend to identify are the ones whose parents have identified them. Someone could be gifted and talented and they are quiet; or they are gifted and talented, and they are irritating. There are lots of ways that it can play out.

When we do additional training with teachers—this was what was presented to us—the ones who get identified are the lower socio-economic kids, who are being missed. We might end up with something in our recommendations, but obviously there is not a very strong connection between the association out in the community and the department. They said they have some trouble getting to the right person and knowing who is taking their information in. That is just a bit of feedback for you. There is also the program that kids can go off-site for, but it costs \$100 a day. Some parents pay for that. I have forgotten what it is called.

Ms McMahon: Gateways program.

MRS JONES: Gateways, exactly. One of my children did it, for one day. It would be good if something like gateways happened inside the department, rather than only by an external group, because it costs quite a lot of money, whether the school comes up with it and sponsors a couple of kids or whether their parents have to pay for it.

Ms Brighton: Gateways education has been engaged by the directorate since 2015. Part of their work with the directorate is about providing professional learning to our teachers—

MRS JONES: About how to identify.

Ms Brighton: about how to identify and how to work with students. They also provide us with access to written research and articles for newsletters for parents in the community. I am sorry if individual parents have had concerns that they feel like—

MRS JONES: No, it is the association. I think that is quite telling, unfortunately. If

the association for gifted and talented students does not feel as though they have a very good “in” with the department, you might be missing out on something that they have to offer.

Ms Brighton: Certainly. Thanks for the feedback. We do try to make sure that we cultivate strong relationships with our non-government providers, but we will follow up on the association.

MRS JONES: I do not think that they are a provider; they are an association of parents.

Ms Brighton: Sorry, non-government entities. We will follow up.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned that school psychologists can also identify gifted and talented students. How many school psychologists are currently employed in ACT schools?

Ms Brighton: Thanks for the question. We have in the order of 76.3 psychologists. The bulk of those are in our schools. We have some who sit in our child development service, providing particular supports and interventions for our young children before they enter the years of schooling.

MRS JONES: Are there any schools that do not have someone onsite?

Ms Brighton: Everyone has access to a psychologist.

MRS JONES: What does “access” mean?

Ms Brighton: Some psychologists might be three days a week and some psychologists might be four days a week at a particular school. The government, in the 2017-18 budget, funded 20 additional psychologists over the forward years. At the end of this year, we will recruit the final five of that 20 so that they are ready to start at the beginning of the 2020 school year. In this budget, the government also funded four psychologists as part of their—

MRS JONES: Four on top of that?

Ms Brighton: As part of their overall investment in student wellbeing, yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: So it is above the previous lot?

MRS JONES: That will end up being 24 as a total from 2017-18?

Ms Brighton: We have those staff already on board. The government is now funding those staff in a different way. It is a continuation of an existing resource that—

MRS JONES: So they are not four additional on top of the 20?

Ms Brighton: No. It is a continuation of an initiative we put in place a couple of years ago.

MS LE COUTEUR: So it becomes the 20 that were promised at the election?

Ms Brighton: No.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am utterly confused.

Ms Brighton: In 2017-18, the government announced 20 additional psychologists.

MRS JONES: And 15 have been delivered. Is that correct?

Ms Brighton: Fifteen have been delivered. An additional five will be recruited at the end of this calendar year, ready to start school in early 2020. That is one initiative. We also had, in this budget, funding for four psychologists, and that continues existing work that we already had.

MRS JONES: Prior to the 20 starting?

Ms Brighton: Prior to the 20 starting.

MRS JONES: They were four psychologists that were already—

Ms Brighton: They are staff on board, working today, and this is their ongoing funding into the future.

MS LE COUTEUR: So those four psychologists will be employed indefinitely?

Ms Brighton: Yes.

MRS JONES: And the 20 as well?

Ms Brighton: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: The 20 are long-term continuing employment?

Ms Berry: Yes, that is the plan.

THE CHAIR: How many students or schools does a psychologist see on any given day?

Ms Brighton: I do not have that data before me, but I can say that psychologists are just part of a whole student wellbeing team. We have psychologists, but we also have youth workers and social workers. There are youth health nurses as well as behavioural specialists. This is a team that wraps around schools to provide comprehensive support; the services are provided not just by school psychs.

THE CHAIR: Are the school psychs only available in school hours?

Ms Brighton: Yes. They are servicing the students at school, and their records are considered health records.

THE CHAIR: What is the average wait time for a student to see a school psychologist?

Ms Brighton: We do not collect that information centrally. I can say that when families do need to see a psychologist, the school does their very best to work with the psychologist and get them in as soon as they can.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned the social workers and that as well. What other mental health or similarly trained staff are available?

Ms Brighton: School youth nurses have mental health training as part of their generalist nursing qualifications. Youth workers generally go through mental health training. Our behaviour specialists have a dimension to that and our senior psychologists, who oversee the psychologists, do specialised supports when required, when schools are dealing with a particular cohort of issues.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mrs Jones, did you say you have—

MRS JONES: Yes, I want to ask about the—

Ms Berry: Can I make a comment on that? Teachers, as part of their personal development, might choose to do specialised training in different areas. It could include a speciality around dyslexia, autism or some different kinds of behaviours. Under the changes that were made to the Education Act last sitting, the Teacher Quality Institute will now have a register of all of the professional experience that teachers have. Am I right?

Ms Brighton: Yes.

MS BERRY: That will mean that the school communities and Education Directorate will better be able to plan and identify where future training opportunities for professional development for teachers might be needed.

MRS JONES: That is the TQI data that you obviously have access to?

Ms Berry: Yes.

Ms Brighton: The TQI collect data across the three sectors here in Canberra. As the minister said, that first data about collecting professional learning starts with the initial teacher education, about capturing that information. Then teachers lodge their professional learning on the TQI portal as part of their overall registration each year.

MRS JONES: The supplementary I have is about the student wellbeing team. How does that actually function? Is there a student wellbeing team in every school or is it set up as required? Tell me about how that works.

Ms Berry: I will ask Sam Seton to take us through that.

Ms Seton: Yes, every school has a student wellbeing team. Obviously, that will look

different depending on the age group that they are working with. The wellbeing team will be made up of a range of professionals from inside the school. There will be some teachers, a school psychologist, a school nurse in our high schools, youth support workers and some schools also have a community worker, which generally is a social worker. Schools can supplement that with the network student engagement team. Sometimes they will invite in an OT, a speechie or a senior psychologist. The role of the wellbeing team is really the more proactive role. So as well as responding to—

MRS JONES: Incidents.

Ms Seton: incidents and needs as they come up, it is identifying a change in attendance, a change in appearance, a change in how the student is generally travelling and trying to intervene early before it becomes a more significant issue.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can I ask a little more about this? What about students who need support outside school hours? Is there a referral into the public mental health system?

Ms Seton: One of the roles of our psychologists is to look at individual students. If they require ongoing support, they refer out into the community. That might be a referral to Headspace, it might be a referral—

MS LE COUTEUR: I was going to ask if you refer to Headspace. That was my next question.

Ms Seton: It might be a referral to the child and family centres. It might be working with the family. It might be more around mum and dad needing some additional supports and linking those parents in, as opposed to linking the student in.

MS LE COUTEUR: I go back to the previous line of questioning about gifted and talented children. Obviously, there is a bell curve of all of our abilities. We are not all gifted. Do you have some sort of target as to what proportion of kids would in general be regarded as gifted and talented? What are you aiming at? Are we talking about one per cent or 10 per cent?

Ms Seton: I will ask Ms McMahon to take that question.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are we talking about the top half or what?

Ms McMahon: It is between two and five per cent of the population.

MS LE COUTEUR: From what was said, you would regard some of those as gifted and talented in one area of their abilities rather than—

Ms McMahon: Some would have greater gifts and talents across a range of different abilities. So the way to cater for their individual learning needs is dependent on who the individual is and what those individual needs are.

MS LE COUTEUR: Does that two to five per cent include people who have sporting gifts and talents? Is it all wound up in the same program?

Ms McMahon: Yes.

THE CHAIR: How do schools determine whether they offer gifted or talented classrooms?

Ms McMahon: All schools will offer ways to accommodate the needs of their students. It really depends on the students who are in that school and what their individual needs are. There are not as many streamed gifted classes, especially in primary schools. There are some in high schools. In saying that, there would be ways of catering and differentiating for those needs within a class or, as we said earlier, through acceleration.

For example, if you are a talented mathematics student, you may be accelerated into a mathematics class that is above your peer cohort level. If you are really exceptionally talented, you may benefit from whole-grade-level acceleration. If you are in year 1 and you are operating at a very high level across many domains, you may be accelerated into year 2 or year 3 for all of your subjects. It really does depend on an individual assessment of that child's needs and the family dynamics of the school.

THE CHAIR: How do you ensure that teaching staff are appropriately qualified for those different—

Ms McMahon: So as Ms Brighton mentioned before, there are a lot of training courses that we have available. Gateway, as our provider, has done four years of training courses for our teachers. Our student needs teams, or support teams, are also available to be able to work with families. We have a gifted and talented liaison officer in every school who works with families, with school leadership and with kids and teachers to be able to provide that wraparound support. Just like we do for kids who have additional needs, gifted and talented kids also get that spotlight.

THE CHAIR: If schools are all determining different offerings depending on their student needs, is there an approval process they have to go through with the directorate?

Ms McMahon: We have set out in the policy the range of different mechanisms that schools can use. Then they adopt those mechanisms, depending on the needs of the individual student.

MRS JONES: We learned a new phrase last week on this committee, a biopsychosocial situation. That deals with different types of treatments for different types of needs. It is a bit similar. One of the things that make me wonder about the answer that you have given is that, if someone is gifted and talented and they get properly psychometrically tested, it can actually show that they are gifted in this type of thinking, not necessarily the subject matter. They are struggling in, say, concentration, which might mean that with the help of a psychologist they can get medicated for the concentration so that they can fly across the board. It is not just about subject.

Is there a process at the moment or would you consider a process that actually looks at

that whole biopsychosocial situation of an individual student that deals with exactly where their strengths and weaknesses are? I will give you an example. My daughter went on the gateway program but she had to go with a learning support because her issues are emotional. But her thinking is extremely fast. I am just saying that sometimes you can actually not be getting the best even out of your gifted students because they are suffering in another area.

From what I am hearing, my concern is that we are not quite as detailed as we could be at unpicking this puzzle—and I know the minister is very keen on testing—because it gives us the proper picture of what that particular student is doing.

Ms Brighton: Thanks for seeking the clarification. When schools, with the help of the psychologist, the parent and the classroom teacher, are talking about what a plan looks like for that individual child, they are looking quite broadly at the child. Theoretically if I give you a practical example, if you have got a year 5 who is an outstanding thinker and problem solver and is naturally excelling in maths, the school will have quiet regard to what that looks like in terms of that problem solving if they accelerate—and part of that acceleration might be going to the high school to do work—and how that intersects with the child's own social confidence and ability to make friends and engage with a cohort that is much older than he is.

When Ms McMahon is talking about having a response that is very geared around the needs of an individual child, that is the sort of work that our school psychologists, the teachers and families are looking at together.

MRS JONES: Is it based on getting the full picture through testing or just anecdotally? There is obviously a need for both.

Ms Seton: If I can talk more broadly, essentially the network student engagement teams use biopsychosocial case assessment, and it is looking at a combination. Yes, you have assessments that might be completed by a psychologist. It might be assessments completed by the classroom teacher. It is also doing some observations and some anecdotal records. As Ms Brighton identified, it is looking at the entire picture.

If we have a year 5 student who is very talented but they do not have the social and emotional skills yet to do high school then we would not do high school yet, because that whole picture of the child is the more important part. We would be looking at how we extend them within the primary school setting and then develop the social and emotional wellbeing.

MRS JONES: Can you demonstrate to us, even if it is on notice, how in that system the empirical testing is done? I know, for example, you can have a psychologically informed questionnaire that the teacher fills out. They constantly change and improve and have probably a best practice standard that is constantly improving. One of the things that the gifted and talented lady came in and spoke to us about was getting information through to the department about the latest surveys. But they are not just surveys of what you think; they are scientifically testing essentially how the child is performing.

Are you able to take on notice to explain to us in a bit more depth how that process occurs so that that testing is occurring and we are getting a very clear picture according to the latest methodology?

Ms Seton: We could provide you the range of assistance tools that we use, what they are used for and how they all interrelate if that is useful.

MRS JONES: Are they available at every school? That is the other question.

Ms Berry: Are you talking non-government as well?

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms Berry: It might be a bit difficult.

Ms Seton: I am answering, I guess, from a government perspective. I am not sure about non-government.

MRS JONES: Generally the non-government schools, if I am correct, have to find their own way to some extent. Is that correct?

Ms Berry: Non-government schools? We work with them and share information regularly.

MRS JONES: I think some schools are doing this heaps better than others.

Ms Berry: Yes.

MRS JONES: It sometimes depends on who the kids that have been through the school are, I think.

Ms Berry: We will leave it.

Ms Brighton: If I can, the other part of this, as we are talking about gifted and talented children, that we have not talked about is that in this budget the government announced three-quarters of a million dollars to develop an extension program at the University of Canberra. This extension program, which we will work on with the University of Canberra over the coming year with a view to implementing it with year 11 students in 2021, will look at university level courses—

MRS JONES: For years 11 and 12?

Ms Brighton: For years 11 and 12 with a different offering from what ANU offers.

MRS JONES: I think for years and years we have sent gifted kids off early to uni and they had that opportunity. It is always a bit scary for parents. But sometimes it can be good.

MR WALL: Could I clarify a couple of little points on the school psychologists. I think Ms Brighton said it was 76.3 or thereabouts.

Ms Seton: If I could correct the record to 76.6 FTE.

MR WALL: What is the headcount?

Ms Seton: I could take that on notice but it is about 100.

MR WALL: You mentioned that there was no formal measuring of the time from when a student needed to see a psychologist to when they actually did. How do you measure whether or not you have got the right staffing mix across the system but also on a regional basis?

Ms Seton: To clarify that response, if for some reason we have a school psychologist who is sick or there is something happening in a school we have the ability to move resources around the system so that we do not actually have a waitlist.

MR WALL: That helps on a day-to-day basis to make sure that someone who had an appointment for Tuesday morning gets their appointment on Tuesday morning should that need arise. How long are they waiting for that appointment?

Ms Seton: I do not believe we have a waitlist at this time but I can take that on notice and confirm.

MS LE COUTEUR: This will be a very short question; it is about the school cleaning contracts. You talk very well about the issues for the workers; I just wanted to check what was happening for the small businesses that previously had the school cleaning contracts.

Ms Berry: The ones currently engaged?

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes. You talked about transiting from having contractors doing the cleaning to employing.

Ms Berry: To directly employing, yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: There are contracting businesses.

Ms Berry: I do not know if I would define the current employer, the current cleaning contractors, as small businesses. Maybe one is; the rest are quite large national organisations. There has been a process of timing, ensuring that there is time for this transition to move from employment under contracts to direct employment from the government. As we have been describing to you, that process has been going really well. Our relationship with the contractors has been a positive one.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am not sure if you answered this question earlier; I did not quite get it. Will all the currently employed cleaners transit to the new arrangement?

Ms Berry: They will be offered employment with the ACT government. If they want to, if the current cleaners are all still employed there or want to work there next year, our intention is to offer them more employment.

Mr Matthews: Each of the individuals has to be eligible to work in the ACT government under the Public Sector Management Act. That includes making sure that their visa issues are in order, as the minister referred to before. And of course, there is the matter of individual preference. Through our registration of interest process, we will be working through every individual circumstance and offering the opportunity to seek employment.

MS LE COUTEUR: But you will offer to 100 per cent of people who are not ineligible due to visa issues or some other issues? I do not know if there is anything else.

Mr Matthews: Yes; that is correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: These will all be ongoing employment, as I understand it?

Ms Berry: Yes.

Mr Matthews: The function is ongoing. The issue of ongoing employment partly relates to the issue of visa conditions. Some visa classes do not allow for permanent employment, for example. From an individual worker point of view, they will be offered employment in accordance with the duration of their visa, for example. If they have a two-year visa, they will be offered employment in accordance with that. And we will have provisions about making sure that we can make that employment ongoing as people's visa arrangements might change over time.

MS LE COUTEUR: I take it from this that the vast majority of your soon-to-be employees are on short-term visas. Is that the situation?

Mr Matthews: A significant portion of the cohort are on student visas, spousal visas or other forms of visa. Some, of course, are either Australian citizens or permanent residents. As I said, there is quite a variety of circumstances there. I think the principle is very clear: we want to provide ongoing employment for all of these staff. We will just need to make sure that we do that in accordance with visa and other requirements.

MS LE COUTEUR: So where people can be offered ongoing employment, you actually will? You will not just want to?

Mr Matthews: We will. The purpose of the insecure work policies of the government is to make as many opportunities as possible ongoing and permanent. We will be starting with the principle that we want to make jobs ongoing and permanent, and offering them on that basis.

MS LE COUTEUR: You said that most of the contractors are now large businesses. I remember you made that change a couple of years ago, but you said that there was still one small business involved. Are there any transition arrangements for that business?

Mr Matthews: There are. That company that we would regard as being a small

business is ACT Commercial. The owner and operator of that business has secured employment in the ACT government to support us with the implementation of this initiative; he is taking steps to divest himself of his business as part of that arrangement.

MR WALL: Is this a cost-saving measure to government or is there an additional cost to the existing contracts?

Ms Berry: This will cost a bit more money.

MR WALL: How much more is forecast?

Ms Berry: That is the price you pay for providing good employment opportunities for a particularly vulnerable cohort of people who live in our community, and that is a cost that we are proud to bear in these circumstances.

MR WALL: We understand that. Can we get the cost, please, minister? We understand the virtue of it.

Ms Berry: It is \$5.208 million over four years, additional.

MR WALL: Additional to what was being spent under the procured arrangement?

Ms Berry: Yes.

MR WALL: Is this transition happening as the contracts for those schools expire or are those contracts being terminated?

MRS JONES: We went through that earlier.

MR WALL: Sorry. I am struggling to find it at the moment, but I recall from reading the budget papers a week ago that there was a capital line item for school cleaning which was in the realm of about a million dollars.

Mr Matthews: \$1.6 million, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: What is the capital expenditure required in relation to this move?

Mr Matthews: To go back and answer your question, and to also add to that, Mr Wall, the additional cost is reflected in the forward estimates in the budget. It includes in year 1 both some transitional costs associated with the insourcing and the capital equipment that I have just mentioned. There is a provision of up to \$1.6 million to meet any capital equipment requirements with insourcing school cleaning.

MR WALL: That is an awful lot of mops, cloths, sponges, chemical dispensers.

MRS JONES: Trolleys.

Mr Matthews: Cleaning can be quite a high-tech industry these days in terms of working at heights, doing window cleaning, doing floor cleaning. We will spend only

as much money on capital equipment as we require. Where possible, and where it is safe to do so, we might secure some equipment from existing contractors. But that gives us the provision to be able to buy all necessary equipment.

MR WALL: This may have been covered this morning, and I apologise if it was, but does this bring school cleaners for all schools in-house as an employee or is it only for some schools?

Ms Berry: No, all schools, all ACT government schools.

MR WALL: What is their employment engagement? Under what award or ASO level are they going to be remunerated?

Mr Matthews: The principle that we outlined earlier was that existing wages and conditions would be maintained. We need to translate that into a government enterprise agreement framework. We are currently working with our colleagues in central agencies, and also with the relevant union, to map existing wages and conditions against existing classifications.

MRS JONES: You do not have one at the moment, do you, for cleaners?

Ms Berry: No, because we have not directly employed cleaners before in this way; it is new.

MR WALL: What is the benchmark for existing wages going to be? One of the long-ongoing issues inside the cleaning industry, particularly with relation to school contracts is that there is a modern award, there is a union enterprise agreement and then there is also a hybrid that existed when government many years ago changed the decision to pay from the union award to somewhere in the middle between the modern award and that. So what has been benchmarked as existing conditions?

Ms Berry: The benchmark will be that none of these employees who are currently employed by contractors will be any worse off by being employed by the ACT government. That is the start.

MR WALL: So it is on an individual basis?

Ms Berry: Individual employee?

MR WALL: Yes.

Ms Berry: No, they will be employed under an agreement.

Mr Matthews: The existing contracts specify a personal rate of pay for cleaners, an hourly rate. That is consistent across all of the cleaning companies and reflected in their enterprise agreement arrangements.

MRS JONES: How much is that?

Mr Matthews: I think it is about \$28 an hour but that gets indexed as well on 1 July.

It is \$29 according to Ms Brighton. I think it is important to describe the fact that in our existing contracts with the cleaning companies we articulate all of that. It is uniform across all of our existing service provision.

MR WALL: The routine maintenance and detailed cleans that were usually done in school breaks, which saw the contractors often offer a surge capacity of additional staff and hours and all those sorts of complexities that existed—which is why it was normally put out to market—how will the cleaners who are employed directly in house fit into that? Will there still be a need for contracts to be issued for the end of term, and end of year cleans and maintenance in schools?

Mr Matthews: Those functions are currently included within the existing contracts. The existing contracts include what you might describe as day-to-day in-term cleaning, as well as annual cleans and speciality cleans, which often take place during the school holiday period. It is our expectation that we will be able to have all of those needs met by our workforce that we engage. If there are particular speciality requirements that we need to identify, we will identify what the best measure to provide those is.

MR WALL: Have any costs been incurred to terminate existing cleaning contracts?

Mr Matthews: No.

MRS JONES: It is feasible, then, that someone working currently in a private sector job as a cleaner might not be able to be employed under the new arrangements? You mention that you will work with them through visa issues and that type of thing but it is it feasible, is it not, that some of them may miss out?

Mr Matthews: The short answer is yes, but I guess that is a factor of public sector employment: there are employment requirements for working for government and there are safeguards built into the Public Sector Management Act. We will be working with our existing workforce to make sure that they can meet as many of those requirements as possible.

MR WALL: Is that not almost counterintuitive to what the intent of this is? You have vulnerable people in the community for whom you are trying to provide better employment conditions but in the process you may be putting some of them out of employment.

Ms Berry: No, I think the intention is that we employ a particularly vulnerable workforce, as you have described, who have for a number of years, I understand from the advice that has been given to me, not been paid their workplace entitlements correctly. In addition to that, we know that we can get a quality clean when we have a workforce who have dignity and are paid correctly and do not have to come to work fearful that they are going to lose their jobs because of their visa arrangements being held over their head.

MRS JONES: No, they would lose their job because they cannot get into a government job.

Ms Berry: What the government is doing right now—and we have had some time to transition through this period of work, so we still have some time before their employment at the start of next year—is to work through those visa arrangements, because that is not clear for us either, and whether the government can change its employment arrangements to provide as many opportunities to as many people as possible. This is new—

MRS JONES: Is it possible that you could create a government contract for those people so that, while they are on the expected wage level and getting the entitlements that they are entitled to, they are not technically government employees? Is there a way of doing that, or is there not a way of doing that?

Ms Berry: That would be what we are doing now, I think: just contracting the work out. This is a new—

MRS JONES: But if you were the contractor then you would ensure that they were paid the appropriate wages.

Ms Berry: I do not know—

MRS JONES: I am wondering because otherwise we might see some people out of work who are currently in work. That, as Mr Wall says, is a bit counterintuitive to the outcome.

Mr Matthews: The minister is referring to the transitional arrangements. We said earlier when we raised this topic that this is an area which is normal to the extent that we are transitioning back into government an existing service. We are looking at what the legislative obligations are and what the most appropriate policy settings are to support this workforce to transition back into government. As was mentioned earlier, the current employees are engaged by private organisations. We have some degree of knowledge about their circumstances.

MRS JONES: We have been over and over this. We totally understand. We are very happy about that. I am just asking—

Mr Matthews: The reason why I was mentioning that—

MRS JONES: if there is a way of making sure that 100 per cent of these people get a job at the end of it?

Mr Matthews: We will.

Ms Berry: We are going to work very hard to make sure that, as much as possible, everybody gets an opportunity. That is the whole purpose of this, particularly those—

MRS JONES: Understood, but purposes and reality do not always perfectly marry up.

Ms Berry: That is right, and this is complicated. The ACT government has never directly employed cleaners in this way, from schools, so this is new and it is a challenge, but we are up for it because we know that it will make the outcomes and

the lives of these individuals so much better than they are currently.

MR PETTERSSON: Can I get a bit more detail? What are these visa issues that are arising that might prevent someone from transitioning?

Ms Berry: It has to do with—

MRS JONES: If someone is on a spousal visa, you may not be able to take a government job. Is it that type of thing?

Mr Matthews: We are getting very complex but essentially appointment in the ACT public service generally requires you to be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident to be permanently employed, so it is particularly about people who might be on some form of time-limited visa. That is the issue we are raising.

What I was going to finish off with before, Mrs Jones, is that once we get through our registration of interest process and we have got a full and direct understanding of the circumstances and intentions of every one of those existing workers, we will be better placed to advise the committee and the public more generally.

MRS JONES: It sounds like something for annual reports then.

MR WALL: Long service leave entitlements for cleaners: who is going to be responsible for those?

Ms Berry: We have already done that.

MRS JONES: I want to go back to the whole-system improvement strategy that we were talking about before, with the upskilling of the leadership teams and so on. How are schools identified as needing this improvement? Obviously, you have some kind of method of looking at where the gaps are. What is that method?

Ms Brighton: A couple of years ago the government started a new process, which we, in shorthand, call a school review. Every year we are putting roughly a fifth of our schools through that process. That is a fairly forensic interrogation of how they are doing, in terms of engaging with their communities, the student learning and where the workforce is at. Coming out of that school review is a report; then the school, working with the education support office, designs their strategic plan for over the next five years as well as their annual action plan.

MRS JONES: Are those reports comparable with other schools for internal purposes, presumably?

Ms Brighton: Yes. We do a consolidation to look at whether there is anything across the system that we need to focus on. Earlier you raised evidence-based decisions. That came out of one of our assessments in one of the years, that we needed to do some further strengthening about that, and that is what has driven our focus on that.

MRS JONES: Can you come back to the committee—I am sure you do not want to list it off now—with all the different areas that are assessed in one of those school

reviews, please?

Ms Brighton: We use the national school improvement tool, which is a publicly available tool, and that tool has nine domains.

Mr Huxley: I am happy to provide those now. No 1 is an explicit improvement agenda within the school. No 2 is analysis and discussion of data. No 3 is a culture that promotes learning. No 4 is targeted use of school resources. No 5 is an expert teaching team, which looks at the teaching practice and quality teaching that happens in the school. No 6 is systematic curriculum delivery. No 7 is differentiated teaching and learning. No 8 is effective pedagogical practices. And No 9 is school-community partnerships. The national school improvement tool is actually run by ACER and is publicly available on their website. It has all of the detail behind those nine domains.

MRS JONES: Will that have the detail of how each of those nine is measured?

Mr Huxley: Yes. Each of those nine domains has a matrix of maturity that is then used to inform the observations of the independent analysis by ACER, and that is fed back to the school.

MRS JONES: We are comparing with other states as well, effectively.

Mr Huxley: Not all other states do this. The ACT is leading out with ACER in this space. We value the independent view and expertise that ACER provides our schools in this space, so it is not just us reviewing ourselves. We really value that independent expertise that they provide.

MRS JONES: Who is ACER?

Mr Huxley: That is the Australian Council for Educational Research.

MRS JONES: Is their material being used by other states?

Mr Huxley: It is being used in different ways by other states, often at an individual school level. We are actually using it systemically to drive our school improvement.

MRS JONES: Does NAPLAN play into the results in that—

Mr Huxley: Yes. The ACER assessments look at the datasets of where the school is up to. It involves schools providing evidence against how they are progressing. We also provide data summaries to schools that they access, and look at their NAPLAN growth, their trajectory, and where they are going. Schools include that discussion as part of the ACER observations and interviews.

After review, that then informs the school plans, the five-year schools plans and the annual action plans, as Ms Brighton referred to before. That is then monitored through the director of school improvement with the school principal over the course of the year. It includes the principal professional development conversations. It also includes further feedback and reviews from peers that come in and check how the school is tracking against those.

MRS JONES: With the fifth of schools that are selected each year, is that on a rotational basis, is it based on feedback or is it based on how often they should be reviewed? What is the decision-making process?

Mr Huxley: We have a rolling schedule of schools. There is a set schedule. But there can be the special purpose reviews, which we can call at any point in time.

MRS JONES: Do you use the same tools for that?

Mr Huxley: We use the same tools for that and we just do it on a needs basis. There might be a situation where there is a change in principal and they would like a bit of assistance in assessing where the school is up to at that point in time. We can use it, for example, in those instances.

MRS JONES: Is one of the matters in that review—I cannot quite remember all of the terms—dealing with where there have been a number of violent incidents or physical incidents? Is that something that will show up?

Mr Huxley: The culture that promotes learning is something which they look at at a high level for school review, in terms of the assessment. It does not drill down into individual case-by-case instances at the school. It looks at the overall posture of the school. It looks at the high-level school improvement matrix. It does not go into the individual case-by-case elements. That is not its purpose.

MR PETTERSSON: Could you provide some more detail about the heating upgrades for ACT public schools?

Ms Berry: Yes, I can. This is a big announcement. It is not insignificant—across nine schools in the ACT. I cannot remember the actual names. Have you got them there, Mr Matthews?

Mr Matthews: I do, minister. The budget invests \$15.9 million over four years to upgrade heating systems across nine public schools. They are Red Hill primary, Fadden Primary School, Forrest Primary School, Lyneham Primary School, Wanniasa Hills Primary School, Mount Stromlo High School, Alfred Deakin High School, Telopea Park School, and Hawker College. In four of those schools the gas heating systems will be fully replaced by zero emission electric heating systems, entirely removing any reliance on gas. In other cases there will be hybrid systems or low emission gas boilers introduced.

MR PETTERSSON: Is the main purpose improving heating outcomes or environmental outcomes?

Ms Berry: These schools are older schools and their heating is probably getting close to the end of its life. Maintaining these systems gets expensive and there is always the risk of some sort of catastrophic collapse of it. Replacing them not only makes a difference to the comfort of students and school staff, but also it has a significant impact on removing polluting carbon dioxides from our environment. The amount of polluting carbon dioxides is 600 and something tonnes.

Mr Matthews: 621.

Ms Berry: 621 tonnes of polluting carbon—

Mr Matthews: Per annum.

Ms Berry: per annum from our community. That is a significant impact on environment and sustainability within our government schools.

MR PETTERSSON: How much will this save on heating costs?

Ms Berry: That is a good question.

Mr Bray: The costs are likely to be higher initially because we will be switching from the cost of gas to the cost of electricity. We are also running out a program of expanding our solar panel systems in schools. We have a longer term strategy to deal with the ultimate energy cost. Energy costs will also be reduced because we are doing other works to improve the thermal insulation of our buildings, from pure insulation right through to doing air locks and changing over glazing gradually to double glazing. The cost will reduce over the long term as we implement these other activities.

MR PETTERSSON: Can any of the schools expect interruptions from the installation of the heating systems?

Mr Bray: No, we usually do major changes to our heating systems during the summer period when the heating system is not required. We plan that around probably the end of October; generally, the heating is not required by that stage. For having it completed, we target end of March, mid-April. That is the basis on which we plan our major works.

MS CODY: You mentioned expanding the solar panel program. Can you give me some more information about that?

Ms Berry: Just before you do, I want to say that all our new schools, starting from this year, I think, are electric and have many different sustainable ways of heating and cooling, including solar panels but also water collection; orientation; and how the air moves in the building, using empty classrooms to cool or heat classrooms that are being used. For our older schools, that becomes more of a challenge for us. That is why there is all this work around the heating and cooling of the old system, but also that insulation work with double glazing, blocking updrafts and ceilings, doors and windows so that that can be more efficiently managed. And there are the solar panel works. Some of our schools have quite a lot of solar panels on them, either owned by us or—

Mr Bray: All of them.

Ms Berry: All owned by us?

Mr Bray: The minister is correct. All of our schools have solar panel systems. One

school, Amaroo School, has a commercial solar panel system, but it also has its own solar panel system. The commercial system is 600 kilowatts, which is very large. In broad terms, the primary schools have at least 10-kilowatt systems, high schools 20 kilowatts, and colleges 30 kilowatts. As the minister said, all of our new schools since 2012 have had 100-kilowatt systems installed as part of the build of the new school.

Going back to the original question about the expansion, we have now started a program where we are looking to expand the existing size, whatever it should be, up to 100 kilowatts. We have just closed tenders on three schools and we are preparing documentation for another three schools at this moment.

MR WALL: Minister, in 2017 it was announced that there would be a principles-based review of the Education Act. It is also referred to in the future of education strategic direction. What has necessitated the review of the Education Act?

Ms Efthymiades: The Education Act has not been reviewed for some time. Given that lots has changed in the past 15 years, it is really timely that we look at it in a holistic way. You may be aware that the Education Act has a whole lot of detail in it that in a more contemporary view would be separated more into act and regulation. That is not the case with the current act. That is certainly part of it. There have also been a number of representations by key stakeholder groups, such as the non-government sector, seeking to modernise and clarify how the regulation of their sector works for registration of schools et cetera and the requirements for their sector. That is a key driver as well.

MR WALL: What does the act require the directorate or schools to do that is not consistent with current thinking?

Ms Efthymiades: A lot of it is around contemporary definitional work: the definition of even a parent, for example, and parents and carers now. The way that those are now described is quite different from how they were described back in 2004. There are complicated, detailed processes articulated in the act for, say, registration of non-government schools. We are seeking to clean those out and tidy up. And it is separating what would be seen to be legislation and the regulatory component.

MR WALL: What are the issues that have been raised with you regarding the registration process? You did touch on that, but where does the concern in the non-government space exist around that?

Ms Efthymiades: If I can paraphrase it—because there is a whole raft of elements that we are seeking to look at there in conjunction with the non-government sector—some of the key bits are how long it takes, how many steps there are in the process, the clarity around provisional registration versus full registration, and that kind of thing.

MR WALL: I am happy for you to expand on that. We have time and I think this is an area that is quite substantial.

Ms Efthymiades: I do not think that level of detail is something that I am able to

share. But that is the nature of the queries.

MR WALL: When will the review be completed?

Ms Efthymiades: There are multiple tranches. There has been a piece already that was considered as an omnibus bill this year, as you might be aware, around student safety. There is the TQI act and Education Act. The imperatives there were the royal commission, the Glanfield report et cetera. That was done first as the highest priority. The second piece has the principles in it; it has definitional work around parents and carers; it has some work around non-government boarding schools et cetera that is royal commission connected. That is the second tranche. The third tranche is heavily around the non-government school registration processes and a small amount of extra wellbeing work. There are likely to be future tranches; those are not yet determined.

MR WALL: Where is tranche 2 up to at the moment?

Ms Efthymiades: I will hand over to Ms McAlister to talk about it.

Ms McAlister: We are continuing the consultation around the second tranche. As Ms Efthymiades has talked about, we have worked up consultation material associated with principles and some definitional requirements relating to the role of parents and also material associated with the registration of schools with boarding facilities. We are in the middle of the consultation.

MR WALL: When is that consultation due to finish? And is there a time line that the directorate is working to to see that tranche completed?

Ms McAlister: The consultation is concluding very soon. Ultimately, we are looking for the introduction of amendments in August this year.

MR WALL: And the third tranche?

Ms McAlister: We will pretty much start in a cascading fashion. We are developing material to go out with the third tranche as we are working on this second tranche now.

MR WALL: Is there a time line or a finished viewpoint of that third tranche in regard to when the legislative changes would be ready to be presented?

Ms McAlister: Ultimately, we are looking at introducing in November for that third tranche.

MR WALL: So it is quite rapid.

Ms McAlister: A rapid program.

Ms Brighton: Our advice to the government will be based on what we hear back through the consultation and the status of the legislative program and its capacity. It is a piece of work we are still working through in terms of the consultation. Then we will take something back to the minister when we have something firmer for her to consider.

MR WALL: While we are talking specifically about the Education Act, what has been the hold-up inside government on bringing the amendments to homeschool registration back to the Assembly to be finalised?

Mr Matthews: Mr Wall, there has been extensive consultation on the home education amendments and the use of regulations again in a different way than is currently the case under the act. We have just been making sure that we are looking at the full range of views of all different stakeholders in this space, making sure that those changes align with the modernisation of the legislation that has already been talked about. We are still working on that and still making sure that we are working through all of the different views of stakeholders.

MR WALL: When that legislation was introduced over 12 months ago—it is getting close to 18 months ago—it was done with some urgency because of abuse of a loophole that existed in that legislation and some very severe reports of child abuse—that is the only way to describe it—that were occurring. Why has that come off the boil when there was such urgency 18 months ago? How has that situation been managed?

Ms Berry: Sorry, I do not recall that circumstance as you describe it, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: How would you describe it, minister?

Ms Berry: I had not recalled a description of the reasons why we were making changes to the act around homeschooling in the way that you have described them.

MR WALL: How would you describe them?

Ms Berry: However, I would say that, like all legislation, they will need to be reviewed, upgraded and changed as our community changes and the expectations of our community change. I think that homeschooling has a number of different stakeholders involved for a lot of different reasons. The government has been careful to ensure that all of the views of different stakeholders are taken into account. This is individuals; it is often not made up of just a one representative group. It is often a lot of individuals. We have been wanting to make sure that all of the individuals are engaged in the process as we change the legislation so that there is a very clear understanding about why the legislation is being changed.

For the most part, people in the homeschooling space have conducted themselves professionally. The people engaged in that space have been engaging in that process in a professional way and working with the Education Directorate. Some of the change that we have been wanting to make to homeschooling is about improving those relationships with the directorate so that we can properly support families and individuals to make sure that the decisions that they are making around homeschooling are appropriate and that they can be supported with tools from the Education Directorate to support them in that decision. I do not think it is fair to blanket all homeschoolers under the banner that you described previously.

MR WALL: No, I said that there was an example and that it was the exception rather

than the rule.

Ms Berry: Now that you have clarified it, that would be the case.

MR WALL: How many registrations currently exist for homeschooling and how many provisional registrations are there?

Mr Matthews: We can take that on notice and get you an answer before we finish today.

THE CHAIR: I turn to the future of education strategy. The strategy claims to reaffirm the government's commitment to equity in the public education system. How are ACT schools deemed to be inequitable?

Ms Berry: In fact, all of the experts say that when you deal with equity issues in any school or in any community, every opportunity to thrive, to improve should be provided. For schools across the country, managing issues around equity to ensure that every child gets an equal chance to a great education is important and it is the very focus of the education strategy in the ACT.

That has been backed up by experts such as Pasi Sahlberg from Finland, who is now working with Avery and Piccolo at the University of New South Wales, to name a few. But there are many others across the world who have said that when you address equity within a school system, you go a long way to improving outcomes for every student.

THE CHAIR: Were there particular schools that were deemed to be inequitable?

Ms Berry: When we talk about inequity, we are talking about particular students who, because of different things that are going on in their lives, start school behind. That is the whole purpose of the early childhood strategy that we will be announcing soon. We have gone some way to that in announcing the three-year-old preschool program. It is about bringing children who are already starting behind to an equal starting point once they reach kindergarten.

When they are in kindergarten, there might be other challenges that they have in their lives. They could be gifted and talented. They could have other things going on in their lives. They could be needing extra support because they may have experienced trauma. It is making sure that they are supported for that so that they do not then still fall behind and so that they are at the same level as every other child in our education system.

It is not that the schools are inequitable. It is just that some families and some students start behind. What the Education Directorate, I, and the future of education and the early childhood strategy are doing is recognising and acknowledging that inequity exists, that every child deserves an equal chance, and how we do that through these strategies.

For example, some of that is about the government's provision of technological education through the provision of Chromebooks across all our senior schools and

colleges. That is a financial impost that is taken away from all parents. It is something that they do not have to worry about anymore. Every child has the same device and every teacher has the ability to spend time doing teaching rather than troubleshooting across a whole number of different devices that students might bring to school.

That immediately improves equity for students who might not otherwise have been able to afford to purchase a device, may have had to borrow one, or may not have had one that is as flash as the one of the person sitting next to them. When we are talking about dealing with and managing equity outcomes in our schools, those are examples of the kinds of things that we want to do to make sure that every child gets an equal opportunity for a great education.

THE CHAIR: Are NAPLAN results used to identify underperforming schools or just underperforming students?

Ms Berry: NAPLAN is one dataset that schools use but I think it is important to keep that in perspective as being one set of data across a very narrow set of outcomes. However, that is not the only thing that schools take into account when addressing issues around equity, and certainly not at a system level, either. Do you want to expand on that?

Ms Brighton: We use NAPLAN at a system level. In terms of an individual child in an individual classroom, it is the data that the teacher collects as they work with that child that is going to be most important about what the strategies are that that child needs in order to accelerate their learning. When the minister is talking about equity, she absolutely is right in terms of what we are doing at a system level and how that translates into the classroom.

It is about making sure that, regardless of the child's circumstances and background, that child has a learning experience from our professional educators that will meet their needs and ensure that they get the same sorts of opportunities and growth throughout the year as their peers. Our new strategic indicator to promote greater equity in learning outcomes in and across ACT public schools will use, at a system level, our NAPLAN data to inform that performance result.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, but I do not think that actually answered my question. Is that being used to identify underperforming schools?

Ms Brighton: We use a range of datasets to look at where a school is at. We do not have underperforming schools in the ACT. We have schools on a spectrum with different sets of needs and challenges. The school review process we talked about earlier in the hearings outlines the methodology we use to identify where a school is performing particularly strongly and where it needs to do some further development. Then we talked through the methodology by which we help that school.

MS CODY: I know it is my question next but I think it will require a long answer. So I would like to hold it over to the start of the next session.

THE CHAIR: Did anyone have a short question before we break for lunch?

Mr Matthews: Miss Burch, I can give you a couple of answers to questions taken on notice.

THE CHAIR: That would be fantastic.

Mr Matthews: In terms of children in home education, as of last Friday, 21 June, the total is 306, of which 226 are registered and 80 are provisionally registered. In terms of the personal rate of pay for school cleaners, the exact figure is \$29.78 as of 1 July 2019.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will suspend and reconvene at 2 o'clock.

Hearing suspended from 12.25 to 2.01 pm.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back. We will go straight back into questions.

Ms Berry: Chair, if you would not mind, I want to clarify with regard to the employment of cleaners by the ACT government. Mr Matthews and I had a conversation outside and I just want to make sure that the committee was clear that the ACT government will offer employment to all cleaners, and all cleaners can be employed in some capacity as long as they have a legal right to be employed to work in Australia. That should be pretty much all of them, unless there are some not employed legally. We are not their employers.

MS LE COUTEUR: That was the impression I got of what you were going to do. You will employ everyone you can legally?

Ms Berry: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have got a range of questions, all on one basic subject, which is food. I have just been to a lecture about reducing carbon in the food system, and it basically said, "Eat more plant-based foods." I was wondering if we could talk a little about what Education does as far as food is concerned. I know there are lots of aspects: cooking classes, canteens, kitchen gardens. What are our kids taught about food?

Ms Berry: Quite a bit, actually. Kate McMahon can provide you with some information about what is required under the curriculum and the kinds of programs that are being run through our schools.

Ms McMahon: Across the curriculum, through the health curriculum, students have an opportunity to learn about healthy eating practices. Aligned to that, a lot of schools have garden programs where the students grow their own vegetables or have small farm plots and then use those vegetables in cooking programs. All our canteens go through an assessment to ensure that they have suitable levels of healthy foods, the green foods, and that there are not too many of the red foods, which are the high-sugar, high-fat content.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is it only high-sugar, high-fat foods that are regarded as having these sorts of issues? When I went to school we had milk every recess. Is it still the

case?

Ms McMahon: Certainly.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are you teaching people that they need a lot of milk and meat—dairy and meat?

Ms McMahon: They would be using the Australian health guidelines around foods, and the food pyramid or the food circle, I think it is now—circle with wedges. There are certain amounts of balance through Nutrition Australia.

MS LE COUTEUR: When you teach them all cooking—I am sure it is most of them, not all of them—

Ms McMahon: I think there will be lots of opportunities within every school to teach kids cooking at various stages. You would be using cooking as activities within mathematics and science and also through health and PE.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you have any teaching of cooking of plant-based food—vegetarian, vegan, not using meat and dairy?

Ms McMahon: There would be a range of different opportunities that teachers would have to teach kids about healthy foods—and obviously plant-based foods are predominant within a healthy diet—but there are also opportunities for people to be eating meats and dairy products as well. They would talk about families and people making individual choices about those foods virtually.

MS LE COUTEUR: With the school gardens, how do you go over the summer vacation period, when clearly there are not an awful lot of kids and teachers there?

Ms McMahon: That is right. From my experience, we would always have staff on site during school holiday periods, and getting the school administrative staff, who are still employed over that time, to water the garden during those periods is more than appropriate. Some communities would have relationships with the parents where their parents would come in and do that—or with the local community.

MS LE COUTEUR: I have heard some very mixed feedback about the more healthy foods at canteens. What would you say? How have they gone in terms of introducing more healthy foods at schools?

Ms McMahon: There is a rating system. We have a relationship with ACT Health and we are able to go in and assess all the canteens. That program has been running for about three years, I believe, and the level of healthiness of those canteens has increased over that period. If a school canteen is not able to meet those standards then we have materials that will support them in making choices and changes to the menus so that they are able to meet those standards.

MS LE COUTEUR: Has the number of meals or the amount of food sold through canteens changed as a result of that program?

Ms McMahon: Yes. It has become much healthier, much more in the green foods. It is less fat and less sugar, no flavoured milks, a reduction in juices. There are lots of waters, lots of fruit.

MS LE COUTEUR: I was asking about the amount of food. Are they selling as much?

Ms McMahon: The quantity?

MS LE COUTEUR: Clearly the quality will have changed. That was the aim of it. Has the quantity also changed?

Ms McMahon: I cannot answer that.

MS LE COUTEUR: From the feedback anecdotally, the kids quite like their junk food.

Ms Berry: Yes, they do.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is more than anecdotal. Every parent can tell you the kids like their junk food, and the canteens are not doing as well now that they are trying to sell the healthy foods that mum and dad might have provided otherwise, you could say.

Ms McMahon: I would have to take that one on notice, I think. Meg, you may know?

Ms Brighton: We do not collect the information systematically across the system, but what we know is that when we first introduced the healthy canteens, and our work with ACT Health, there was a degree of nervousness from canteen operators about how they would go. But, over time, given that this is now deeply embedded in our schools, you hear the momentum from the children themselves as they are talking about what they are eating, what they are buying. In a lot of ways a better choice has been normalised amongst the students, which is really great to see. And it is important that the canteens have adapted to not only what our policy guidelines say but also what the demand has been from the students themselves.

MS LE COUTEUR: In the last couple of weeks the letters to the editor in the *Canberra Times* have been talking about treasurers of canteens who, because of the ATO's new rules for reporting on payments, are going to have to do an awful lot more paperwork. Is that something that has been brought to your attention? Certainly the *Canberra Times* makes it appear that it would be.

Ms Brighton: I am not aware of anything in public education that has been brought to our attention.

Ms Berry: I think that was about small business.

MS LE COUTEUR: There were a couple of letters that the canteen is, in effect, a small business and a voluntary treasurer now every fortnight is going to have to tell the ATO something about what they pay; whereas in the past they only had to do it every few months. They said, "There's a let-out if you have got an auditor and an

accountant.” They said, “We’re a bunch of volunteers. We don’t spend that sort of money. We just have a lot more work that we are going to have to do.”

Ms Brighton: We meet regularly with the P&C council, and next time we meet with them we will ask them whether they have got any feedback for us about that issue. But we have not heard anything.

MS CODY: You mentioned before that all the schools meet the requirements of the healthy canteen. Is that non-government and government, or—

Ms McMahon: I could answer on the government schools. We would have to take the non-government ones on notice.

MS CODY: Is that something you do monitor? Do non-government schools have to meet—

Ms McMahon: The program is through ACT Health, so we would have to find that out for you.

MS CODY: Then I might ask the rest of ACT Health. I was going to ask whether there is assistance to help schools meet those requirements, but I will go to Health.

Ms McMahon: There is. There are materials for canteen managers, training for canteen managers, education programs for P&Cs and things like that to support them in developing their menu so that it does meet those standards. We also have people who can go in and support them, a physical resource that can go in and do some coaching with them.

MS CODY: Excellent. Minister, there was an initiative in this year’s budget about reducing insecure work practices, moving away from labour hire firms and contract employees. How is the directorate managing that particular budget initiative?

Ms Berry: The first part, of course, is the direct employment of school cleaners, which will provide more permanent employment for those workers. I will get David Matthews to talk through what the Education Directorate is doing to ensure more permanent employment arrangements.

Mr Matthews: One of the immediate consequences this has for us is in our enterprise agreement negotiations with teachers. We are just in the process of balloting from today. Included in that new agreement will be specific provisions around casual staff and what rights casual staff have got to access more permanent arrangements, to have a review of their circumstances requested and for that to be properly considered by us as an employer. There are some changes to our enterprise agreement framework which make it much more specifically clear to every individual what their rights are if they are a casual or temporary employee.

In terms of the Education Directorate more generally, because of the nature of our workforce we use a number of casual teachers, relief teachers, to supplement our permanent workforce. In our human resources area we are looking at further recruitment and workforce strategies to reduce the reliance on casual relieving pools,

including how we might move towards more centralised approaches to recruitment of staff.

In a competitive market, which we are in nationally with teachers—teachers are in demand—we appreciate the need to have good working conditions and good rates of pay as being absolutely critical to making sure we can staff a high quality education system. Not only is it in accordance directly with government policy objectives to reduce the casualisation of work but also we see it as a competitive advantage issue for us in terms of attracting and retaining high quality teachers in our system. So as well as rolling out and meeting the obligations in our enterprise agreement, we will be undertaking specific recruitment activities to increase the overall percentage of the number of permanent and ongoing staff that we have in our teaching workforce, which of course comprises the great majority of the employee base of the Education Directorate.

MS CODY: I am happy for this to be taken on notice. What are your numbers of permanent employees and contract staff? I am assuming relief teachers are contract staff, or are they—

Mr Matthews: They are a mixture of casual and contract staff, depending on the length of the vacancy. I think we will have that information for you in our various materials, so we will provide that to you. We acknowledge that education does have a relatively high level of casual and contract staff, again due to the nature of our operations, as I have described previously. But I reiterate the commitment we are making to reduce that and to offer long-term work to our teaching workforce. We will find that number for you before we leave today.

MS CODY: Thank you.

MR PETTERSSON: The directorate previously reported on overall student satisfaction with education, but you have now changed it to whether they have strong identification with their school. What is the reason for the change?

Ms Berry: It is about making sure that we can report better on outcomes and engagement with school communities rather than just an output. We think that provides more useful information and is a more constructive way to let the community know and let the committee know, through the budget processes, about student satisfaction within the education system in the ACT.

Mr Gotts: The reason for the change is that we have moved to a measure of student engagement. It is referred to as student identity, but what we are talking about here is engagement and belonging of students. The reason we have moved to that is that it is predictive of better outcomes. The stronger the sense of belonging that students have in relation to their school—and the same applies to staff as well, which you will also see as one of the measures there—the more positive an indicator that is for the future. It is a strategic indicator in that sense. We still collect the school satisfaction information. It provides what has been a quite consistent picture over many years of student overall satisfaction. We were looking for something that provided more strategic insight.

MR PETTERSSON: You are going to have to keep walking me through it. What exactly was lacking with student satisfaction?

Mr Gotts: There was nothing lacking with student satisfaction; it represents a measure of how satisfied overall students are with their education. It is perfectly fine as a measure. Consistently over many years the figure was, depending on the levels, in the high 80s and 90s for student satisfaction. So there is no lack of confidence that overall students are satisfied with their education that they are receiving through the public system. This is looking for something that can provide insight for future direction. The strength of belonging is something that does that.

MR PETTERSSON: You mentioned that student satisfaction used to sit in the 80 per cent ballpark. Is it, then, surprising that students reporting having a strong identification with a school sits at about 60 per cent?

Mr Gotts: No, it is not surprising at all, because it is not a measure that is directly comparable with student satisfaction. They are fundamentally different concepts. There is a five-point scale over which we measure it, which is that students can agree, strongly agree, be neutral, disagree or strongly disagree in relation to their sense of belonging. This measure is strongly agree and agree. There is another portion of students in the middle who might not agree, not disagree and so on. It is measuring a different concept, so in that sense it is not comparable to school satisfaction.

MR PETTERSSON: This is going to sound a bit pedantic, but if they are not comparable, why is one replaceable with the other?

Mr Gotts: It is not a question of replaceable; it is looking for a strategic indicator. It should be considered in conjunction with the other strategic indicators, which are around equity and around student growth. Those two measures, the latter two, are both measures that record what has happened. Student growth is something that has happened. The equity-related one is something that has happened. The one on student belonging, engagement, is one that is pointing forward to the future. In that sense it performs a different function and is ideally considered in conjunction with the other two.

MR PETTERSSON: There are great results for staff, at 91 per cent, who have a strong identification with the school, and for parents and carers, 86 per cent. Is it strange that they can have such strong identification with a school but it is different for the students?

Mr Gotts: I am not sure whether I should refer to my own experiences as a student, where at times my strength of belonging might not have been as great as the school desired. But essentially it does reflect the different nature of things. Again, overall satisfaction is consistent over time. Looking at something like belonging gives something that the system and schools can look at and work to increase, given that it is strongly predictive. As I said, it is a predictive and strategic indicator. It is the first year that we have put it in, so I do not think that 60 per cent, for example, is something you would say is either good or bad. That is not the question. The underlying satisfaction rate is still very high. It is a starting point for consideration of a different kind of measure.

Ms Berry: One of the things that you will see throughout the future of education strategy as we implement that strategy across our schools is the student voice and community engagement, through more engagement from young people about their learning, their education and their school communities across a whole bunch of different forums. We are giving them agency within their personal learning plans as well. When they actually get to be part of the development of their personal individual learning plans with their teachers and their families, they will be more engaged in their education. They will be more engaged in their school communities through school parliaments and leadership through the schools, as well as the student congress and other ways that we engage young people in education with their education.

You will see that that strategic indicator will make a lot more sense over the years as students become more and more engaged as the grown-ups—or the adults, because grown-up is not necessarily adult—give young people more opportunities to become involved in education than we probably have ever had before.

MR WALL: Minister, the *Schools for all children and young people* report recommended that alternative school settings be available for students who have disengaged from mainstream schooling. What options are available through the public school system?

Ms Berry: The Education Directorate has been working on a different kind of engagement program out of a school campus to provide opportunities, still within the Education Directorate and provided by the ACT government, for other ways to learn where an ordinary school environment does not work for them for lots of different reasons. I will ask Sam Seton to provide more detail about that continuum of education in the off-campus model that the ACT government is providing.

Ms Seton: The continuum of education is looking at everything we need to do for our young people to keep them engaged with schools and is specifically focused on high schools. The first thing we work on is putting everything we can in place in their local school to ensure students remain engaged. Our first option is not to find them somewhere else. We look at what we can do either universally or in a small group, or in some instances at an individualised level, to keep them enrolled at their local school.

Sometimes for a period of time that is not the best option for a young person, so we have an off-campus model which provides a personalised wraparound approach for the young person. They have access to a psychologist, a school youth health nurse and a youth support worker. They work on what we call a passion project, where they get to identify the area of their interest and we build education around that. At the end of their 10-week cycle they present back.

The key point is that they remain in touch with their local school. They will have someone they invite into that project, with the idea being that we move them back into their local school where that is appropriate. For some of our young people it is more about moving into a CIT or a vocational-type option at the end of that.

MR WALL: How are those off-campus set-ups auspiced? Are they part of a major campus? Are they a school unto themselves?

Ms Seton: There is one program that is currently located in Woden, opposite Canberra College.

MR WALL: Is that facilitated by Canberra College? Who has got responsibility for the staffing?

Ms Seton: We have a flexible education team that looks after the Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre based at Bimberi, the off-campus, the cottage and the hospital school. We have a team of staff with specialist skills and they are able to move around in the settings to support students.

MR WALL: Is it just called the off-campus, or has it got a better name?

Ms Seton: It will have a better name; it is coming.

MR WALL: How long has it been operational?

Ms Seton: Since term 4 last year.

MR WALL: How many students are currently engaged?

Ms Seton: Ten.

MR WALL: And how many staff?

Ms Seton: We have a range of staff. There is one expert teacher, a psychologist, a youth support worker, a nurse and a principal who oversees those four campuses.

MR WALL: What is the attainment level available by going through the off-campus? You noted in your previous answer that the intention was to get them back into their mainstream school. But where that is not possible will they go through to a year 10 level?

Ms Seton: The off-campus program currently works for years 7 to 10. Students are working on the Australian curriculum so are able to obtain a year 10 certificate if that is required. At the end of year 10—we have a couple of students in year 10—we transition students into a college setting or CIT or a workplace.

MR WALL: What is the process for a student transitioning into this program? Who identifies that the student is in need and then tries to engage them in this program?

Ms Seton: Students are identified through the network student engagement team. The concept is that all schools should have in place a range of options and NSET is one of those supports. When NSET is working with a school and identifies that the school has attempted everything possible and for whatever reason that is not appropriate, that then comes to a panel. The panel involves multiple agencies within the cottage and CYPS. The panel discusses it and ensures that it is the right option for that child at that time.

MR WALL: Is there an interconnection with the long-established project by Communities@Work with the Galilee School?

Ms Seton: It is a separate offering. Galilee is a private school.

MR WALL: Yes. They are registered as a non-government school, but they are servicing the same need. Has there been any collaboration in that space, given that we have an established operation?

Ms Seton: When it was established, we worked with Galilee. We have students who move between the public school system and Galilee. Ultimately, Galilee is a parental choice, and for parents who do not want Galilee this is a different option.

MR WALL: Do you see this as being complementary to, a step above, or below, as far as the intervention and support that is offered?

Ms Seton: I cannot talk to Galilee and the service they offer, but I can say that our off-campus offering is bound in the Australian curriculum and has expert teachers and expert staff.

Ms Brighton: If I could clarify the off-campus option, each high school has a range of strategies it is required to put in place to support students. When those strategies are not working—and our network student engagement team works with the school—then referral to the off-campus opportunity would come. It is really a focus on public education and a route for a very small number of students, given the supports that are in place in high schools.

MR WALL: Is there a view to broadening the scope to include the college years?

Ms Seton: At the moment we are catering to years 7 to 10, but we will be doing an evaluation of the program, so that is a question we can test at that point.

MS CODY: Another program that is run is the Canberra College cares program. How is that going? I note that all the graduates that I speak to think it is amazing.

Ms Berry: Yes, it is amazing. I have not spoken to anyone that has come through that program for a while. Supporting young parents and their families to get their year 12 certificate, having that opportunity, is great. It means they do not miss out on school and they get a high school qualification at the end of it.

Ms Brighton: CC cares has been running for a number of years and it has received a number of awards for the quality of education service delivery as well as the innovation that underpins that program. The model of CC cares means that students, as they become parents, can continue to participate in education. The feedback that we have had from students who have participated is all of those things that Mr Gotts has been talking about: “I feel engaged and connected and valued, irrespective of my circumstances.” The feedback from those students is that they feel worthy, they are treated as individuals and their education offering is wrapped around what their interests and needs are.

You can participate in a range of vocational programs through CC cares; you can also take your tertiary level subjects at CC cares. The different education program that a student participates in is very much wrapped around them. Of course, there are childcare options available to students, if they require them. Canberra College can also elongate, based on the individual student's needs, the time it takes to finish their college years of schooling.

MS CODY: I cannot remember exactly when it started, but, as you said, it has been running for a number of years. I am assuming there have been evaluations done of the programs that are offered there, and changes and tweaks along the way?

Ms Brighton: It is not dissimilar to other school programs that we run. We take feedback from the students about what is working for them and what is not working for them; then adjustments are made. I could not speak specifically to what adjustments Canberra College has made, but it is very common for in-school programs like CC cares to go through a revision and a consultation. Through the future of education consultation, there was a very strong feature of student voice. We had lots of submissions from students about the importance of their feeling heard and connected—that education was all about them, so they should be at the centre of the discussion.

MS CODY: I have been lucky enough to go out to Canberra College cares a number of times and have met many of the graduates. It is a great program.

Ms Brighton: Thank you. We are very proud of it.

THE CHAIR: The budget measure ensuring that teachers and staff are safe at school has around \$1 million allocated for next year, and just under that for the year after. What is that money being spent on and how will those outcomes be achieved?

Ms Brighton: We started work with the Australian Education Union a couple of years ago around occupational violence in our schools. From that work we have an occupational violence policy and plan, which is all about how we strengthen our schools to be safe schools for both students and our workforce. This investment from the government is about extending that work, enabling us to implement with fidelity, and ensuring that the government is funding that ongoing strengthening of work health and safety systems.

THE CHAIR: How exactly is that—

Ms Brighton: What does it look like on the ground?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Brighton: On the ground we have a specialist team of safety and clinical experts that work together. They undertake risk assessments around behaviours of children. They pull together a plan for how to support the staff to make sure that they are not going to be injured at work and to support the student to make sure that they are in the best possible position to learn. We are also using that funding to ensure that staff are trained not only in the broader, general work health and safety but in the specifics of

how to implement the plan that is wrapped around the behaviours of that particular child.

MR WALL: Is this part of the enforceable undertaking that was entered into with WorkSafe, and meeting the Education Directorate's requirements under that?

Ms Brighton: Yes, it is.

MS CODY: I want to ask a couple of questions about non-government schools. Where are the non-government school infrastructure grants up to?

Ms Berry: We are into the second year of that.

Mr Matthews: End of the first year.

Ms Berry: End of the first year of that grants funding. I think we will be announcing soon the successful applicants for that funding.

Mr Matthews: We have entered into an arrangement with the Block Grant Authority around the allocation of funds to support infrastructure works at non-government schools. There is a contract with them worth \$15 million. They do an assessment process of the various applications from the different schools and they make recommendations through to the minister about which ones should be funded. It will be an annual process and, as the minister has just advised, there will soon be announcements around the first round of that particular initiative.

MS CODY: How is the government also assisting non-government schools to implement the future of education strategy?

Ms Berry: It is the ACT government's strategy. However, we have engaged with the non-government schools at various points along the way. We have offered to continue to work with them, particularly around teacher quality. Investment in our teaching workforce through the Teacher Quality Institute is probably at the front of working with non-government schools.

Ms Efthymiades: That is the really big centrepiece. With respect to other aspects, the ACT government entered into a bilateral agreement with the commonwealth under the national schools reform agreement. In that there is a cross-sectoral implementation plan. There are a number of key things that all sectors have committed to there, and those are also embedded in the future of education work going forward. There are a range of things, but the minister is right: teacher quality is the main, driving one, and working together on things like leadership, disability data collections and NAPLAN online.

MS LE COUTEUR: Can I ask about access to school facilities by non-students? First off, with playgrounds, when I went to school, and when my daughter went to school, the playgrounds were open 24/7. I have observed that a lot of them are now fenced, but I have heard differing reports about whether those fenced playgrounds are ever available to non-students out of school hours.

Ms Berry: Every school should be available out of school hours. There should be a gate where they can access the school. If you are aware of a school where that is not happening, there could be different circumstances for that occurring. But the policy in the Education Directorate is that every school is available out of school hours for general community use. There should be an access point somewhere around that fence. They can engage with the school to find out where that is.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is not the policy of an individual school? It has been suggested to me that it might be. I have been told about a couple of schools where they seemed fairly clear—

Ms Berry: There might be a particular reason for a particular school doing this at some point in time, but the policy more broadly is that they should be accessible outside school hours.

Ms Brighton: Ms Le Couteur, the policy is available on our website. We regularly remind schools of their obligation to make that available. If you do have individual concerns, let us know and we can follow up with the individual schools.

MS LE COUTEUR: Okay. Where there is a fence around a playground, if you walk around, you should be able to find probably one of those—

Ms Brighton: A point of access, yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, pull gates; you will be able to get in.

Ms Brighton: Yes.

MS LE COUTEUR: In terms of the other issue, the availability of school rooms for out of hours activities, I am aware that in Molonglo you and I have both been at meetings at the school, it being basically the only community facility there. But there are a variety of people who would like to use school spaces out of hours. Is that managed on a school-by-school basis?

Ms Berry: At the moment, it is on a school-by-school basis, and it is the same with the school halls. From Education's perspective, the ACT government would like to see our schools as vibrant places after three o'clock in the afternoon as well as during the day. We want to make sure that they are not left empty and are used by the broader community all across the week and at weekends. Freeing up those school halls for sports clubs to be able to use them out of school hours has been really important. Not only does that give a space for people to come together; it makes the schools a safer place as well.

MS LE COUTEUR: Fewer vandals.

Ms Berry: The more activity there is around a school community, the fewer opportunities there are for people to cause damage to school communities. At the moment, access to those facilities is predominantly done through the schools, and bookings are done through the schools, but there is a general policy around pricing and access.

Ms Brighton: That is right. As the minister alluded to, we are looking at how we strengthen this over time. On our website we have a list of all the schools and the facilities at each of those schools available for hire, but we are looking at how we strengthen this over time and how we make it a bit more seamless for members of the community when they might want to make bookings.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are they generally done on a cost recovery basis and do you require a member of staff to be present? In some instances, that is clearly the issue. If you have to pay for a member of staff, it becomes expensive.

Ms Brighton: We have a range of scheduled fees, and there is a degree of flexibility for principals. Sometimes those after-school hours are an augmentation of a service that is already being offered in the school, so sometimes there are pre-existing relationships over an extended period of time. We are looking at how we systematise that to make it a bit clearer so that those external agencies can be clear, when they negotiate with one school versus another, what that agreement might look like.

You have raised an important issue about staff and whether staff need to attend to unlock it. At the moment, by and large, with our security systems, we either have a hirer who has access to the school or we need someone to open up the school for them. That depends on the security system at the school.

MS LE COUTEUR: Are you looking at improving the security system so that you do not require a staff person to be there to do something?

Ms Brighton: In the long term, that would be certainly ideal, but some of our schools are quite old, so it is a matter of retrofitting those arrangements. Mr Bray has been looking at what options there might be in the long term for how we might deal with that.

Ms Berry: Sport and rec work with the Education Directorate on opening up school halls and gyms for the use of sports facilities. Some of those sports halls are separate from the school and can be fitted with external security access so that you do not need a key to be picked up from the letterbox of the building services officer or whatever down the road; you can get the code and access the school hall, and it is easily managed. For a lot of the newer schools that are built, it can be separated like that. It is easier to put those kinds of security systems in, and that access is easy. For the older schools, where the school hall is in the middle of the school, it makes it a bit more difficult because of the security arrangements at the school. It is a challenge that we are up for. We are working out different ways to open up those schools to different parts of the community through different access arrangements.

Mr Bray: We are about to start two trials in the next few months. One is to have a better opening and closing external gate on the security fence. It will be activated by time. It will be open on weekends. It will basically open at sunrise and close at sunset, essentially just to control night access.

MS LE COUTEUR: And it will be open in the afternoon after school hours when it is still light?

Mr Bray: Yes. That is the technology we will be looking to test and try: that it can basically be usable by the general public after school hours but before it gets dark and there is no lighting in the grounds. We are also hoping to do a trial at two existing schools, fitting electronic pass access card systems, to see how effectively we can set that up. They are two trials that we are going to be doing over the next six months. If they are successful, we will roll that program out across the other schools.

MS LE COUTEUR: The other question I would like to ask is about insurance requirements. Do you have to get public liability if you want to hire your facilities, even for a short period?

Ms Brighton: Thank you for that terrific question, as I reach deep into the back of my mind. My recollection is that ongoing hirers do require public liability insurance.

MS LE COUTEUR: That is my recollection. That can be a considerable issue where basically it is a group of people who are just going to sit around and talk about something or other. Any actual public liability issues would almost certainly be with the education department, because it is going to be their facilities. Generally speaking, all the people who are coming are doing is talking.

Ms Brighton: Yes. It is difficult to construct a policy around the different activities that people participate in. One group might be talking; another group might be pogo jumping. That is our general policy with public liability insurance. I am just looking at the CFO to see if she has anything to add to that.

Ms Daly: I acknowledge and understand the privilege statement. Our schools have a responsibility to hire out their facilities to the community after hours. There is an element of long-term hire versus short-term hire, which is just a distinguishing factor between the types of agreement that a school might put in place. In terms of public liability insurance, it varies, depending on the usage of the space. If it is a sporting group, a long-term hire or after school hours care and things like that, there would be a public liability responsibility for the individual group in terms of their agreement in hiring the space. When we talk about, say, a church group or a small group that might come to just use that space, they would be covered by the school's public liability insurance at that time.

Ms Berry: Someone like Neighbourhood Watch or a P&C, if they were coming every month, are all covered under the school.

MS LE COUTEUR: P&Cs, book clubs and those sorts of people would be covered? I have heard otherwise. I was going to suggest that you could do something like what some other ACT government venues do: they have a general insurance policy, and if you want to make use of that, you pay a fairly nominal amount of money to join. But if you have what sounds like small, low-risk things—and obviously P&Cs would have to be your number one clients—

Ms Daly: Exactly. Some of the groups are already incorporated groups themselves, so they have their own insurance as part of their business. Those are the ones that we would ask, as part of the hire agreement, to demonstrate that they have liability

insurance, particularly if some of their events can extend beyond a standard school-type activity in which they would need to be covered. The small groups—P&Cs, church groups, things like that—would be covered within the school use.

MR PETTERSSON: One of the oft discussed things in this place is the new IT system to better centralise the collection of student data. How is that coming along?

Ms Berry: It is coming along great. Parents in schools will have noticed already some changes to the system in how they engage with the schools or how the schools engage with them. But the whole idea of the system will be to have data that is collected in a more central place rather than a collection of data from a whole lot of different places and then trying to make sense of that. It might help the committee to understand how the actual system works—what kind of data it collects now and what we are looking at considering in the future.

Mr Hawkins: As the minister has said, we have been incrementally rolling through the program. In the sense of what is currently out and currently operational, it is for the schools to be able to upload and record incident data. That is both positive and negative incidents that take place in schools. That is helping us build a really useful record of what is taking place in terms of student behaviour, both positive and negative.

In terms of our future capability we are moving to a point now where we can put academic reporting through the system. That will be centrally available and passed out to parents. Into the future, a really exciting point for us is that there be a parent portal where we can eventually do away with those notes that go into kids' lunch boxes and we can manage our interactions with our parents and communities online, and parents can contact us all on one central system.

MR PETTERSSON: The collection of incidents, both positive and negative, is now centrally collected?

Mr Hawkins: It is probably worth saying that at the moment that is being rolled out on a school-by-school basis.

MR PETTERSSON: It is being rolled out at the moment?

Mr Hawkins: Yes. It is a part of our future capabilities to bring that up at an enterprise level and look at it across all our schools. All our schools are in various stages of maturity of putting those systems in place. They should be mature towards the end of the year. And as we bring on that ability for us to have a look at it at an enterprise level, it will enable us to look at data centrally rather than, if you like, a school-by-school instance.

MR PETTERSSON: Is this a line item in the budget?

Mr Hawkins: I did not bring my budget with me.

MR PETTERSSON: Better schools IT upgrade for school administration?

Mr Hawkins: No, wrong one.

Ms Brighton: It was funded in the 2017-18 budget.

Mr Hawkins: I am not quite sure what it was. Being a public servant, I did not bring my budget book with me. It was flagged and everything.

MR PETTERSSON: Page 24.

Ms Brighton: It was funded in a previous budget and it is a multi-year implementation schedule. We are working with an amalgamation of firms. This system is a \$10 million investment and it is the core business system to run schools. It is a very significant project for us and we are looking forward to the point where the data is not held at an individual school but we are mature and the system is so well developed that we will be able to have a view across the entire system without having to go to each school and gather information from them directly.

MR PETTERSSON: If it is not based in this budget, if there is no future funding, it is going to be done and dusted this financial year?

Ms Brighton: We anticipate the project being fully implemented during the 2019-20 financial year. It did not receive new budget funding in this year because it has been funded in a prior budget. And that funding has spread out over a number of years.

MR WALL: Minister, how many full-fee-paying international students are currently enrolled in ACT government schools?

Ms Berry: I will get that figure for you.

Mr Hawkins: I can cover it off if you want. As at May there were 552 full-fee-paying international students.

MR WALL: How is the determination made whether or not a student is required to pay fees?

Mr Hawkins: There is a policy that exists for us in terms of full-paying students and where exemptions are offered. Normally this appears when temporary visa holders commence as permanent visa holders. That policy is available online.

MR WALL: What is the latest government revenue for fee-paying students and—

Mr Hawkins: Would you like me to run through them?

MR WALL: Yes.

Mr Hawkins: For primary, it is \$11,100 per annum.

MR WALL: That is per student?

Mr Hawkins: Per student.

Mr Hawkins: Yes, per annum. For high school it is \$14,500, and for college it is \$16,200 per annum.

MR WALL: What is the projected revenue for next year?

Ms Brighton: I believe it was in the order of \$10 million.

Mr Hawkins: Yes.

Ms Brighton: You asked us a question about exemptions. There are certain exemptions by visa class—of course, refugee and humanitarian visas—but also there is an arrangement for students undertaking certain classes of higher education when they have come to Australia particularly to do their research degrees.

MR WALL: How does that policy to charge international students those fees fit with the ACT government's Human Rights Act, particularly section 27A(1), that every child has the right to have access to free school education?

Ms Brighton: The Human Rights Commission has previously released a report on that very issue. When an international student applies for a visa to come to Australia to study, part of the condition of their visa is their capacity to pay fees. Our policy position is not inconsistent with every other policy in the country. Those students are not residents of Canberra seeking to access public education but they are making a decision to come to this country—

MR WALL: But it is a human rights act and not an Australian citizens act.

Ms Brighton: I appreciate that. This is a piece of work that we have been engaging with the Human Rights Commission over and how the Human Rights Act intersects with our existing policy position. Do you want to add to anything to that?

Mr Hawkins: No, only that we have been working, as Ms Brighton said, with the Government Solicitor on this issue in terms of the interception of those acts and what sits in the Education Act in a very specific way around the ability for the minister to charge fees for certain categories of students. It is not inconsistent with the human rights legislation.

MR WALL: That is advice that you have had from the Government Solicitor's office?

Mr Hawkins: Correct.

MR WALL: Minister, do you think that that encapsulates the intent of the Human Rights Act in the application of the fee-paying policy?

Ms Berry: As we have said, the advice that we have is that there are reasonable limits to the Human Rights Act and that is what is being applied by the Education Directorate under these circumstances, with an opportunity to—

MR WALL: But it is a fairly explicit right?

Ms Berry: With an opportunity to waive or exempt individuals, should their circumstances warrant it.

MR WALL: How many individuals currently receive an exemption?

Mr Hawkins: I would have to take that on notice. To give you an example, the majority of our international students are visa 500 holders. These are international students from places like China and Korea that deliberately want to come to Australia to engage with our education system. And it is for those individuals, in a very clear relationship, where we would levy and charge a fee. But I will get on notice for you the number of exemptions that we have.

MR WALL: Is the advice that has been provided to the directorate able to be provided on notice to the committee?

Mr Hawkins: No. It has been provided under privilege.

Ms Brighton: If I can clarify that item we have just taken on notice, we have processed 241 fee exemptions this calendar year and we have waived tuition fees for seven students, based on particular circumstances.

MR WALL: What sorts of circumstances would warrant a waiver of fees?

Ms Brighton: By and large, financial hardship.

Mr Hawkins: Which is not inconsistent with other jurisdictions as well.

THE CHAIR: I have a question on capacity and then also infrastructure. The February census data was not made available until mid-June. Why was it delayed?

Ms Efthymiades: The census report traditionally only had census figures in it. As of last year we have included capacity figures in it. The capacity figure process has a whole lot of pieces to it where we are looking at potential future commitments. One of the things that happens in our schools is that, if they are to set up a small group setting like an LSU, the capacity is adjusted from a full class count to a small group count. There are a number of steps required to settle the capacity figures, so we held the census report until the capacity figures were final, including the ones that were announced by government in the budget.

THE CHAIR: The February census indicates that Fraser Primary School has a capacity of 500 with an enrolment of 573 and Miles Franklin has a capacity of 500 and a current enrolment of 583. What has been done this year to address the overcrowding?

Ms Efthymiades: The figures in the report include preschool in the total numbers; however, for the capacity figures preschools are not part of that. Preschool is part of the number of enrollees in a school. It is a separate infrastructure piece. It is a bit of a calculation exercise to subtract the preschoolers and then do the comparison to get the

utilisation.

THE CHAIR: The \$500,000 set aside for feasibility of the Kenny high school: there is no capital for that yet. Is that correct?

Ms Brighton: Yes.

THE CHAIR: What work has been done to determine enrolments, location and the size and type of the school?

Ms Brighton: We spoke this morning about the work we do with the ANU to strengthen our forecasting, so that is a factor in it. Looking at regional-based forecasting we know, based on the students in our primary schools in Gungahlin and where they are, where the need is. That is informing not only our advice to government about the need for a school but also optimum location for that school. We are working with the planning department on that.

THE CHAIR: The new primary school at Throsby: there is no money for that yet. Is that correct?

Ms Berry: That is because we do not announce the cost before the contract is made.

THE CHAIR: But has money been provisioned?

Ms Berry: Yes.

MR WALL: How is that money accounted for in the budget papers?

Ms Brighton: If you turn to budget paper 3, page 147, you will see the NFP note—not for publication—under the new high school in Kenny. That states that the capital cost in this initiative has been withheld in order to secure value for money when the government approaches the market. Immediately under that is the table about Throsby.

MR WALL: Yes, but—

MS LE COUTEUR: We went through this when we talked to treasury about the hollow log. They said that was not the technical term but they explained to us where that sits. “Provision” is the word they would like to use.

THE CHAIR: The roof replacement program on page 371 of budget paper 3, is that a consistent program across all schools or is it certain schools with ageing infrastructure?

Mr Bray: The roof replacement program is targeted at a short-listed number of schools, based on the condition of those roofs. We have started working with the worst of the roofs and we are working through a priority list. At this stage we have finished a lot of due diligence on a lot of those roofs and we are about to move into the tendering and contract phases for a number of them.

Prices can vary quite significantly between schools. We are about to award the

contract for Calwell High School, which is a very complex roof in quite poor condition. Its cost will be quite extraordinary, probably in the order of \$3 million to \$4 million to do that replacement work. At another school, it could vary quite significantly and be in the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars, depending on the problems being experienced.

Ms Berry: Chair, I just want to correct the record—Throsby has had funding allocated; east Gungahlin has not.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. How many schools are included in that program?

Mr Bray: I would have to take that question on notice. I do not want to guess. It is in the order of eight schools, but I cannot remember if it is seven or eight.

THE CHAIR: At Narrabundah College, where is the asbestos replacement program up to?

Ms Berry: The classrooms that had the asbestos in them have been demolished and removed. Temporary classrooms have been put in place, called very fondly by the school “the village”. They are high quality quite incredible spaces for learning. All the teachers and students have said what a change it is being in school where learning environments are so amazing. They are all double glazed and all have heating and cooling. They are very different to the old classroom spaces.

The next part of that program will be starting the consultation with the school community. I had a meeting with the P&C last week and the Education Directorate will keep engaging with them and the broader community about what the school is going to look like and what is the next part of that school’s journey.

THE CHAIR: It says there is a 2020 completion date for that. Will that be met?

Ms Berry: 2020 for the new school? No.

THE CHAIR: No, for Narrabundah College.

Mr Bray: That relates to the work that has already been completed there. There has not been a budget allocation yet for the construction phase of the modernisation. The funds have been allocated for the purchase and installation of the transportable buildings, as part of the learning village, and the demolition of the three buildings that have subsequently been removed.

MS LE COUTEUR: Maybe a year or so ago there was some suggestion of changing the requirements for homeschooling, in particular the requirements for when you first start homeschooling. Have you done any more work on that?

Ms Berry: We have been consulting carefully with the community about those proposed changes to make sure everybody is clear on what it means and that people do not get the wrong impression about the changes that have been introduced. That is continuing. I think we said earlier we are hoping to get that onto the program in the Assembly very soon, but we just want to make sure everybody is comfortable with

what is happening there.

MR PETTERSSON: Reference was made earlier to a new partnership with the University of Canberra. What are the actual courses on offer?

Ms Berry: This is a partnership. It is not so much a courses partnership but more a partnership of excellence, if you like. We already have the university affiliated schools program across five schools. This is about expanding that program. I might be confusing this, sorry. Are you talking about the H course?

MR PETTERSSON: No.

Ms Berry: Are you talking about the affiliated UC program?

MR PETTERSSON: Yes.

Ms Berry: Yes. Nobody knows what they are talking about. I quickly note that this partnership with the University of Canberra is across affiliated schools. We have five schools and we are expanding that to 20. That partnership will mean that teachers will be able to get direct support from the university and bring that expertise, those up-to-date, state-of-the-art teaching methods into the classroom.

We were talking earlier today about those teacher mentors, more people having eyes on the classroom. It is not so much what is being taught but how it is being taught. That is the partnership with the University of Canberra through the affiliated schools program. The other part is the courses that are on offer, which is similar to the H course. Ross, can you provide some detail about those? I beg your pardon, Mr Pettersson. There are two answers to the one question.

Mr Hawkins: Yes, the minister is right. We have been deepening our relationship with UC. The affiliate school program is one part of that. We have now started the engagement with them around what an alternative extension program will look like, beginning in 2021. We now have an 18-month period to be working with them around the offerings. We met with the deans of the health faculty, the education faculty and the STEM faculty recently to talk through what some of those offerings might look like. We are now to do some work to understand what it is that kids that are currently in year 8 might be looking at in the future for year 10. We have about 18 months to work through the kind of program design for what those extension programs might look like for 2020.

MR PETTERSSON: I take it that they are going to look somewhat like what has been offered at ANU previously? There might be a music course, a maths course or a physics course.

Mr Hawkins: No, there would be a distinctly different offering. There is no competition, effectively. ANU will still consider their offerings in physics, in languages and in maths. The offerings for UC would look different. They might be in areas of allied health, in psychology, in design, in architecture and in a range of other areas. That is what we have been exploring with UC. It is effectively just to broaden the range of extension programs we have on offer right across our system.

MR PETTERSSON: Right; good idea.

MR WALL: Is that the H course offering? That differs from what you were talking about, minister, which is the school partnerships.

Ms Berry: Affiliated school, yes.

MR WALL: In respect of the school partnerships you mentioned, there are currently five schools. You are looking at broadening that out to 20.

Ms Berry: Twenty, yes.

MR WALL: What are the additional 15 schools?

Mr Hawkins: The program that you are referring to is our affiliated school program. We are currently working with 25 schools across the system. Five of those are what we call full program and 20 of those are part of the broader program. In all of those schools, UC is currently running placements for pre-service teachers to come in and actually spend more time in the classroom in years 2 to 3 to get a level of experience and exposure to what teaching really looks like and feels like, rather than solely being based in a lecture room.

MR WALL: Are the five schools—

Mr Hawkins: The five are at UC: Kaleen, Lake Ginninderra, Maribyrnong, Kaleen and Giralang. It is three primaries and two high schools.

MR WALL: How will that then differ for the other schools?

Mr Hawkins: Basically, under our affiliated model and relationship with UC, there are different component parts to the program. Those five schools are also deeply engaged with our teachers as researchers program, on the basis of working with them this year to develop that capability for teachers in those schools to become researchers so that we can actually then work through, with them, action-based research or what that looks like in the classroom for next year. I suppose that there is a kind of extra level of relationship that UC has with those five above the other 20.

MR WALL: How is that relationship formulised? Is it just an MOU? Is there a fee for service involved one way or the other?

Mr Hawkins: Correct. There was a budget bid. I think it was \$4.5 million last year. Part of that is actually to fund the research. Part of that is to fund us for our teaching staff. There is also an element to this around the scholarship program that we put in place with UC. We funded 30 teachers within our system to do a masters scholarship with UC for the next two or three years.

MR WALL: My new question probably continues on a similar train. Which schools currently offer the International Baccalaureate and which schools currently offer the Cambridge program, which I know a couple of the colleges are utilising.

Mr Hawkins: Yes.

MR WALL: Where specifically are they and what is—

Mr Hawkins: I am going to have to take on notice which schools specifically have IB. We need to check.

MR WALL: The question following on from that is: is there any work being done to extend the use of those programs to other campuses?

Ms Brighton: Our core focus is on ensuring that there is quality teaching and learning. That quality teaching and learning does not need to be anchored in a program like the International Baccalaureate or the Cambridge program. There are particular forms and structures around how the curriculum is being delivered. The majority of our schools follow the Australian curriculum. Our focus is on making sure that the teachers as practitioners are really strong without needing the anchoring into a broader initiative or a broader offering like the International Baccalaureate.

Off the top of my head, I cannot tell you how many schools are associated with the International Baccalaureate, but I think there are two schools in the ACT that are connected with the Cambridge program.

Ms McMahon: They are both in Tuggeranong.

MR WALL: Yes. I know one is Erindale.

Ms McMahon: Yes, that is right, and Wanniasa Hills Primary School. IB runs several programs, commencing with the primary years program, which is for students aged three through to 12. That is run at North Ainslie, Red Hill, Forrest, Gold Creek, and Miles Franklin. The middle years program, which is a high school program—for students who are 12 years through to about 16 years—is run at Gold Creek, Melba Copland and Telopea. Then the IB diploma program, which is the graduating certificate program for schools, is at Melba Copland and Narrabundah College.

MR WALL: Who determines whether or not those programs are rolled out in the schools? Is that a directorate decision? Is it a principal decision?

Ms Brighton: It is our expectation that those decisions are made with the directorate.

MR WALL: Who ultimately has the final say?

Ms Brighton: The directorate works closely with the school and it is the directorate's decision about the broader policy position around implementation of the curriculum. Do you want to add to that?

Ms Efthymiades: Yes, I can add that in respect of IB programs, the IB is not a separate recognised curriculum in Australia. ACARA assesses alternative curricula. IB is the vehicle through which the Australian curriculum is delivered. It is not a separate thing. It is really a packaging of the same content as the Australian

curriculum.

MR WALL: Yes, but I guess it extends students typically in a different way from the standard curriculum delivered in schools. I am just curious as to who initiates and determines whether or not that is offered in a school.

Ms Efthymiades: Sure. Of course, an extension can be done through a whole lot of different ways, too, so—

MR WALL: Yes, it can, but these are, as you said, frameworks in which it can be delivered.

Ms Efthymiades: Yes.

MR WALL: I still do not think I am much clearer. Is it the directorate or the principal that has that final call?

Ms Brighton: Ultimately, it is the directorate that makes a decision about those sorts of things. But Ms McMahon can talk a little about what that form, that frame and that structure looks like in terms of our expectations of schools.

Ms McMahon: IB is a framework in which learning is organised. In respect of your point about it being more rigorous and extending kids, it certainly is an inquiry-based program which allows some personalisation for kids. It also allows content to be taught through a conceptual base so that you are looking at change rather than necessarily the water cycle, for example. Kids are able to make those connections between disciplines and within disciplines so that they are broadening their understanding conceptually rather than just through a knowledge base. It also has an ethics or a values base to it. In fact, throughout all four programs of the IB there are a certain number of attributes that students develop as citizens within their community.

THE CHAIR: We are almost out of time. We will suspend now and return at 3.30 pm. Thank you.

Hearing suspended from 3.13 to 3.30 pm.

Appearances:

Office of the Commissioner for Sustainability and the Environment
Auty, Professor Kate, Commissioner
Dickson, Ms Kirilly, Director, Investigations

THE CHAIR: Could you confirm, when you first speak, that you have read and understood the privilege statement? Thank you. My first question is: there has been a significant increase in funding from 2018-19 to 2019-20. Why is that?

Prof Auty: I have read the privilege statement. What always happens with the budget for my office is that there is a rollover for the state of the environment report, and we have always received that because the state of the environment report is not completed in a three-year cycle. It is completed in a four-year cycle.

Last time we were here, we had in fact been invited to put in a budget submission because there was some suggestion that we were not going to get the rollover. We did put in a budget submission and we were unsuccessful with that. There were then ongoing discussions about whether we would be getting the rollover. At one stage it was suggested that we would not be, but we now are. I understand that the figures that you see before you reflect the fact that we get that rollover in relation to the state of the environment report.

THE CHAIR: In previous years your office's budget has spent less than what has been budgeted. Is that because of that report?

Prof Auty: It is because of that. This year, out of the budget we are taking the new work for the web design, we are taking work for the ecological footprint, which is something that we do every four years, and there will also be some consultancies in relation to the state of the environment report. The expenditure starts to pick up because it is the state of the environment reporting cycle.

MS LE COUTEUR: This rolls into what I was going to say. When will it be ready?

Prof Auty: The state of the environment report?

MS LE COUTEUR: Absolutely, yes. We are waiting.

Prof Auty: It will be with the minister, as is required, in December this year. That is in accordance with the statutory requirements. The minister then has six clear sitting days to table the document, which will be in February; then there are six months after that for the recommendations to be responded to. We have been pursuing the ecological footprint, which you have been very interested in, Ms Le Couteur.

MS LE COUTEUR: Yes, that was my other question.

Prof Auty: In relation to that there have been some delays, but I am told by my team member Sean Grimes that we have got to the stage where we will have that document provided to us in the next few weeks. The delays have not been a result of any work in

my office; rather, they are to do with the consultant who has been contracted to do the work.

MS LE COUTEUR: You will get it in the next few weeks. When will we get it?

Prof Auty: You will get the ecological footprint as part of the state of the environment report.

MS LE COUTEUR: Not until February?

Prof Auty: Not until it is tabled, no.

MS LE COUTEUR: This will be your first state of the environment report, I understand. Are there any changes that you think you will be making in it?

Prof Auty: We will adhere to the way in which state of the environment reports are always presented, in that there will be numerous chapters. The chapters will be along the lines of air, water, biodiversity and human settlement. Human settlement will include questions of energy, water and waste.

There will also be, in this particular state of the environment report, a starting-out chapter which I am provisionally calling Indigenous Kambri. In that particular chapter we will be dealing with issues of cultural heritage and Aboriginal people's perception of that here in the ACT. We have taken on board an Indigenous consultant to pick up that work. Brad Moggridge is a well-known Wiradjuri water scientist who is doing his PhD at the moment with the University of Canberra. He has spoken extensively about Aboriginal people and water issues. That is one of the changes that will be made.

The other thing that we will be doing is that we are intending to produce an interactive web design. That web design is coming together as we speak. That will be under embargo until such time as the minister has tabled the report in February because it would not be appropriate for it to be released any earlier. But I can tell you, in relation to that, that I now have working in the office a person with some GIS skills, so we have mapping skills in the office, which we did not have previously.

I am also pleased that the state of the environment reporter that I have working in the office, Sean Grimes, has an extensive background in state of the environment reporting in the UK, New South Wales and Victoria. He is also a UC graduate and worked, when he first came out of the University of Canberra, with the CRC for freshwater ecology in New South Wales. I am pleased that I have a team that has come together in relation to that.

Also, in relation to that web design, we have taken on board, from the School of Art and Design, Mitchell Whitelaw and Geoff Hinchcliffe, who did some work with the ANU climate institute, specifically to do with the coaster they put together about climate issues. They will be involved in what is happening with that web design. The consultants that we have taken on board to produce that web presence are a Canberra firm called Icelab. They are quite experienced in what we require of them.

MS LE COUTEUR: You said it is going to have a GIS capability. Does that mean

you might end up being another couple of layers on ACTmapi?

Prof Auty: We are hoping that is what is happening. That is what we are negotiating at the moment with the web designers. We have two web pages. We have the Squiz Matrix page, which is the ordinary web presence which you will see if you go to the commissioner's page at any time, and there will a subsequent page which will be sitting in, under and with that, which will be the state of the environment page.

Sometimes when those state of the environment pages are put together they are simply the uploading of the PDF. We are working on ensuring that that is not just what we are doing; we are trying to get interactivity into that. There is a lot of work being done in the office at the moment on making sure that we can do the best we can with the skills we have available to us.

MS LE COUTEUR: I know you said we are not going to see the whole report until February, but are there any key findings that it is possible to discuss at this point, or do we just have to hold our breath?

Prof Auty: I would prefer not to at this time. I can give you an example of how we have been progressing the whole of the report. We have taken an extensive period of time to come together on what we describe as the appropriate indicators for the report. There has been a lot of consultation with the various departments and directorates involved in that. Those consultations have continued for the purpose of data provision. None of this happens overnight. It is actually quite a complex undertaking and it requires a lot of discussion and negotiation about what it is that we require.

We have had the usual discussions with conservation research, EPSDD, Transport and all of the other directorates who have always contributed data to the report. That is how we are progressing at this time as well.

MS LAWDER: I have a few questions about *The Heroic and the Dammed*. The government has recently responded to the recommendations and, for example, did not accept your recommendation about the water abstraction charge. What is your understanding of the reasons the government did not accept that recommendation?

Prof Auty: We are simply provided with the same response that you are. We are not given anything additional to what is provided to the Legislative Assembly about the fact that that report has been noted rather than accepted. The recommendation was made on the basis that our consultations, over the time that we produced that report, continued to raise with us the issue of needing ongoing financing for work that needed to be done in relation to the lower Cotter. It was not made lightly; you would not expect it would be. Over the time of putting the report together, there were, as I say, extensive discussions with a range of experts about the need for there to be ongoing financing of the restoration program up there, and a monitoring and evaluation framework, which we have gone to some trouble to include in the report.

I might say that I called it *The Heroic and the Dammed* because it is a heroic undertaking. There is an awful lot of work to be done up there. And of course, it is a dammed river, which is why that title lent itself to the report. But I did not do it lightly and I did not do it in derisory fashion. It was simply to say that what is required up

there is heroic. It will involve numerous directorates. It will involve operational people and planning. It will need to be ongoing, and that requires finances. To that end, the water abstraction charge, which is there for the purposes of water, was one of the ways in which I saw that there could be ongoing financing. That is the reason for the recommendation.

MS LAWDER: You said there was a risk of the Cotter water becoming unusable if the recommendations were not accepted and implemented. Is that if all five were not?

Prof Auty: I would not use the word unusable. I would say that we have taken some trouble to describe the risks associated with not doing the work that was suggested to us, appropriate to the reporting process. I would say there are risks. To the extent that there are always risks in a climate change situation such as we find ourselves in, with the erosions up there and with the fire issues that are attendant on how that particular landscape is managed, those risks are ongoing. Each one of those risks has the potential to impact water supply. The report goes into that in some considerable depth, as does the monitoring and evaluation framework which we put together and which is in the report itself.

MS LAWDER: The report also makes mention of the danger of dumped vehicles in the area.

Prof Auty: Yes.

MS LAWDER: Presumably that requires legislative change. Is that, to your knowledge, what has already been proposed in the change to the Litter Act that has been tabled?

Prof Auty: No. I have been told that that matter is under consideration, and I have got the response in respect of that particular recommendation. I will say about that recommendation that that issue was raised in every field trip that we took in respect of the lower Cotter. It was raised because it was an ongoing issue. As this report was provided to the minister, I think none of us will forget that the Pierces Creek fire occurred at that same time. It is outside this particular catchment, or outside this area, but it occurred that night or just the afternoon beforehand.

So it is certainly a risk. It is a risk that was raised with me. On occasion when we were involved in field trips, we were shown areas where there had been some burning associated with abandoned cars. It was explained to me that there was a need for far better coordination to make sure that when a car was abandoned it was removed before it could be incendiary. That is why that recommendation is there.

I have described that to my team as our orphan recommendation, because it is not one that ordinarily sits well in a report such as this, where we are asked to talk about biodiversity and restoration. It is there because it was raised with me persistently by those with whom we consulted.

MS LAWDER: Have you had much discussion about the risks either way with restricting vehicular access to some areas around the Cotter versus recommendations after the 2003 bushfires that some of the fire trails had become difficult to navigate

because of overgrowing and bushes; they were not used very much, and they were not maintained as well. It is risks either way.

Prof Auty: There are risks either way. That was pointed out to me. Going over the area, it is very clear that there have been very significant endeavours to block off some of the roads or some of the paths that people have been using. It is also clear that there is a need to make sure that they are open for the purposes of fire hazard reduction and also dealing with what might be wildfires in that particular part of the landscape.

It was raised with me as a complex problem that required ongoing analysis and assessment, on the ground monitoring, care and planning, and thinking through how you might keep people out of certain areas but how you make it possible for the relevant emergency vehicles to be capable of getting in and dealing with issues. It is complex.

One of the reasons why this is called *The Heroic and the Dammed* is that, apart from the efforts that have been made there, it is an extraordinarily complex landscape for what appears to be an area that is so close to a city and is so well known by people. People think that they know that landscape very well—and many people probably do—who are what I would describe as just ordinary people in Canberra. But it is complex, and it requires complicated responses. That is one of the reasons why the monitoring and evaluation framework to deal with that is a significant issue. None of that, I am sorry, answers your question in any simple way, but I do not think it is possible to do that.

MS LAWDER: When you looked at those risks, did you use a traditional risk matrix approach to weigh up the pros and cons of each option?

Prof Auty: We did not use a risk matrix, but we have suggested, in the monitoring and evaluation framework and across the report, that those risks need to be assessed and they need to be the subject of discussions amongst those who are involved in managing that landscape.

THE CHAIR: The same report refers to the failure of the New South Wales government to deal with the issue of brumbies. When your office was writing the report, did you come across any evidence at the time of writing to suggest that the Cotter catchment was worse off because of the New South Wales government's actions?

Prof Auty: I was not on any field trip where I witnessed the impact of brumbies, but we certainly were shown what was happening with pigs and deer. They were matters that were raised persistently. We were also acquainted with what people said was the concerning risk of brumbies crossing from New South Wales to the ACT. There is nothing to stop them from doing so, basically. At one stage, I and my office were part of a field trip that did go out and have a look at what was concerning about where brumbies might find their way into Namadgi, for instance, but I did not witness any personally myself, and it is not the subject of any commentary, because that is not what we saw. It is what we have been acquainted with as a potential risk, and a real risk.

THE CHAIR: Going to table 26, your accountability indicators, point c, “undertake complaints generated investigations”, the table says they are complete, 100 per cent. How many complaints generated investigations were undertaken in 2018-19?

Prof Auty: Ms Dickson is the person who deals with complaints. She is the director of complaints and investigations in the office.

Ms Dickson: I acknowledge that I have read the privilege statement and have understood its content. As Kate indicated, I head up the complaints functions in the office. Over the last 12 months, we have continued with a lot of business improvement processes and looked at how to capture and report different business metrics to make sure that we are adequately addressing complaints.

This year we received nine potential and real complaints. Six of those were potential and three were real. The reason we are starting to capture potential versus real is that the office does invest significant time in following up an inquiry and making sure that we have the best and most up-to-date information on the issue, should it proceed to a complaint. There is still a fair bit of work the office does before a complaint form is lodged.

We have had three formal complaints. One is closed; two are under inquiry at the moment. Our first action is to forward the complaint to the relevant directorates for an initial response. Then we proceed from there. To get to the point of your question, we have not had any formal investigations for complaints this year, but we do spend significant time making sure that we are able to respond to the constituent’s matter.

THE CHAIR: You have not received any formal complaints, so no investigations were generated?

Ms Dickson: We have received three. One was inquired into and closed. It was a matter of the independence of experts brought into the matter, so it was not something which we needed to launch a full investigation into. The other two are under inquiry and may well go through to investigation once we get those responses back.

MS LE COUTEUR: The ACT recently declared there was a climate emergency. What impact do you think this will have or should have?

Prof Auty: On my reporting?

MS LE COUTEUR: You can take that as wide as you want.

Prof Auty: The declaration brings the ACT into line with others who have also said we are dealing with a climate emergency, so it aligns the ACT with others who are showing leadership in respect of that issue. It also will be the subject of commentary in the state of the environment report because we will be dealing with climate change issues, and you would expect that to be the case.

In respect of what the office is currently doing, I have instituted another procedure to produce issues papers. They are not investigations, they are not complaints driven and

they are not associated with state of the environment or other ministerial reporting. There are two issues papers currently subject to further consultation. The first is to do with the circular economy as one of the issues that flows directly out of what we do about a climate emergency. It is not just about waste; it is about supply chain issues and the associated economic impacts of that.

The other is a piece of work which is on climate change in sport. The reason I have asked the team to complete a piece of work on that is because it is not just about whether we are drought proofing our turf and our ovals; it is about how communities are going to deal with climate change realities from the point of view of health and sport and across demographics and the whole of the ACT.

I have instituted those proceedings because I see that there are other places where we ought to be thinking about what we do about declarations such as the climate emergency that has been made, short of simply repeating that declaration. We need to be responding to that declaration in a way that brings reports to the public's attention and assists the public and the government and anybody else who is interested. On the issue of sport, that would be those organisations involved in doing something about those particular concerns.

To the extent that my office responds to these matters, the climate emergency will be the subject of commentary in the reports we produce and it will be the subject of ongoing investigation when it is appropriate for that to be the case.

We have taken very seriously the need to be engaging the public with what we do. I have had the team go off and get some skilling up in respect of Esri story maps, the GIS story maps some of you will be very familiar with. We now have story maps on the website in respect of Molonglo, the lower Cotter and also in respect of the plastic bags work. I assure you that in relation to that we have had some really significant interest in what we are telling the community about climate and other issues.

For instance, in relation to the plastic bags report 1,000 people have looked at that. In relation to Molonglo 1,900 people have looked at the story map which takes them to the very significant report that is attached to that. We have had 500 people look at the story map in relation to the lower Cotter, which also brings people back to the very significant report. They are, in effect, a rotating presence on the web we currently use to communicate issues to the public. We will be using story maps in the state of the environment report as well to try and communicate the message.

In answer to your question, it is a very serious and grave matter and we recognise that in the office. We are trying to find ways to make sure we communicate that to the widest possible public and we are doing it in every possible way we can.

MS LAWDER: You mentioned earlier you have someone on board now with GIS skills. So the ones you talked about—the plastic bag ban, the lower Cotter and Molonglo—were they done in house?

Prof Auty: Yes, all of them are done in house. The plastic bags one was done by Ms Dickson. The Molonglo one was undertaken by Ms Farrelly, who is on maternity leave, and the lower Cotter one was undertaken by Caitlin Roy. Additional to those

staff members I now have Ellie Mosley in the office, at a level 6, who is the person with the GIS skills. She has also had the story mapping skill up and so has Sean Grimes, who is the director of the state of the environment report process.

We spent \$16,000 on getting that skilling up into the office. The reason I have done that is that I see it as a means of maintaining the skill in the office, developing and demonstrating that we can do that work, making sure we are assisting others in the ACT public service to understand the viability of that sort of work and, of course, communicating to the public. I regard it as a really significant and serious part of the work of the office.

MS LAWDER: With respect to your decision to implement the story map aspect, what sort of research is there about how effective it is as a communication tool?

Prof Auty: Story maps have been used by a vast array of people. We first became aware of them through the ANU. A scholar there called Bruce Doran has done some work for the Yawuru people in Broome about bus routes, for instance. He indicated to the office that there was a way of making sure people were able to explore the issues with the bus route, short of a big report. It led to the change in the bus routes for the purposes of people using the buses in Broome. That is one very clear example of it.

Esri story maps are being used extensively by all environment reporters, to my knowledge at this time, and we are basically just one of many. We also, in getting into the story-mapping exercise, have been able to use licences that have been made available to EPSDD, so it has not cost us money to do that, as I understand it.

MS LAWDER: You referred earlier to the number of people accessing the work. I think you said 1,900 in one example. How does that compare to the metrics of non-story mapping?

Prof Auty: It is very difficult for me to tell you that. I wish I could be clearer about it. We now have a number of people following our Facebook page; so people go to that, where we take them to the big reports. We also have people following our Twitter page. The numbers are over 1,000, but I can find them for you specifically if you need them. We know social media draws people to those particular documents. The story maps are not a comic; they are a serious enterprise about communicating the content of those reports and bringing people to the relevant research in a way that is engaging.

The Molonglo story map is now on the ANU undergraduate curriculum. Dr Phil Gibbons, the associate professor, has installed it in that. The lower Cotter work, I am given to understand, is also being used by ANU undergraduates in Professor Peter Kanowski's course, and the plastic bags work is being used at Actsmart in the schools curriculum.

THE CHAIR: We are over time, so we will finish there.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability, Minister for Corrections and Justice Health, Minister for Justice, Consumer Affairs and Road Safety and Minister for Mental Health

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate

Ponton, Mr Ben, Director-General

Rutledge, Mr Geoffrey, Deputy Director-General, Sustainability and the Built Environment

Simmons, Mr Craig, Chief Operating Officer

McGlynn, Mr Gene, Executive Group Manager, Climate Change and Sustainability

Harding, Mr Daniel, Senior Director, Energy Markets and Renewables

Mozqueira, Mr Antonio, Director, Climate Change Policy

Malouf, Ms Ros, Senior Director, Sustainability Programs

Harmer, Ms Antonia, Director, Energy Efficiency Improvement Scheme

THE CHAIR: Welcome. Before you speak, can you please confirm that you have read and understood the privilege statement in front of you. There was an ABC piece about concerns over poor quality solar panels on roofs around Australia. Is the government aware of this occurring in the ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: I am aware of the report. The ACT has a quite rigorous inspection system. Every system that is installed in the ACT is inspected, whereas I believe in other jurisdictions it is a sort of sample audit. We have not seen anything like the level of reporting that was conveyed in that ABC report here in the territory.

MS LE COUTEUR: What accreditation is given to solar panel producers or sellers in the ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: There are no producers in the ACT, so the stores bring them. In terms of the accrediting of installers—

Mr Harding: I have read and understood the privilege card. Access Canberra, particularly through the electrical inspectorate, have a licensing regime for authorised electricians. Anyone undertaking the installation of solar technology is required to be a licensed electrician in Canberra. So there is obviously a safeguard there for the installation particularly. Then, as the minister alluded to in his previous answer, the electrical inspectorate still has a 100 per cent inspections protocol for solar installations in Canberra. So there are quite thorough safeguards both for the individuals and for the individual activity.

MS LE COUTEUR: Minister, given that we are very close to having 100 per cent renewable electricity, what are we doing now in terms of energy efficiency programs? I appreciate that they are still continuing, and I think this is a good thing. But in prioritising or accounting for them are we looking at them in terms of where we are going to save the most dollars or where we are going to save the most CO₂, given that, despite the fact that we are buying renewable electricity, we are still connected to New South Wales. How do we do this?

Mr Rattenbury: There are a couple of elements to your question. First, yes, we do need to keep doing energy efficiency, for a couple of reasons. One is the obvious social and economic benefits of people having both warm and cost-effective houses or businesses, whichever perspective you are looking at it from. That is an important part of it. The second part of it is that in maintaining our 100 per cent renewable electricity target, if we had a free-for-all on electricity usage then we would need to keep buying more and more electricity. So it is of value to the ACT to also work on those energy efficiency programs so that we are not having to augment the grid too much and all the other things that go with uncontrolled electricity growth.

Around accounting for greenhouse emissions and what we prioritise next, we are currently undertaking a review of the energy efficiency improvement scheme. We have had a range of public consultations on that. You will see a couple of elements of that going forward. One will be that we will change how we measure the energy efficiency improvement scheme from an emissions basis to a draws basis, or an energy unit basis, so that you can still gauge activities effectively. But also within the EEIS you have seen a number of products where you can no longer transition to a more efficient gas product. You can now no longer access gas products, because we are encouraging people to go down the all-electric path. That is the broad direction we are going in in that scheme.

MS LE COUTEUR: Will that mean you will also have more electrical energy improvement? I am speaking specifically about a number of cases where people have electric heaters, which are not insanely efficient, and would like to install split systems, particularly because some of these people are in residences that are west-facing apartments, where overheating is a serious issue, and they have not been able to be assisted by the energy efficiency scheme.

Mr Rutledge: I am across the privilege statement and agree with that. I will talk a bit about what we have learned in the energy efficiency improvement scheme. On the issue that you talk of, we are finding that more and more. Both the reverse cycle and the split systems are becoming much more efficient than they were before, and a lot of people's gas ducted or gas heaters are getting close to end of life. The feedback that I am getting from tradespeople doing installations and also from consumers is that we are not seeing the same gas connections, or we are seeing people move off gas at the residential level.

When we did some community consultation around the extension of the EEIS, what came through loud and clear was about what we can do to help people with either inefficient gas or inefficient electric. So the government has agreed to extend the scheme to 2030, because it is a very popular scheme, and then that will line up with our interim targets. The focus of that is now becoming, as much as efficient electricity, getting off gas.

Ms Harmer: I have read and understood the privilege statement. As the minister said, we are undertaking a review of the energy efficiency improvement scheme. Due to the 100 per cent renewable electricity target, we will be changing to an energy metric, which means there will be more uptake of efficient electric replacements in the future. There are also opportunities for low income households to save on energy through an

energy efficiency improvements in public housing program, which will replace inefficient electric heaters with more efficient electric reverse cycle air conditioners.

MS LE COUTEUR: When will that happen? I have some people who would really like to take advantage of it.

Ms Harmer: That is actually occurring at the moment.

MS LE COUTEUR: When did that start?

Ms Harmer: It was in the 2018-19 budget and it is a three-year initiative.

MS LE COUTEUR: I know people who have been refused. I know public housing tenants who have tried to have an electric heater replaced with a split system and been refused. They were told that there was no way this would happen. That is why I am asking when it started.

Ms Harmer: I think what has happened is they focused on gas to electric first and then they are transitioning into the electric to electric reverse cycle. So they should be eligible now. I am happy to take that—

Mr Rutledge: Ms Le Couteur, if you have some specifics, between ourselves and Housing we can work that out.

MS LE COUTEUR: I do have a specific example, yes.

Mr Rutledge: Then maybe we can do that.

MS LE COUTEUR: Over the summer his place was, I think, above 43 degrees. It was—

Mr Rutledge: It was a ferocious summer too.

MS LE COUTEUR: It was atrocious, in an almost new apartment. I thought that, as you said, that was not the case. Given that we have moved to almost 100 per cent renewable electricity, what are we now doing to ensure that new government buildings, at least, do not use gas as their main form of power?

Mr Rattenbury: We are working on rolling that out as we go to new buildings. I think I mentioned recently that we have just opened our first all-electric school in the ACT, the Margaret Hendry School at Taylor. That is a great case study, because we will now demonstrate it. I will shortly be confirming a new building that the government is leasing. It is about to be constructed for us. It will be an all-electric building.

Across the road here, at the north building, when they replaced the boiler system they went to an electric-based system, which has produced both considerable cost savings and considerable greenhouse savings. We are at the point where the technology is just maturing. We are at the cutting edge of getting new technologies in and are increasingly proving that it is possible. The residential scale is, I think, quite well

proven. The commercial scale has been a bit harder.

MS LE COUTEUR: Residential scale in our Territory Plan still requires us to install gas in the suburbs.

Mr Rattenbury: You are right, currently.

Mr Rutledge: If I might add another couple of examples, through our carbon neutral government fund, a couple of new retrofits we are doing: at the moment at the Tuggeranong police station and the Tuggeranong bus depot we are working with them to move from their gas to all electric. We are converting gas to all electric and solar panels on both those buildings. We are still looking, as we have for some time in the carbon neutral government program, for opportunities for cost savings but also moving to all electric. Each one of these seems to be a demonstration for both the building managers and the commercial builders. As the minister said, we have done the school, we have done an office block, we have got a new office block. We are now doing a police station and a bus station. We keep rolling out, with the focus on moving from gas to electric.

Mr Ponton: I have read and understood the privilege card. In terms of the question that you asked relating to what the government is doing and educating directorates, at the strategic board level this is a matter that is regularly raised. I regularly take papers and reminders to my colleagues at strategic board to make sure that the directors-general understand this important government policy and priority and when directors are thinking about leasing any new buildings or looking to relocate this is front of mind, and also promoting the carbon neutral government fund.

MR PETTERSSON: How many zero emission vehicles are in the ACT government fleet these days?

Mr Rattenbury: We have an answer for you.

Mr Mozqueira: There are 17 electric vehicles that are registered in the ACT at the moment.

MR PETTERSSON: In the government fleet?

Mr Mozqueira: In government.

MR PETTERSSON: How many electric bikes?

Mr Mozqueira: If I may, I have that information here. We used eight in the trial which finished in 2018. What we found from that trial was that they were effective and they were used. It has been an interesting thing with the e-bikes that what we have seen is that often people try the e-bikes as part of the fleet and then they go out and purchase their own e-bike for private use. It has actually been an interesting promotional tool for e-bike retailers across the territory.

MS CODY: Doesn't the government do some sort of salary sacrificing?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, we did introduce that last year as part of our overall zero emission vehicle strategy and we have now got a provider that does that. It makes it just that bit easier for some people because the up-front cost of them is in the order of \$1,800 to \$2,500, depending on the model.

MR PETTERSSON: What work has been done to widen the number of zero emission vehicles that people can utilise in the ACT?

Mr Rattenbury: I think that is a fair question. It is very much part of our zero emission vehicle strategy. We have adopted the target to have the ACT government fleet, basically all the vehicles, to be zero vehicles within three years, subject to applicability. There are some specialist vehicles but certainly all our—

THE CHAIR: Subject to what, sorry?

Mr Rattenbury: Applicability, being suitable for purpose. Obviously there are some particular things—the rangers going over the top of Namadgi and those kinds of things—but for our standard, community health nurses, education department officials, these sort of things, the sedans will be replaced.

As part of that there will be three things. One is that people will see more vehicles around, which I think is part of the public education process. The second is that, as vehicles come out of the lease cycle they will become available as second-hand vehicles. The third is that the ACT government committing to this target has generated real interest from the car-making sector. We have had all the major car importers and makers in Australia come and see us to talk about being involved in this arrangement. I think what it is doing is giving some market confidence to make it worth it for them to import vehicles. The great barrier in Australia still is that there are not many vehicles available.

We are taking delivery of the Hyundai Ioniqs, which are in the price range of a common family sedan as a new vehicle. I think they are retailing for \$43,000 or \$44,000. That is still, for some people, a very expensive car. But there are a lot of people who spend that on a car. The market will start to change as those sorts of vehicles become available.

MR PETTERSSON: And electric scooters?

Mr Rattenbury: You will be pleased to know that we are just about to launch the consultation paper. We are going to have a brief period of community consultation. There is a bit of work to do on what rules we should put around it. We have been looking at other jurisdictions. They have different speed limits; they have things like geofencing requirements, hours that you can and cannot use them. In some jurisdictions they do not allow them to be used after 10 pm so that people who have been drinking do not get on these scooters and try to ride them home, for example. Tomorrow I will release that community discussion paper. We hope to have the regulation in place well before the end of this year.

MS CODY: Have you kept track of any pedestrian incidents where there have been e-bikes and pedestrians colliding, for want of a better word?

Mr Rattenbury: Not specifically on e-bikes, I am not aware. Mostly with my road safety hat on I tend to know that, more than through climate change. But I am not aware of any specific data where we have delineated e-bikes versus regular bikes.

As you, I am sure, are aware, there is real tension out there between pedestrians and cyclists, as there is between cyclists and cars and the like. What we are doing is trying to run protocol etiquette campaigns with cyclists particularly. In that order of vulnerability, pedestrians are the most vulnerable of the road users. I am sure we have all seen it, but unfortunately there are some bike riders who are not considerate; equally there are some pedestrians who are not considerate. The bottom line is: if everyone was a bit more considerate to each other we would all be a lot better off.

MS CODY: Are the e-bikes mainly used on the bike paths and the footpaths?

Mr Rattenbury: No. You see them on the road as well. That would go to the individual users. For example, coming from EPSDD to the city, you could come down the Northbourne bike lane or the footpath or use the back route through the suburban streets. I think different people would make different choices.

MS CODY: So there is no policy, as long as it is safety first?

Mr Rattenbury: No, I do not think so. You have to sign up to be able to use the e-bikes, and there is a little induction program—I think it is a half-hour program—where you are shown how to use them. But there are no requirements about where you can ride them in the way you have asked about.

Mr Rutledge: If you have ever been on an e-bike, the first little bit is quite challenging for people, because you instantly go from zero to 20. So we do ask that people do some level of training—we sign them up to road rules et cetera—and make sure that they have either brought their helmet from home or borrowed a helmet from work. Mr Simmons, do you want to add anything to the e-bike discussion? I could think of no greater champion of e-bikes than Mr Simmons.

MS CODY: Mr Simmons loves estimates and telling us everything.

Mr Simmons: I have read the privilege statement on one or two occasions. As was mentioned earlier, we had eight bikes for the trial. We have recently purchased three new bikes to add to that. We are redistributing some of the bikes. One of the bikes from Dame Pattie Menzies House is going out to our nature conservation people at Mitchell. We also have a couple of e-bikes in the parks and conservation service.

Going to the bikes we tracked for the length of the trial to see how much use they got, ours and the TCCS bikes had the highest level of use over the course of the trial. They proved quite popular. It was my method of transport to get here today. It is my predominant method of transport between Dickson and here, when I am not riding the light rail. I have done that on the odd occasion as well, but I have to say I do prefer the e-bikes.

We are trying to expand the fleet, to encourage the number of people who use them

but also to reduce the number of pool vehicles we have. Part of this process of getting the three new e-bikes was to reduce by one the size of our fleet for transport around the city. So that will drop. When the next vehicle comes up for renewal, it will not be replaced, because we have a bike presence. With the light rail and with e-bikes, we think that is a more sustainable form of transport for us.

As I said, there is a short course that we do to make sure that people can ride the bikes successfully. It is a very different technique when you are riding an e-bike. With these new bikes, it takes about a crank and a half before the motor kicks in. When it kicks in, if you are not prepared for it, it can be quite a surprise. We make sure that people are aware of that.

It is a very effective form of transport. Personal use, as was described, varies in the method by which routes are taken. I am not a big fan of riding down Northbourne Avenue. I also appreciate the white line on the road. It does not provide as much protection as going down the back street, which I also find a bit more enjoyable as a ride, but it has been very effective for those intermediate distances—certainly for Dickson to the city.

We have a bike with the office of the commissioner for sustainability, to make that distance from the CIT at Belconnen, where they are located, over O'Connor Ridge just a bit easier for them. That is an effective form of transport for them as well. Once again, it is about being able to reduce the amount of car uses we have. And, except for the really cold days—fortunately we have not yet had a really cold day—it is quite a nice way to drive around.

MS LAWDER: In your action plan, on page 3, it talks about the shift to zero emissions vehicles already being well underway. It details the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2040 in some other countries. Is the ACT considering banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars?

Mr Rattenbury: You are right to identify that issue. Since that paper was written, some countries have adopted more ambitious targets—2030, for example. And some of the car makers are now saying that they will stop making internal combustion engine vehicles, some of them within the next few years.

Going to the question of whether we would adopt that policy, we have contemplated that question, but our view is that it is not practical at this time for the ACT. Being a very small jurisdiction, it would be very difficult to implement a policy like that. We do not think it is one that we would do unilaterally; we would need to work with other jurisdictions.

MS LAWDER: It is a whole page of your eight-page action plan. What was your intent in including it if you were not planning to introduce it?

Mr Rattenbury: What we were trying to do in that was set out the fact that the world is moving in this space. At the moment our emphasis is on facilitating the uptake of electric vehicles in the ACT, focusing on things like charging stations and making sure there are recharging points in multi-unit buildings, which are there in the strategy.

As a small jurisdiction, we are conscious that our ability to shape the global car market is small. We are a taker rather than a pace setter, although, because of setting our target, we are probably more advanced than most other jurisdictions in Australia. We have been able to box above our weight in that sense.

MS CODY: What is the impact on maintenance and procurement of moving towards an electric vehicle pledge?

Mr Rattenbury: We are just starting to bring them into the fleet. As an example, we have two vehicles out at Winyu House. Minister Stephen-Smith and I were out there the other week to have a look at those. From the early data, which was admittedly only from about four to six weeks of use, they were seeing an 80 per cent reduction in running costs. And electric vehicles obviously have lower levels of maintenance, because there are fewer moving parts. Our assessment is that over a probably four-year lease cycle it is essentially cost neutral for the government to go to an EV.

MS CODY: What about the impact on the workforce? There will be mechanics that are trained in fuel combustion engines.

Mr Rattenbury: Sure. It is part of the big discussion on a just transition. We are just about to bring out our new climate change strategy; it should be ready quite soon. This sort of issue is a focus in there. We are very conscious of these sorts of transitions. There will also be new jobs, of course. For example, CIT at Fyshwick is one of the leading campuses for training people in electric vehicle use, maintenance, servicing and the like. We need to make sure that we offer those retraining opportunities as we progress. In becoming a bit of a known hub for these things, some of these opportunities are coming to the CIT. At CIT in Bruce, at least when we launched it, we had the only accredited wind training course in the Southern Hemisphere. So there is some of that first mover advantage.

MS CODY: And that battery storage stuff that they do at Bruce CIT.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Whilst an individual may not move from one to the other, we are certainly creating a range of opportunities. We need to be cognisant of those who may lose their jobs as a result of some of these changes. But as the car makers stop making internal combustion engines, we, as a government, need to make sure that we see those trends coming, which is in part an answer to your question, Ms Lawder. In flagging those strategies, we are also trying to prepare the community, if they have not done that research themselves, to see some of those trends that are coming.

MS CODY: As you said, just keep an eye on that just transition.

MS LAWDER: With emissions reduction plans generally—we heard a little bit about transport—when will you be publishing the specific plan for achieving the 2025 target? It was referred to on page 6 of the budget.

Mr Rattenbury: I expect to release that in the next few months. I was recently looking at action plan 2, so the next one will essentially be action plan 3. We have had two previous ones. It is scheduled to come out in 2021, but we will be a little bit ahead of schedule on that. I expect to have it out shortly.

We undertook some community consultation from late 2017 through to the first half of 2018. We received an enormous amount of community input. I was very encouraged by both the quality and quantity of input that we received. We had over 1,000 specific policy suggestions from members of the community, which I thought was very positive. It has taken us a little bit of time to sift through all of those suggestions, to analyse them and to work across government to get that whole-of-government coordination to bring together a strategy that the whole of government has bought into.

MS LAWDER: Will all of those public submissions be made available on the website?

Mr Rattenbury: They already are, if I remember correctly.

MS LAWDER: A lot of submissions?

Mr Rattenbury: There were. I think there is also a table on our website in which we extracted the thousand-odd specific policy suggestions and put them in an Excel sheet. It was partly so that everyone could see everyone else's ideas. There is quite an engaged community around some of this.

MS LAWDER: When you come out with your draft strategy, or an interim target?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes; we have a target for 2025. This new strategy will be all about getting us from now until 2025. It will just be the strategy. It is not coming out as a draft. Because of the extensive consultation we have done, we are just coming out with a plan.

MS LAWDER: There will not be another consultation along the—

Mr Rattenbury: No, I think it is time to get on with it.

MS LAWDER: In a *Canberra Times* article in August last year, Mr Rattenbury, you were quoted as saying that a 65 per cent reduction in emissions by 2030 would cost \$5.8 million. What makes up that figure? How did you get to that figure?

Mr Rutledge: I will ask Mr McGlynn to take us through that. As you will see on the website, some economic modelling was done for that; we then published that. Before we hold to that number, we should be clear that it was based on economic modelling. We are seeing a lot of change, and the pace of change is rapidly changing. I can think back just to the zero emission vehicles. The electric vehicle market, with vehicles available and coming to Australia, has changed in 12 months. Twelve months ago there was a lot of talk about fast charging. Now the Hyundai Ioniq that we looked at the other day just have a standard plug that you would put in your extension cord.

With the pricing of what that change will be, I am sure if we went to another economic modelling firm today we would get a different number. I am sure if we went there in another month we would get to another number. I will ask Mr McGlynn to expand on that.

Mr McGlynn: I have read the privilege statement. As Mr Rutledge said, that, as with all analyses, was based on a particular set of circumstances put together in terms of a scenario. There are an infinite number of scenarios to get to any outcome. That was based on an assumption around future paths—for example, very specific paths around the future of electric vehicles.

At the time, for example, the expectation was that electric vehicles would become cost competitive with petrol vehicles by around 2030. All of their thinking since then is that that is likely to happen sooner, if anything. The costs, as Mr Rutledge was saying, are changing.

It also comes down to the fact that the scenarios in the future will become more difficult to estimate. We will get to our 2020 target of a 40 per cent reduction largely through achievement of our 100 per cent renewable electricity target. That is based on a range of specific contracts that we have in order to deliver that renewable electricity.

To get to the 2025 target, then 2030 and beyond that, requires a much larger range of actions in the community in terms of transport choice, fuel choice within homes, fuel choices within businesses, and how people build their buildings over a long period of time. It has a much bigger requirement for the particular engagement of players in activities that they need to undertake. The range of costs of that become more difficult to estimate.

Also, there is fundamentally more uncertainty in that it is about behaviour change, and that does not come through a direct financial incentive. It comes through the way that we interact with the community. A lot of the future strategies are going to be about how we educate the community and make them aware of the advantages that they can have in moving to new technologies, rather than doing things behind the scenes that they do not see.

MS LE COUTEUR: With that \$5 million, is that \$5 million annually or a one-off capital cost?

Mr Rutledge: That was to 2030. With the economic modelling—as I say, we have made that modelling available—that worked on a 65 per cent reduction to 2030 and it worked on roughly \$32 per tonne of abatement. That is where you get to \$5.8 million.

The economic modellers also saw a lot of co-benefits. Some changes they costed as no change, no cost. With others, they predicted, for example, reduced health expenditure due to more active travel, less chronic disease and that sort of thing. Climate resilience of buildings and energy efficiency were seen as a positive. Also, with a climate resilient building, you then do not need to do all the maintenance and upgrades down the track. If people are building better buildings, that is where you get to it.

That modelling was interesting because I think we all have a desire to put a cost on the action taken. It was a small cost—as I said \$5.8 million to 2030. I am certain that if we went to a different modelling company tomorrow, we would end up with a different answer.

MS LE COUTEUR: I am still confused as to whether that is a capital cost or an annual cost. It sounded a bit like it was all of the annual costs until 2030.

Mr Rutledge: Correct. That is what the modelling came up with.

THE CHAIR: I think it is an economic cost.

Mr McGlynn: The actual cost is a social welfare cost, in some senses.

MS LE COUTEUR: I assumed it was economic but is it capital or annual?

Mr McGlynn: As I recall the study, it is a social welfare cost. It is neither a capital cost nor an expense cost in that sense; it is an estimation of the difference in the social welfare that existed at the time, if you went with that strategy or not, as I recall. I can check that.

Mr Rutledge: Yes, that is correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: It is at a point in time that—

Mr McGlynn: It is at a point in time, but in some terms it summarises the changes that would go on in order to get to that outcome. It was also based, as I recall, on a comparison. It was the cost to get from 2025 to 2030, and it was based on certain assumptions about what would happen in 2025 as well. In that sense it was a kind of preliminary estimate.

MS LAWDER: The article in the *Canberra Times* was called “Cost of emissions reduction target revealed”. You mentioned abatement and social costs. Is it a line item in the budget of \$5.8 million that the government has to spend? Is it about changes in people’s behaviour contributing towards that amount? Is that what you are saying?

Mr McGlynn: No. It is not an estimate of expense; it is an estimate, again, of the change in total economic outcome that would be achieved through doing that. Again, it is a kind of estimate of a BAU case and a case with a different scenario, and the different social welfare outcomes at that point in time.

MS LAWDER: Based on changing populations over that period et cetera?

Mr McGlynn: It is based on a range of assumptions about what would exist in 2025 and what would need to exist in 2030; that then incorporates within it assumptions about population growth, economic growth and other sorts of assumptions.

MS LAWDER: Have you done similar modelling past 2030 or do you see that it is difficult to go past—

Mr McGlynn: We have not done that, and that is probably something we will look at. Modelling is inherently complicated and uncertain. The technology in this space is changing so quickly that doing assessments in the long term is prone to error. Five years ago people said, “Electric vehicles will be a key part of the transport system

within 10 or 15 years.” No-one would have believed it, yet that is what every reasonable analysis is now saying around the world, and we are seeing that change.

Similarly, when the national government set a target for achieving a certain target of renewable energy in the national electricity system under the renewable energy target, when that was set there were a lot of expert commentators who said, flat out, “That is impossible; there is no way we can possibly reach that target.” Now most analysis is saying that we will not just meet it but we will exceed that target by quite some time. They are both examples of where attention to setting targets and trying to solve a problem actually drives a bit of technology change that we would not have anticipated otherwise.

MS LAWDER: I also want to ask about hydrogen refuelling stations. There was some recent media commentary about some overseas explosions and fires. What has the government done to ensure safety at the Fyshwick hydrogen refuelling station?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly we are aware of one report of one incident in Norway, which I think did garner some media coverage recently. The station being built at Fyshwick is being done as a partnership with ActewAGL and Neoen. ActewAGL, of course, are quite expert in the provision of liquid fuels and have done it for many years. They are subject to a range of both their own organisational safety requirements as well as a range of government regulatory requirements.

The best advice I have been given on this, Ms Lawder, is that probably it still would be more dangerous to go to a petrol station than to a gas refuelling station. However, obviously there will be an examination of what happened at that incident in Norway and we will be working to make sure that we are aware of the lessons that come from that, if there are any that are directly applicable to the ACT.

Mr McGlynn: It is probably worth expanding on that. ActewAGL has operated refuelling stations at that site for some time. I think it is a CNG station. It has operated that quite safely. ActewAGL has an extensive and very good safety track record. That station, and also the hydrogen station that will be built, will be subject to particular regulations in terms of safety requirements and workplace health and safety requirements. Mr Harding may have a little more detail on those regulations but there are quite stringent regulations that are in place for any kind of refuelling station.

Mr Harding: As Mr McGlynn and the minister previously mentioned, the development of the hydrogen refuelling facility on Mildura Street at Fyshwick is being industry led. Obviously, the government is working in partnership with ActewAGL which has been procured as the delivery partner by Neoen. Neoen, you will recall, was the successful bidder as part of one of the reverse auctions. Part of their industry development contribution as a successful bidder in that auction was to develop a hydrogen refuelling capability in Canberra. They procured ActewAGL.

ActewAGL has then procured an infrastructure provider to deliver the electrolyser for the production of hydrogen at the facility, for storage compression and for refuelling capability. In particular, we have been working closely with Access Canberra and our colleagues on the planning side of the directorate, particularly with regard to the regulatory framework that will wrap around any new refuelling facility.

Obviously, hydrogen is a new technology for Australia. We understand that the facility that is under construction at Fyshwick will actually be Australia's first publicly accessible hydrogen refuelling station. Particularly in Canberra, the regulatory framework is the Planning and Development Act 2007. Obviously, land use and other approvals are required, ensuring appropriate zoning and the like.

As Mr McGlynn mentioned, given that there is already a compressed natural gas refuelling station on that site operated by ActewAGL, it is an appropriate use for that piece of land. There is also the Dangerous Substances Act 2004, which adds additional regulatory requirements on any facility operator, any person or any business who would like to store certain chemicals, substances and the like. Those two pieces of legislation in particular wrap around this facility and ensure that it will meet the appropriate planning obligations and obviously safety obligations.

I can also add a little more detail about the particular incident you might have seen reported. That was on 10 June outside of Oslo in Norway. Early reports did not actually specify what the circumstance might have been. We have had a recent update suggesting that the likelihood is that the incident was caused by a leak in the high pressure hydrogen storage component. So it was not particularly in the refuelling infrastructure.

Again, it is fair to say that hydrogen refuelling has a range of safeguards built into it which are not available in your conventional fuel station. I think everyone's mind goes to the scene in the *Zoolander* film where they are splashing fuel around. I do not think we are going to see that with hydrogen. There is a range of smart technologies with hydrogen in that it is a closed system. When the nozzle, for want of a better term, attaches to the vehicle, it requires the vehicle to talk to the bowser and the bowser to talk to the vehicle to enable the flow of hydrogen. There is a safety measure there.

Also, you cannot drive off in the vehicle with the pump still attached as it will not allow the vehicle to engage the engine until the connection from the bowser is actually disengaged. So there is a closed system. Hydrogen refuelling capability has additional safeguards.

It is also worth noting that while this is obviously unfortunate, there are around 50,000 fuel station fires a year around the world. This is a serious matter and something we obviously take into consideration in developing any new technology or any new facility. But we are obviously leading the way. There is a huge economic development opportunity in Canberra positioning itself as leading the way on this new technology. We are obviously working with our industry partners and with regulators and we are procuring expert industry partners to ensure the safety and confidence of that technology going forward.

The government will be the first customer from the facility. We are expecting delivery of 20 Hyundai Nexo hydrogen vehicles that will be integrated into the government's fleet. We are timing the delivery of those vehicles to be ready by the end of the year when the facility is expected to become operational.

As part of a broader hydrogen story, it always requires you to learn some lessons in

going first. So as part of a broader hydrogen package, to assist the committee if you are interested, there is about \$7 million worth of hydrogen industry funding actually being delivered in Canberra as part of the government's energy industry development components that have come with the renewable energy options. There is a project that the Australian National University is working on with one partner on power-to-gas research, using excess renewable electricity to produce hydrogen via an electrolyser and then having that gas or hydrogen available for other uses.

There is also a test facility that is operational at CIT at Fyshwick that CIT and Evoenergy, the territory's gas distributor, are cooperating on. It is a 100 per cent hydrogen test facility. They are producing hydrogen onsite and they are testing gas pipes, valves and flanges, all the sort of equipment and components you would need to build a gas network and how it performs with 100 per cent hydrogen pipes. That is a leading facility and it is something that is happening here in Canberra. It is helpfully located at a training facility where we train gasfitters and the like. There are huge benefits there. Obviously, there is also the facility that I have mentioned in terms of the refuelling infrastructure. With those components of industry partnerships, research and development, there is a real economic development opportunity that we are pursuing there.

In parallel with the hydrogen story, which has a lot of people around the country and around the world very interested, COAG energy ministers on 19 December last year at their meeting in Adelaide agreed on and tasked officials to commence development of a national hydrogen strategy. The Australian Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, is leading that piece of work. The territory government, through my team, is participating in a range of work streams, particularly hydrogen for transport. Our project here is obviously a leading component.

Also, we are particularly interested in the role of hydrogen in the gas network and then the role of hydrogen as an opportunity to pair up renewable sources along the lines of the ANU project I described. These are all opportunities where the territory's interests, particularly in the potential future of hydrogen, align with and roll into our broader strategy. That strategy is being developed through this calendar year and will be delivered to COAG energy ministers for their end of year meeting this year. All going well, there should be a national hydrogen strategy promulgated by the end of this calendar year.

MS LAWDER: If there happened to be an incident at the refuelling station in Fyshwick, what would that mean for the ACT government hydrogen cars that you said would be delivered at around the same time? Are there alternative refuelling stations?

Mr Harding: There would not be any other hydrogen refuelling facility under development that we are aware of in Canberra at the moment. The delivery plan for the Hyundai Nexo vehicles I mentioned is that Hyundai are potentially looking to bring a couple of vehicles to Canberra before the start of the facility. They would essentially be filled with bottled hydrogen.

There is a range of facilities where you do not necessarily actually have to produce hydrogen on a hydrogen refuelling facility platform, although that is the configuration

that ActewAGL are pursuing at Fyshwick. There is a model that is quite common I think in Japan and in Europe. There will be a large hydrogen production facility somewhere. Via what is called a tube trailer, they will fill large gas bottles, if you like, put them on a truck and deliver those to different refuelling sites throughout a city.

Obviously, Hyundai, if they wanted to bring a vehicle to Canberra in advance of the fuel station, would need to source an alternative hydrogen fuel supply. Probably that would be via compressed hydrogen in a bottle. In the unfortunate circumstance of there being some kind of incident—obviously as part of any facility there would be a period when there would be maintenance and other sorts of things that might take the hydrogen production offline—alternative sources of hydrogen would be made available. Again, we would work through industry partners, through ActewAGL and Hyundai particularly, to source appropriate fuel grade sources of hydrogen to fill those vehicles.

THE CHAIR: There is a measure on page 22 of budget statements E called “Securing electricity supply in the ACT.” What is that funding for?

Mr Rutledge: Miss Burch, we can probably talk about this later in the week in the planning portfolio. That is about securing a second energy supply, in effect, through west Belconnen to bring that into the territory. It is another interconnector to the national network that has been planned for some time. The planning minister is probably better to cover that off. Minister Rattenbury sets the policy and we are delivering it through the planning portfolio.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is Actsmart focusing mainly on businesses? We spoke about residential stuff earlier in relation to the energy efficiency program but is Actsmart business energy? It seems to be business energy.

Mr McGlynn: Actsmart—and I will get Ms Malouf to talk about it more in a bit—has a number of arrows in its quiver. It has a number of elements. It has a general household program and then some parts are focused particularly on low income households and assisting those in a variety of ways. It has a schools component where every school in the ACT is signed up to the Actsmart program and they go through an accreditation process where they go through the five different aspects of Actsmart. There is a business program as well.

All three of those are part of the Actsmart program. They share some knowledge but they also have quite different approaches. There are a number of events. Ros, if you want to talk more about how the three interact?

Ms Malouf: I have read and understood the privilege statement. Actsmart, in addition to Mr McGlynn’s comments, has a range of community components as well: community gardens grants, community zero emission grants and also the community partnership agreement that we have with the ACT government with three community organisations.

MS LE COUTEUR: What is the take-up of the programs?

Mr Malouf: It depends on the program. The low income program, which is one of our

most popular supports—

MS LE COUTEUR: It would be over-subscribed, I assume.

Ms Malouf: It is. We support about 1,500 low income households per year. That gives low income households the opportunity to access a range of services, from education advice only right through to draught-proofing support with no interest loans for appliances and also appliance upgrades. It also connects with our solar program.

With our business programs we support almost 1,000 businesses with the waste and recycling program, with annual accreditation into that program, and that is from small businesses to large businesses. With the schools program we have 100 per cent of schools, public, private and independent, signed up to the schools program.

MS LE COUTEUR: Your low income program is probably the program that I was talking about previously where my constituent was refused access to the program. I understand that you are not supporting people who have electric heaters and who wish to transit to split systems, reverse cycles, as part of that program. Is that correct?

Ms Malouf: We upgrade split systems. We complement the EEIS delivered through the tier one retailer ACTEW. The Actsmart programs complement those services. They would not be excluded from that program if they were to come through the current contractor, which is St Vincent de Paul.

MS LE COUTEUR: Given that they have been refused, what should they do?

Ms Malouf: If you can give us the details Actsmart would be happy to follow that through and give them their best options.

MS LE COUTEUR: When you are looking at businesses do you target the businesses with the highest emissions or the people who come to talk to you, or what?

Ms Malouf: With our energy program, that tier is targeting small businesses, with less than \$25,000 per year energy spend and/or fewer than 10 full-time or equivalent staff. The small business program is targeting small business. We provide advice only for medium businesses and large businesses if they are after that specific advice on energy usage.

MS LE COUTEUR: Do you look at things as well as energy usage? I am particularly thinking here of organic waste because clearly, if it decomposes, it produces greenhouse gases.

Ms Malouf: Sure.

MS LE COUTEUR: Within your sphere of concern, at any rate?

Ms Malouf: Sure. Part of the program is an organics program. Our 1,000 businesses have to have an organics component to become accredited. To give you some idea of the organics diverted from landfill, until 31 March this year the 626 accredited sites have sent 2,877 cubic metres of organic material to an organics reuse facility to be

broken down more efficiently than in landfill.

MS LE COUTEUR: When you say organics reuse, do you mean what I would call composting or what—

Ms Malouf: Correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: Someone else described things as organics reuse. I was having real difficulties with that as a concept, I am afraid.

Ms Malouf: What that looked like. Some of our sites have organics worm farms on site—the AIS is one—and they support their own organics composting onsite and they use that material as far, as the reuse goes, on their own premises, their own gardens.

MS LE COUTEUR: Of the others who do not have their own worm sites, do you have different requirements if you are, say, a food business or an office which has only a tiny amount of food? Do you have requirements for the food businesses which have presumably a fair amount of organic waste?

Ms Malouf: We require that they have a commercial arrangement or an in-house set-up. You have to either have your organics material collected by an authorised organics recycler or process it yourself.

MS LE COUTEUR: An authorised organics recycler would be a composter?

Ms Malouf: A commercial composter, or processed by one of the organic machines. The Canberra Hospital has installed an organics machine onsite that actually processes it onsite rather than having to have it taken away.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is it anaerobic digestion or something?

Ms Malouf: Correct, an anaerobic digestion machine.

MS LE COUTEUR: What do you recommend that businesses do? I guess very big ones like the Canberra Hospital can do their own anaerobic but most places are a lot smaller.

Ms Malouf: We tailor the advice depending on the site of the business, whether they are a multi-tenanted unit, whether they can manage it if they have got a large enough amount. Minister Rattenbury went and had a look at the one at the Hyatt that had a digester put in as well. It depends on the amount of material, the organics that they produce. It also depends on how they process a lot of their material. Lots of places get fruit and vegetables arriving already peeled and they do not create a lot more waste. It is tailored advice for each individual business or school.

MS LE COUTEUR: What sorts of places get their fruit arriving already peeled?

Ms Malouf: Lots of hotels.

MS LE COUTEUR: They cut them up once they get them?

Ms Malouf: Yes, they do.

MS LE COUTEUR: They have to wrap them up in plastic, I suppose, to transport them?

Ms Malouf: Or they get them straight into the kitchens. They might be delivered ready for making into different recipes.

MS CODY: Did you say that the organic waste is currently disposed of through a contractor?

Ms Malouf: If it is picked up commercially. There are several contractors in the ACT that compost the material commercially.

MS CODY: This might be a question for the minister. How does that fit in with our procurement policies?

Mr Rattenbury: In what way?

MS LE COUTEUR: They are private businesses.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS CODY: They are not actually contracted by the ACT government?

Mr Rattenbury: No.

MS CODY: I just misunderstood.

Mr Rattenbury: They have private contracts to deal with their waste. We might give them some guidance on what is available and the like but they still go out and buy it themselves.

MS LE COUTEUR: I assume that some of these businesses would be giving their excess to OzHarvet and you would give them a tick for that?

Ms Malouf: Yes, we definitely give them a tick for any kind of reuse. Some also give it to the zoo.

MS CODY: What about farmers? Do they come online with that?

Ms Malouf: That also counts towards organic accreditation, as long as it is not going into landfill.

MS LE COUTEUR: Is there enough capacity in the disposal industry to meet the demand?

Ms Malouf: Yes, there is enough capacity at the moment. It is really driven by

demand. We originally started some 10 years ago with one part-time commercial organics collector and now there are at least three doing it full time.

MS LE COUTEUR: They do the collecting and then the processing?

Ms Malouf: Correct.

MS LE COUTEUR: Compared to sending stuff to landfill is it more cost effective to compost it?

Ms Malouf: If you just got the compost it would be cheaper to send it to landfill. But the other recycling methods—the mixed recycling and the paper recycling—make it cost effective if you do it as a package. If you were just sending waste to landfill it would be a certain price. It would be cheaper if you put in your mixed recycling and your paper recycling and then you would offset the cost of your organic. You can run through the program at least at cost neutral. Many organisations actually save money.

Mr Rutledge: That is the strength of the Actsmart program in that they go to the business and often the business has not thought about waste at all and they just pay for the dumpster to be collected a couple of times a month, whether it is full, empty or one-third full. The Actsmart team, often for the first time, show the different waste streams that are available and the different contractors that are available.

Sometimes you might get a few tenants in one shared block to consolidate and Ros and the team do the numbers for the business as a whole. Then you get a better result environmentally and for many businesses. We have even gone into hairdressing. We were not in the hairdressing game until recently but now we have Actsmart accredited hairdressers who have looked at that for the first time.

MS CODY: Can you expand on that for me?

Ms Malouf: Bond hairdressing was one of our award winners last year. They reduced their waste to three per cent waste to landfill, which is remarkable for a small business whose job is not waste management but amazing hair. Lots of hairdressers have since signed up and they have gone to the point—Ms Le Couteur might be interested in this—where they are sending hair away to a national organisation that make it into booms used for oil spills.

If you are looking for an accredited business of any kind, including a hairdresser, look for the Actsmart accredited point-of-sale stickers which we give to businesses to promote their accreditation status.

MS CODY: As a former hairdresser and business owner of a salon I know colour waste can be a big environmental impact because for a long time hairdressers of my vintage used to just wash that down the sink. I am sure that those practices are no longer carried out, but are those the sorts of things you also work on when it comes to hairdressing salons?

Ms Malouf: We have not done that one particularly, but we will deal with very unusual wastes and try to find a solution for them. We have had our team find out

about blood products from veterinary surgeons and how we best dispose of them. Our team can go outside the box as well as far as anything different and not mainstream. It is not just organics, mixed recycling, and paper and cardboard; if there is an unusual type of waste my team will get the most unusual mail deliveries in the ACT government when people send different objects that are really hard to explain.

MR PETTERSSON: What is the turn-up like at Actsmart events?

Ms Malouf: Are you talking about events that we support through our public event program or events where Actsmart attends?

MR PETTERSSON: Probably the former.

Ms Malouf: Actsmart, through our public event program, have 205 events at the moment this year that we support to make sure they are as sustainable as possible. Some 800,000 people have access to recycling at those events. They can be small events like fetes and festivals or they can be large events like Summernats, the Multicultural Festival or Floriade.

MR PETTERSSON: I was asking about things like your workshops.

Ms Malouf: Our household workshops have anywhere between 30 and 60 attendees. We run those workshops in local areas to try to take the actual information to the suburbs. They are run through local libraries, community centres and school halls. We had one last week on heating your home without breaking the bank; that had 35 attendees. They are generally run after hours to catch people who cannot get to something during the day.

MS CODY: If someone were on a body corporate and interested in running one for a multi-unit development, could they contact Actsmart and talk to you about ways they can do those sorts of things?

Ms Malouf: Absolutely; we can do that. We have done some for various groups as well, like Rotary or other community groups. And we can tailor it to whatever they want the topic to be: heating your home, draft proofing, solar. Solar is a really popular one.

MS CODY: You are doing this to help the environment but also to help with the hip pocket?

Ms Malouf: Sure. The Actsmart programs across the board on energy are sustainable programs but they also look at the dollar cost.

MS CODY: With older apartment complexes like those around some of the older parts of Canberra, are there ways that you can assist people in those older areas?

Ms Malouf: Sure. We can go in and teach people—it is quite a practical course—how to draft proof or best manage their energy usage, for example by not heating rooms. There are lots of really practical tips that people do not consider that can make a real difference to their comfort as well as their hip pocket.

MS LAWDER: Minister, I want to ask about the large-scale generation certificates. The spot in the forward prices for the certificates has decreased again since the 2018-19 budget review. From your understanding, why weren't the certificates surrendered when the price was better, when we had been anticipating a drop? Why are we holding on to a rapidly depreciating asset?

Mr Rattenbury: I think the first thing to say is that the actual presentation of the LGCs in the budget is an accounting requirement. That is why you saw them appear in the budget last year for the first time. Treasury gave us clear advice that under the accounting laws they are deemed an asset, so we had to present them. In terms of the surrender details, I will ask Mr Harding to help.

Mr Harding: The LGC, while it is a financial instrument, is traded in a market and has a value, is also a property that represents something. One large-scale generation certificate is equivalent to or represents one megawatt hour of renewable electricity generation.

As the territory's large-scale feed-in tariff supported projects come onstream—the final project, being the Hornsdale 3 wind farm, commences on 1 October—the feed-in tariff supported generation for the territory is that those LGCs are transferred to the territory and they sit in the territory's renewable energy certificate registry account with the Clean Energy Regulator, a federal body. While you will see LGCs start to accrue in that account, and obviously there is a value visible to anybody in the market as to what they are worth, those certificates are what the territory will use to acquire a large proportion of its 100 per cent renewable electricity target. That target will be made up of a combination of the territory's pro rata share of the national large-scale renewable energy target; the large-scale FIT contracts, which I referenced; and then local solar rooftop generation and voluntary green power purchases.

There is a combination of components that will build up and contribute to the territory government being able to acquire that target. Those certificates do represent property, albeit they will be surrendered—and that is the intention: that they are surrendered voluntarily to the Clean Energy Regulator—in order to acquire the territory's ownership or right to that one megawatt hour of renewable electricity.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what involvement have you had in the decision to hold onto these certificates? Any discussions?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. It has been government policy that the government intended to retire the certificates as part of ensuring that our efforts for a 100 per cent renewable electricity target were deemed to be additional. That has been government policy. We have considered a range of options—people have put options to us—but that remains the government's position.

MS LAWDER: So that ongoing remains the government's position?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MS LAWDER: What impact does it have, if any, on household power bills?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think it has any, in the sense that the costs for households through the large-scale reverse auctions have been well documented and well publicised. There is a published figure there. That goes to the purchasing costs of our electricity. The change in price, if you like, or the decision to sell or not sell, does not have a direct impact on household costs in that sense, if I have understood your question correctly.

MS LAWDER: Yes. Is it government policy that decides whether certificates would not be surrendered when their values started to decline?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Our decision has been to retire them rather than use them as a tradable commodity.

Mr McGlynn: I think the issue is this. The way that the 100 per cent renewable target will be met is through effectively surrendering the certificates at zero cost, and there is no transfer of funds at that point. The certificates are paid for through the contracts we have with renewable generators right around the country. The price paid is set out in those contracts. It varies depending on what the market is doing at the time that the overall price is set out. That is what effectively purchases the right to those certificates. They then come in to us and they are surrendered to basically acquit our renewable energy target. The variation in the price as it goes along does not affect that. As the minister indicated, it is largely an accounting treatment of how we deal with an asset while we have it. The intention was never to sell the asset for it.

MS LAWDER: As with any organisation, whether it is the government or another body, with a fiduciary responsibility to maintain a good financial position, you feel that you have balanced that against the environmental benefit?

Mr Rattenbury: I am trying to think about where you want to go with this question. Are you suggesting that the government should have sold them in order to maintain a better fiscal position?

MS LAWDER: I am just interested in the government's view on the fiduciary position.

Mr Rattenbury: I have not received any advice, via treasury, Chief Minister's or my own directorate, that there is a fiduciary element to our consideration of these matters.

THE CHAIR: We will adjourn. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank the ministers and officials who have appeared today. The secretary will provide you with a copy of the proof transcript of today's hearing when it becomes available. If witnesses have taken any questions on notice, could you please get the answers to the committee's support office within five working days of the receipt of the uncorrected proof. If members wish to lodge questions on notice, please get those to the committee support office within five working days of the hearing, day one being tomorrow.

The committee adjourned at 5.09 pm.